
SHIFTING LOYALTIES
MALIFAUX
2E
Wyrd



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Customer Service Email - support@wyrd-games.net

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SECOND EDITION



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CREDITS

LEAD DESIGN

Justin Gibbs

ADDITIONAL DESIGN

Mason Crawford and Aaron Darland

WRITING

Matthew Farrer, Justin Gibbs,
Christopher Gorham, David McGuire,
Graeme Stevenson, and N. A. Wolf

ART

Aleksandar Aleksandrov, Hardy Fowler,
Christophe Madura, and Bram 'Boco' Sels

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Jorge Gomez

CREATIVE DIRECTION

Nathan Caroland & Eric Johns

EDITING

Elizabeth Fitzgerald

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CAMPAIGN

INTRO

You hold in your hands the Malifaux Second Edition Campaign book! This is a supplement to Malifaux Second Edition (M2E), so you will still need a core rulebook, models, stat cards, a fate deck, and all of the usual odds and ends used while playing Malifaux. This book is designed to give you a way to link multiple games together to create one long, interactive story. You and your friends will agree on a length of time the Campaign will last and over that time your models will gain injuries, curses, find unique weapons, and learn new skills. Due to the character-driven nature of the Malifaux setting this is a perfect way to experience the game, and we hope you enjoy it!

WHAT IS DIFFERENT?

Campaign games sometimes require some extra set up before the game, but are otherwise generally played using the same rules as normal Malifaux. After the game is finished, you will determine what happened to your injured crew members and try to find new Upgrades for the survivors in the way of Skills and Equipment. These changes to your Crew will carry over from game to game until the Campaign is completed. In addition to this, there will sometimes be Campaign events which affect the game, such as special terrain, scenarios, or other fun challenges.

A COMMUNITY FOCUS

This book was designed with the community in mind. Nothing happens in a vacuum, and Malifaux is a very community-oriented game. There will be events which change from week to week, so having a set place and time to gather everyone together once a week is ideal. Short of this, participating players can be contacted through a community message board, email, etc. Regardless, there will be a certain level of organization required so it may be a good idea to charge one person with helping to organize; if you have a local Wyrd Henchman, he or she will likely be the perfect choice!

A FEW TERMS

Here are a few terms which you may come across. These will be discussed in more depth later, but it can be useful to have a general idea now:

Scrip

Scrip is currency which will be earned as your Crew plays in the Campaign. It can be spent on new models or Upgrades. See pg. 14.

Skills

Skills are special Campaign-only Upgrades which models may earn as you play. See pg. 14.

Injuries

Injuries are Campaign-only Upgrades which models may suffer if they are killed or sacrificed. See pg. 26.

Finished Off

A flip to determine if a model suffers an Injury. See pg. 13.

Aftermath Step

The Aftermath Step happens after each Campaign game and determines what happens to the Crew. This includes determining Injuries, acquiring new Skills, and other exciting things. See pg. 14.

Barter Flips

Barter flips are earned during a game and determine which Campaign-only Upgrades your Crew may purchase during the Aftermath Step. See pg. 14.

Aftermath Hand

A hand of cards used to Cheat Fate during the Aftermath Step. See pg. 14.

Annihilated

If a model or Upgrade is Annihilated, it is permanently removed from its Arsenal. See pg. 13.

ARSENALS

A player's Arsenal represents the models and Upgrades which the player has available to hire to form Crews for individual Encounters during the course of the Campaign.

Hiring models for an Encounter is done as normal, except that all models and Upgrades hired must be from the Crew's Arsenal. A Crew does not need to hire its entire Arsenal during an Encounter.

For example, you may eventually find yourself with 50 Soulstones of models in your Arsenal, from which you will hire a 35 Soulstone Crew to complete a single Encounter.

Players will keep track of their Arsenals on Arsenal Sheets (available on pg. 284 and for download from wyrd-games.net). The Arsenal Sheet will also be used to track any Injuries, Skills, Scrip, Bounties, and various other things which may come up during the Campaign. A player's Arsenal Sheet is always public knowledge.

STARTING THE CAMPAIGN

The first thing you must decide on is how long the Campaign will last. A Campaign may last for 4, 6, 8, or 12 weeks. Designate one day each week to resolve weekly events. This day should be the day that the most people will be free to show up and play, but everyone does not need to be present when you do so, as life often gets in the way. For example, your group may primarily be free on Tuesdays, so you determine that Tuesday will be the day when you flip for weekly events.

At the start of the first week, each player must declare a Faction and hire their starting Arsenal. Declaring a Faction is done the same way as declaring a Faction for an Encounter, only it will last for the entire Campaign.

Each player has 35 Soulstones with which to hire their starting Arsenal. This Arsenal must include one Henchman which is designated as the Leader and may not include any Masters (the Leader is paid for like any other model). Multiple Henchmen may be hired, but one must be noted as the Leader. Any models may be hired into the Arsenal which the Leader may legally hire when declaring the chosen Faction. (Note: These models cost the same as they would in a normal Crew. For example, out of Faction Mercenaries will generally cost one more, etc.) A Crew may only purchase a maximum of one Upgrade at this time; it may not have the "Campaign" trait and must be able to be attached to at least one model in the Crew. This Upgrade may open up new hiring options for the Crew which it can take advantage of at this time. Each Soulstone not spent becomes one Scrip, up to a maximum of three Scrip (see Scrip pg. 14). Once all players have declared their Factions and assembled their Arsenals, flip for the first weekly event and then start playing some Campaign games!

ZERO COST HENCHMEN

Some Henchmen have a Soulstone Cost of 0. For the purposes of the Campaign, these models are considered to have a Cost of 13 minus their Cache while Leading. For example, a Henchmen with a cost of 0 and 3 Cache would be considered to have a cost of (13-3) 10 while Leading.

VARIATIONS

Different groups have different needs, depending on how often they play or personal tastes. Here are some variations which you may wish to use:

STARTING ARSENAL SIZE

Players with larger collections or who simply do not like smaller games may wish to play with a larger starting Arsenal size. In this case, your group may play with a starting Arsenal size of their choice (we recommend no more than 65).

MASTERS

Under normal circumstances, players do not start the Campaign with a Master. This is for balance reasons, as Masters can become powerful very quickly once they start racking up Skills. However, some groups may not play frequently enough to hire Masters later, or they may simply feel that it "isn't Malifaux" without a Master. In this case, every player starts with a free Master of their choice. If this method is chosen, Masters are never paid for or factored into Crew size, always Lead the Crew, and add their Cache as normal.

WHAT IS A WEEK?

This Campaign is written with the assumption that all players in the group will play 1-2 games per week. If your group plays less frequently, you may wish to start a new "Campaign week" every 2, 3, or even 4 weeks. Simply choose an allotment of time which will allow most people to play 1-2 games. You may also adjust the number of weeks the Campaign lasts to whatever suits your needs.

START OF A NEW WEEK

At the start of each week, on the designated day, players gather to determine the Weekly Event and gain New Hires. The Weekly Event is a unique happening which affects games played that week. New Hires represent opportunities to gain new Crew members.

NEW HIRES

Skip this entire step during the first week of the Campaign. Before determining the Weekly Event, players hire any new models or non-Campaign Upgrades they wish into their Arsenal.

The start of each week is the only time players may hire new models for their Arsenal, and every player must hire at least one model. Any model which the Crew may legally hire considering its Leader and chosen Faction may be added to the Crew's Arsenal (this includes models the Crew may hire due to Upgrades or rules such as Infiltration or the Mercenary Characteristic). The Crew must immediately spend an amount of Scrip equal to the model's cost. (Note: These models cost the same as they would in a normal Crew. For example, out of Faction Mercenaries will generally cost one more, etc.)

The first model a Crew hires each week costs 5 fewer Scrip than it normally would (this discount only applies to the Scrip paid to hire the model into the Arsenal and does not affect its actual Soulstone cost in any way). Although every player must hire a minimum of one new model at this time, there is no maximum; players may hire as many models as they like, so long as they have the Scrip.

Non-Campaign Upgrades are also purchased at this time. This includes any Upgrade which does not have the Campaign trait. Non-Campaign Upgrades may be purchased for an amount of Scrip equal to double their Soulstone Cost. If the Upgrade has a cost of 0, it costs 2 Scrip. Players may purchase as many or as few non-Campaign Upgrades as they like at this time. Upgrades purchased in this way are added to the Crew's Arsenal and will be available to attach to the Crew's models during Campaign games. The start of each week is the only time non-Campaign Upgrades may be purchased in this way.

LEADERS

Each Campaign Crew will have one model designated as the Leader. The Campaign Leader must be hired as the Crew's Leader during Encounters, and it may not change from game to game. The Crew's Leader also determines which models may be hired into the Crew's Arsenal. Any models which the Leader may legally hire when declaring the Faction chosen for the duration of the Campaign are fair game to hire, even if those models do not belong to the declared Faction (this includes hiring options the Leader may get from Upgrades).

The leader may change in two ways. First, if a Master is hired into the Crew's Arsenal, the Master automatically becomes the new Leader. If a Crew already contains one Master, it may not hire another.

Second, the current Leader may be Annihilated during the course of the Campaign. If this happens, a new Leader must be chosen. If the Crew has a Henchman, a Henchman must be chosen. If not, the model with the highest Soulstone cost becomes the new Leader (if multiple models are tied, choose one).

If a Crew's Leader changes and some of the models in its Arsenal are no longer legal to hire due to the change, those models are now considered legal for the Crew to hire, although future models purchased into the Arsenal must follow all regular hiring restrictions.

ADDING A MASTER

Masters are some of the most powerful and well-known characters in Malifaux, and your Crew will have to distinguish itself to attract one.

To represent this, during the New Hires phase of the week which marks the halfway point in the Campaign (for example, the New Hires phase at the start of week 4 in a 6 week Campaign or the start of week 5 in an 8 week Campaign, etc) every Crew which has completed at least one Bounty (see pg. 24) may pay 10 Scrip to add a Master to its Arsenal. The Scrip cost of Masters may not be reduced.

From this point on, any Crew which has completed at least one Bounty may pay 10 Scrip during the New Hires phase of a week to purchase a Master for its Arsenal.

WEEKLY EVENT

Next, flip to determine the Weekly Event. Weekly Events vary greatly; some require players to use unique terrain in every game played that week, while others require a certain scenario to be played or cause a random occurrence to happen. Some Events will affect every game played that week, while others may have one-off effects or contests which happen immediately.

Most Weekly Events allow players to acquire more Scrip. A Crew may not earn more than 6 Scrip from a Weekly Event during a single game. If the same result as the previous week is flipped, reflip until a new result is obtained. Use the following table:

FLIP	EVENT
Black Joker	A Bad Moon Rises
1 of ♠ or ♥	Contract Work
2 of ♠ or ♥	They Ride
3 of ♠ or ♥	Ancient Monument
4 of ♠ or ♥	Carnivorous Plants
5 of ♠ or ♥	Saloon
6 of ♠ or ♥	Vermin Infestation
7 of ♠ or ♥	Swamp Creatures
8 of ♠ or ♥	The Lonely Traveler
9 of ♠ or ♥	Guild Patrol
10 of ♠ or ♥	Forbidden Text
11 of ♠ or ♥	Dead Zone
12 of ♠ or ♥	Map It Out
13 of ♠ or ♥	Pit Fight
1 of ♣ or 🕮	Extermination
2 of ♣ or 🕮	A Lucrative Offer
3 of ♣ or 🕮	Ampersand
4 of ♣ or 🕮	Junkyard
5 of ♣ or 🕮	A Bullet With Your Name
6 of ♣ or 🕮	A Sinner's Prayer
7 of ♣ or 🕮	Kythera
8 of ♣ or 🕮	Returning From a Job
9 of ♣ or 🕮	Fate Favors the Bold
10 of ♣ or 🕮	Wandering Mercenaries
11 of ♣ or 🕮	Soulstone Vein
12 of ♣ or 🕮	The Plot Thickens
13 of ♣ or 🕮	Chain Gang
Red Joker	The Event

NEUTRAL MODELS

Many Weekly Events use Neutral models which belong to neither player. These models are considered to be enemies to all models, may not take Interact Actions, and may not drop or place Markers of any kind. Neutral models may not be buried or sacrificed and may only be killed by being reduced to 0 Wounds. Neutral models which come into play at the end of a Turn and Activate at the end of the Turn will Activate the Turn they come in.

When a Weekly Event calls for a Neutral model to Activate, follow these steps:

1. If the Neutral model does not have Range or LoS to any model controlled by either player with any of its Attack Actions, it takes a Walk Action which must end with the Neutral model as close as possible to the closest model controlled by either player.

2. If the model has Range and LoS with any Attack Action to a model controlled by either player, it immediately takes an Attack Action against the closest player-controlled model. If multiple models are tied for closest, the First player chooses the target. If the Neutral model has multiple Attacks in range, the player who does not control the target model chooses the Attack Action.

3. If the Neutral model did not move in step 1, it will make a second Attack as in step 2. However, if the model moved in step 1, but did not make an Attack in step 2, it makes a second Walk Action as in step 1.

Neutral models always make Disengaging Strikes against player-controlled models when they can.

When a Neutral model makes a flip, it uses the deck belonging to the opposing Crew of the model it is Attacking or Defending against. It may not Cheat Fate or declare Triggers, but it receives + to all duels (not damage flips) and always chooses the highest card. If the Neutral model is Attacking and the highest card it flips is a ♠, then any resulting damage flip will gain +. If the Neutral model is Defending and the highest card it flips is a ♣, then any resulting damage flip against it suffers −.

Player-controlled models which are killed or sacrificed by a Neutral model are automatically Finished Off (see pg. 13).

Any player-controlled model in base contact with a Neutral model may make a (1) Interact Action targeting it to push it up to 6" in any direction.

A Bad Moon Rises

Finished Off flips may not be cheated this week.

Flip for another Weekly Event to affect each game this week, refliping Pit Fight and either Joker.

Contract Work

During every Encounter this week, players earn 2 additional Scrip for every enemy Enforcer, Henchman, and Master killed or sacrificed during the Encounter.

They Ride

At the end of the second Turn, one player flips a card which may not be Cheated, reflipping Jokers. If the card is a 6 or higher, place one Horseman in the center of the table (or as close as is possible). Flip at the end of each Turn until a Horseman arrives. At the end of Turn 4, the Rider arrives on a 1 or higher. Consult the card's suit to determine which Horseman:

: Pale Rider (Crossroads pg. 32)

: Dead Rider (Crossroads pg. 64)

: Mechanical Rider (Crossroads pg. 116)

: Hooded Rider (Crossroads pg. 158)

The Rider is a Neutral model which Activates immediately after each Leader ends an Activation (up to twice per Turn).

At the end of the game, if a player killed or sacrificed the Neutral Horseman, that player earns 6 additional Scrip. The player which did not kill or sacrifice the Neutral Horseman earns 3 additional Scrip if they made at least one successful Attack Action against it.

Ancient Monument

Every Encounter this week must include an Ancient Monument terrain piece. While placing terrain, randomly determine a player to place the Ancient Monument. The Ancient Monument is on a 50mm base and is **Ht** 5, blocking, impassable terrain. It may be placed anywhere on the table within 2" of the Center line. While within 2" of the Ancient Monument, models receive +2 **Ca** to all **Ca** Actions.

Whenever a model within 2" of the Ancient Monument kills or sacrifices an enemy model, the Acting model's Crew gains 2 Scrip.

Carnivorous Plants

Every Encounter this week must include Carnivorous Plant terrain. Each player places one 50mm Plant Marker within 6" of the Centerline of the table. Plant Markers are Ht 0, severe, hazardous terrain which deal 1/4/7 damage. Any model which ends a move or push within 3" of a Plant Marker must succeed on a TN 14 **Wk** duel or be pushed into base contact with the Plant Marker. Any model may target a Plant Marker with a Attack. In this case the Plant is considered to have **Df** and **Wp** 7 and the opposing player flips and cheats for it. If the Attack succeeds, remove the Plant Marker.

Whenever a Carnivorous Plant is discarded, the player who discarded it earns 3 Scrip.

Saloon

Every Encounter this week is played in a Saloon. Due to the ceiling, all models lose **Flight** for the duration of the game.

In addition, each player places two Barstool Markers (**Ht** 0, 30mm) within 6" of the Centerline. Any model within 1" of a Barstool Marker may discard it to take the following Action:

(1) Thrown Stool (**Sh** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 10 or 2): Target suffers 2/3/7 damage. If the target suffers Weak damage, or this Attack fails, place a Barstool Marker in base contact with the target.

Whenever a player kills an enemy model with the **Thrown Stool** Action, that player gains 3 Scrip.

Vermin Infestation

Every Encounter this week suffers a Vermin Infestation, and you're getting paid to clean it up. Before deploying Crews, players take Turns placing Vermin Markers (**Ht** 0, 30mm) until 8 Markers have been placed. The Markers may not be placed in a Deployment Zone or within 6" of another Marker. Any model in base contact with a Vermin Marker may make a (1) Interact Action with it. When this happens, the *opposing* player flips a card, which may be cheated:

0-8: *Squish!* The acting model's Crew gains 2 Scrip.

9-10: *It bit me!* The acting model gains the **Poison +1** Condition.

11-13: *Quick critters...* The Vermin Marker is pushed up to 6" in a direction chosen by the player who flipped.

Red Joker: *They're everywhere!* The acting model suffers 3 damage and ends its Activation.

Swamp Creatures

Every Encounter this week will be ripe with Swampfiends. After deploying Crews, choose one player to flip a card which may not be cheated. If the card is 9 or lower, the Swampfiends for this game will be Silurids (M2E pg. 184), but if it is 10 or higher they will be Waldgeists (M2E pg. 186). Place 3 Swampfiends on the board at the end of the second Turn. Determine a random player to place the first Swampfiend and alternate until all of them are placed. A player may not place a Swampfiend within 8" of a friendly model or within 4" of another Swampfiend. These Swampfiends are Neutral models.

At the end of every Turn, all Swampfiends Activate. After all Swampfiends have Activated, if they are Silurids, each one is pushed 7" directly away from the closest player controlled model. If they are Waldgeists, place two 50mm Tree Markers (**Ht** 5, severe terrain, soft cover) touching each other in base contact with a randomly determined Waldgeist. The First Player places the Markers. Remove all Tree Markers if no Neutral Waldgeists are in play. Each time a player kills or sacrifices a Neutral Swampfiend, that player gains 2 Scrip.

The Lonely Traveler

A Lonely Traveler joins every Encounter this week. Place a 30mm Traveler Marker in the center of the table (or as close as possible). This Marker is **Ht** 2, impassable, blocking, and it may be Attacked. When it is Attacked it is considered to have **Df** and **Wp** of 5 and 8 **Wd**. The Crew which is not Attacking it flips and cheats for it.

Any model within 1" of the Traveler may make a (1) Interact Action targeting it to ask it for guidance. When this happens, flip on the following chart (this flip may not be cheated):

Flip	Result
Black Joker	The model is immediately killed.
	Heal all damage on the model.
	The model's controller may place a Scheme Marker anywhere on the table.
	The model's controller gains 2 Scrip.
	The model's controller gains 2 Scrip.
Red Joker	The model's controller makes an additional Barter flip at the end of the game.

Guild Patrol

Every Encounter this week is subject to a Guild Patrol. At the end of the second Turn, place 4 Guild Guard on the board (M2E pg. 105). Determine a random player to place the first Guild Guard and alternate until all Guild Guard are placed. A player may not place a Guild Guard within 8" of a friendly model or within 4" of another Guild Guard. These Guild Guard are Neutral models which Activate at the end of the Turn.

Reinforcements! Starting on Turn 3, at the end of each Turn, if none of the original 4 Guild Guard are still in play, place a Peacekeeper (M2E pg. 106) in the center of the board (or as close as is possible). Only one Peacekeeper comes into play this way per game. The Peacekeeper is a Neutral model which Activates at the end of the Turn.

Each time a player kills or sacrifices a Neutral Guild Guard, that player gains 1 Scrip. If a player kills or sacrifices the Neutral Peacekeeper, that player gains 5 Scrip.

Forbidden Text

Every Encounter this week is at a good place to pick up some forbidden books! Each player places two Text Markers (**Ht** 0, 30mm) within 3" of the Centerline of the table. Any model may take a (1) Interact Action while in base contact with a Text Marker to discard it and draw a card.

When a Text Marker is discarded, the player who discarded it gains 2 Scrip.

Dead Zone

Every Encounter this week is affected by Dead Zones. A Dead Zone is **Ht** 0, 3" by 3", severe terrain. Each player places one Dead Zone anywhere on the table within 6" of the Centerline and at least 3" from another Dead Zone. While in base contact with a Dead Zone, models may not take **Ca** Actions and are immune to **Ca** Actions.

When a player's model which is in a Dead Zone kills or sacrifices an opposing model, that player gains 2 Scrip.

Map It Out

Map making can turn a profit in Malifaux. After determining VP at the end of the game, gain 2 Scrip for each friendly Scheme Marker on the opponent's half of the board.

Pit Fight

A Pit Fight is a singular event. It takes place once, so choose a time and place when the most players can join in. Each player chooses one Minion or Enforcer in their Arsenal and attaches up to one Upgrade to it which it can legally attach. Set up a typical 3' by 3' Malifaux board and players alternate deploying their chosen fighter anywhere on the table which is not within 8" of another model. Players each get a hand of 3 cards, then flip for initiative. The player who wins initiative Activates his or her model, and play proceeds clockwise from there. Once all players have Activated their model, the Turn ends and a new one begins (keeping in mind each player's hand size is still 3). The player whose model is left standing wins. This game has no Aftermath step, so models will not be injured, etc.

Players gain 3 Scrip for each opposing model they kill or sacrifice. The winner and the first player to be eliminated each gain 3 additional Scrip.

Once the Pit Fight is done, flip for another Weekly Event to affect each game this week, refliping Pit Fight and either Joker.

Extermination

During every Encounter this week, players earn 2 additional Scrip for every enemy Minion and Peon killed or sacrificed during the Encounter.

A Lucrative Offer

Every game this week, players may select a third Scheme. This Scheme does not need to be available in the game's Scheme Pool, and it may not be one the player already selected. Players do not score VP from this third Scheme, but instead gain 2 Scrip for each VP they would earn from it.

Ampersand

Every Encounter this week is played in or around Ampersand. Place a 50mm Watchtower Marker in the center of the table at the start of the game. This Marker is **Ht** 5, impassable, and blocking. Every model within ❶6 of the Marker gains the Construct trait and reduces the damage it suffers by 1, to a minimum of 1. Any model within ❶6 of the Marker is automatically Finished Off if it is killed or sacrificed.

Each player gains 2 Scrip for every enemy model killed or sacrificed within ❶6 of the Watchtower Marker.

Junkyard

Each Encounter this week is played in a junkyard. Each player places two Junk Heap Markers (**Ht** 0, 30mm) within 3" of the Centerline of the table. Models in base contact with a Junk Heap Marker may discard it to take the following Action:

(1) Here Goes Nothin'... (**Sh** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐10 or ⫻ 2): Target model suffers 3/5/7 damage. This Action must declare a Trigger if able.

- ✕ ***Catastrophic Failure:*** After resolving, the acting model suffers 4 damage.
- 🕮 ***Extra Juice:*** The damage flip gains ✚.
- ❣ ***Whoa...:*** After resolving, the opposing player places this model within 6".
- ❦ ***Invigorate:*** After damaging, this model heals the amount of damage dealt.

Each time a player kills an enemy model with a **Here Goes Nothin'...** Action, that player gains 3 Scrip.

A Bullet With Your Name

This is a singular event. Write down the name of each player in the Campaign on a scrap of paper and place these scraps into a jar, bag, or the customary hat. Every player randomly draws one scrap of paper and secretly looks at the name. If a player kills or sacrifices the Leader of the Crew owned by the player whose name they drew, they must immediately reveal the drawn name. The Leader is automatically Finished Off without flipping and the player who killed or sacrificed the Leader immediately gains 6 Scrip. If a player draws their own name, they may do this when they kill or sacrifice any Leader, but they only gain 4 Scrip. This may only be done once. If a player fails to kill or sacrifice their target before the end of the week, they have run out of time and earn no Scrip.

Flip for another Weekly Event to affect each game this week, refliping Pit Fight and either Joker.

A Sinners Prayer

At the end of every Encounter this week, each player flips a card for each of their models which was Finished Off. These flips may not be cheated. If a model flips a 10 or higher, it does not need to flip on the Injury Chart and the player who controls it gains 3 Scrip.

Kythera

Every Encounter this week is played in or around Kythera. Place a 50mm Spire Marker in the center of the table at the start of the game. This Marker is **Ht** 5, impassable, and blocking. Every model within ❶6 of the Marker gains the Undead Characteristic and all damage flips against such models suffer ⊟. Any model within ❶6 of the Marker is automatically Finished Off if it is killed or sacrificed.

Each player gains 2 Scrip for every enemy model killed or sacrificed within ❶6 of the Spire Marker.

Returning From a Job

Every Encounter this week is played while the Crews have some spare cash. After deploying Crews, each player places 3 Scrip Markers onto the stat cards of three different friendly models. When a model with a Scrip Marker is removed from play, place the Scrip Marker (**Ht** 0, 30mm) into base contact with it. Any model in base contact with a Scrip Marker may make a (1) Interact Action with it to place it onto the model's stat card.

At the end of the game, each player gains 1 Scrip for every Scrip Marker on the stat cards of friendly models.

Fate Favors the Bold

During every Encounter this week, whenever a player Cheats Fate, they may Cheat Fate with a random card from their hand rather than choosing one. If a player does this while they have 3 or more cards in hand during an opposed duel in which they are defending against an enemy Attack Action, they gain 2 Scrip.

Wandering Mercenaries

Every Encounter this week includes some Wandering Mercenaries. While hiring Crews, each player must hire a Mercenary model which is not a part of their Arsenal with a cost of 7 or less. Players do not need to pay for this model while hiring their Crew and it is not added to their Arsenal; this model is their Wandering Mercenary.

If a player kills or sacrifices an opposing Wandering Mercenary, that player gains 6 Scrip.

At the end of the week, if a Crew has played at least 2 games, used the same Wandering Mercenary during every game, and their Wandering Mercenary was never killed or sacrificed, then that player immediately adds that Mercenary to their Arsenal without paying for it.

Soulstone Vein

Every Encounter this week is played near a Soulstone Vein. At the start of the game, each player places two Soulstone Vein Markers (**Ht** 0, 30mm) within 6" of the Centerline of the table. Any model in base contact with a Soulstone Vein Marker may make a (1) Interact Action to discard it and add two Soulstones to its Crew's Pool.

When a player discards a Soulstone Vein Marker, they gain 2 Scrip.

The Plot Thickens

Every Encounter this week must be a Story Encounter. Any Story Encounters are eligible, whether they're from the Story Encounter section of the M2E book, Crossroads, or the Chronicles. Also, each game must use a random piece of special terrain (M2E Core Rulebook pg. 78).

The player who wins each game gains an additional 2 Scrip. Also, if a Crew's Leader is still in play at the end of the game, that Crew gains 2 additional Scrip.

Chain Gang

You have been tasked with keeping a bunch of prisoners in line! Before deploying Crews, players alternate placing a total of four Convict Markers on the table. These Markers must be placed at least 6" from the Centerline of the table and not in any Deployment Zone. These Markers are 30mm, **Ht** 2, impassable, and blocking. Any model in base contact with a Convict Marker may make a (1) Interact Action with it to push it up to 4" in any direction.

At the start of each Turn, a random player flips a card for each Convict Marker which may not be Cheated. On a 🐈, the Marker is pushed 4" directly away from the Centerline. If the Marker is on the Centerline it is pushed towards a random Deployment Zone.

At the end of the game, each Crew gains 2 Scrip for every Convict Marker on its half of the board. Markers on the Centerline count for neither Crew. If all four Convict Markers are on the Centerline, both Crews gain 6 Scrip.

The Event

Every player immediately adds one Avatar of their choice to their Arsenal. If a player does not have a Master, they may simply keep the Avatar in their Arsenal until the appropriate Master can be added as well.

Flip for another Weekly Event to affect each game this week, refliping Pit Fight and either Joker.

SETTING UP A GAME

Setting up a Campaign game of Malifaux is slightly different than usual. The Encounter set up steps which are modified are listed here. If a step is not listed, it is not changed. One new step, the Campaign Rating step, is also added.

DETERMINE ENCOUNTER SIZE

During a Campaign, the size of an Encounter is limited by the models in each player's Arsenal. To determine the maximum size of an Encounter, add up the Soulstone Costs of all the models in both player's Arsenals (ignoring Upgrades); the maximum encounter size is equal to the size of the smaller Arsenal total +5. If either player has a Master model in their Arsenal, it counts as a model with a Soulstone cost of 15. If the players agree, they can play an Encounter of a smaller size than this maximum limit.

For example, Nick has 27 Soulstones worth of models in his Arsenal, while Amy has 35 Soulstones worth of models. When they play a Campaign game, the maximum Encounter size of their game is 32 (the Soulstone total of Nick's lower Arsenal total + 5).

DECLARE FACTION

Each player must declare the Faction which they declared for the Campaign.

HIRING CREWS

During the Hire Crews step of playing the Encounter, your Crew must be hired from the models and Upgrades in your current Arsenal. You do not need to use every model or Upgrade in your Arsenal, but you may not use any which are not in your current Arsenal.

Upgrades in your Arsenal may be given to any model legally able to equip them; they do not need to stay on the same model from game to game. For the purposes of hiring models during a Campaign game, Masters count as having a Soulstone Cost of 15 Soulstones. All the other usual rules which apply to Masters (a Crew may not have more than one Master, the Master must be the Leader, the Master is not considered to have a cost for Schemes which may reference a model's cost, etc.) are unchanged. If a Henchman is hired as the Crew's Leader, its Cost must be paid as if it were hired normally.

During a Campaign, a Crew must pay for its Leader in order to maintain a balanced experience; it would make for a very lopsided game if one Crew was able to field a free Master and the other did not yet have a Master. Due to the necessity of paying for a Leader, you may wish to play games at a slightly higher Soulstone level. (Note: Remember that Henchman with a Cost of 0 gain a Soulstone Cost when Leading a Crew during the Campaign; see the box on pg. 5).

UPGRADES

Your Crew may acquire various Campaign Upgrades as you play. A Campaign Upgrade is just like a regular Upgrade, except that it may only be used while playing a Campaign game of Malifaux; it may never be taken during a pick-up game or a tournament.

CAMPAIGN RATING

After hiring and revealing Crews, determine each Crew's Campaign Rating for the game. The Campaign Rating is used to help offset any unfair advantages one Crew may have over the other due to advancements within the Campaign.

A Crew's Campaign Rating is equal to the total number of its non-Injury Campaign Upgrades minus the total number of its Injury Upgrades, +3 if the Crew has an Avatar Upgrade (Note: the Avatar Upgrade is still counted as a Campaign Upgrade when calculating the Campaign Rating in addition to granting the +3). Crews may have a negative Rating. For example, Jack's Crew has 5 non-Injury Campaign Upgrades and 2 Injuries, giving him a Campaign Rating of (5-2) 3. Jill's Crew has 2 non-Injury Campaign Upgrades and 2 Injuries, giving her a Campaign Rating of (2-2) 0. If either had an Avatar, their Rating would be 3 higher.

SOULSTONE POOL

Players may use excess Soulstones from hiring to increase their Pool as normal. However, Henchmen do not add their Cache. Masters add their Cache if the opponent also has a Master to lead their Crew, but count their Cache as 0 when playing against a Henchman-led Crew.

The Crew with the lower Campaign Rating gains a bonus number of Soulstones in their Pool equal to the difference in Campaign Ratings. This may exceed the usual maximum of 7 Soulstones. For example, if one Crew has a Campaign Rating of 3 and the other a Rating of -1, the lower rated Crew would receive a bonus of 4 Soulstones to its Pool.

PLAYING

A Campaign game is played just like a regular game of Malifaux, but with a few tweaks.

FINISHED OFF

When a model is reduced to zero Wounds, we generally refer to it as being killed. However, this isn't always the case, as it may simply represent the model being injured and taken out of action, such that it can no longer participate in the skirmish. In a normal game of Malifaux, this doesn't really matter, but over the course of a Campaign it is important to keep track of which models were simply injured and which ones were actually killed.

Whenever a model which was hired from a player's Arsenal (Note: this means models summoned during the course of the game are generally ignored) is killed or sacrificed, the model's controller flips a card to determine if the model was "Finished Off." If the card flipped is 3 or higher, the model was Finished Off and will need to flip on the Injury chart during the Aftermath step at the end of the game. If a 2 or lower is flipped, the model was simply knocked unconscious or otherwise incapacitated and is not considered to be Finished Off. The flip to determine whether a model is Finished Off may be cheated by the model's controller.

A model only ever flips to be Finished Off the first time it is killed or sacrificed, even if it has some unusual way of coming back. Models which are buried when the game ends count as killed and therefore flip to be Finished Off as normal (cheating is allowed from any cards the player had in their hand at the end of the game).

If a model is "automatically Finished Off" by some game effect, then no flip is made and the model must flip for an Injury during the Aftermath Step.

STRATEGIC WITHDRAWAL

A Campaign game is different than a regular game of Malifaux because a player not only has to worry about accomplishing his or her objectives, but also about keeping their Crew alive to fight another day. As such, it is sometimes a better idea to play a little more defensively.

Immediately after flipping for initiative on any Turn, a Crew may make a Strategic Withdrawal. The Crew which won the initiative flip has the first chance to Withdraw. When a Crew makes a Strategic Withdrawal, that Crew removes all of its models from play.

If the Crew Withdrew on or before the second Turn, then that Crew receives no VP, Barter flips, or Aftermath Hand and loses any Scrip earned during the game. The Crew skips its entire Aftermath Step except to flip for Injuries. The Crew which did not Withdraw may use any remaining Turns to score VP and then completes its Aftermath Step normally.

If the Crew Withdrew on or after the third Turn, then the Crew which did not Withdraw may use any remaining Turns to try to score VP. After that is done, compare the VP scored by each Crew as usual (keeping in mind that the Crew which Withdrew has no models in play when the game ends). If the Crew which Withdrew has fewer VP than their opponent, then VP is scored as normal. However, if the Crew which Withdrew has as many or more VP than the opposing Crew, then the Crew which Withdrew scores VP as normal and the opposing Crew counts as scoring 1 more VP than the Crew which Withdrew. In this case, both Crews proceed with their Aftermath Steps as usual.

ANNIHILATED

Sometimes a model or Upgrade is Annihilated. When this happens, it is removed from its Crew's Arsenal entirely and may not be used in subsequent Campaign games. Anytime a model or Upgrade is Annihilated, the rules will specifically say so; models which are killed or Upgrades which are discarded or removed are not normally considered to be Annihilated.

Even though the Annihilated model or Upgrade is removed from its Crew's Arsenal, it may be purchased again if the opportunity arises. Although this may not seem very thematic, particularly in the case of named models, it can be seen as a person of similar abilities being sought out by the Crew.

When a model is Annihilated, any Injuries and Skills associated with it are Annihilated as well.

AFTERMATH

Aftermath is a special step added to every Campaign game that takes place after a winner has been determined. Aftermath is used to determine what happened to the models during the course of the game. The Aftermath step is broken into six phases:

PHASE 1: DRAW AFTERMATH HAND

Both players shuffle their decks and then draw their Aftermath Hands. Each player draws one card for each of the following:

Draw 1 card for completing the game without using Strategic Withdrawal.

Draw 1 card for winning the game.

Draw 1 card for completing the final portion of a Bounty during the game (see pg. 24).

This means that a player's maximum Aftermath Hand size is three cards. These cards may be used to Cheat Barter flips, Reward flips (for completing Bounties), and Injury flips. As such, these flips must always be made in the proper order and one at a time. You may not flip multiple Barter cards or Injuries before deciding which one to Cheat; you must decide whether or not to Cheat a flip before moving on to another flip. Use your Aftermath Hand wisely!

PHASE 2: PAYDAY

It was a hard fight, but now it's time to collect your rewards! Each Crew gains 1 Scrip for every 2 VP it earned during the game (rounded up), and the winning Crew gains 1 additional Scrip. If a Crew has a lower Campaign Rating (see pg. 12) than the Crew it opposed, then it earns an additional amount of Scrip equal to the difference in Campaign Ratings. Additional Scrip may also have been earned during the game, depending upon the Weekly Event.

SCRIP

Scrip is used to purchase new models and Upgrades. It may be used in the same Aftermath Phase in which it was earned or saved for later; in this case, keep track of your Crew's unused Scrip on its Arsenal Sheet.

MAXIMUM WEEKLY SCRIP

A Crew may not earn more than 16 Scrip per week. As such, you should keep track of how much Scrip you have earned during a single week as well as your Crew's total Scrip. All Scrip your Crew gains applies to this maximum, including Scrip gained for earning VP, completing Weekly Events, or any other source. Any excess Scrip is discarded.

PHASE 3: BARTER

Malifaux is a big place and, even if you have the cash, you may not find what you are looking for. During this phase, you make a Barter flip to determine which Campaign Upgrades you may purchase. Each Crew makes one Barter flip. This flip may not be modified except by things which specifically state they modify it. If the Crew scored 3 or more VP from the Strategy, then it makes an additional Barter flip. The Weekly Event or other game effects may allow a Crew to make even more Barter flips.

After a Crew makes a Barter flip, it compares its result to the chart on the following pages. It may immediately purchase any Campaign Upgrade with a Barter Rating (BR) equal to the Barter flip's value by discarding an amount of Scrip equal to the Upgrade's listed Campaign Cost (CC). If you do not like the result of the Barter flip, it may be Cheated. Remember to make Barter flips one at a time. In this way, a Crew may earn Campaign Upgrades after every game. Remember, non-Campaign Upgrades are purchased at the start of each week.

CAMPAIGN UPGRADES

Campaign Upgrades represent your Crew growing and changing over time. Campaign Upgrades may only be used during Campaign games of Malifaux and they are split into two categories: Skills and Equipment.

Skills: Skills are a special type of Campaign Upgrade which represent things the Characters have learned. When a Skill is purchased, it must be attached to a specific model. It may never be attached to a different model, and must always be attached to its designated model if that model is hired into a Crew. Only models which participated in the game when the Skill was purchased are eligible to equip it; models don't learn anything sitting on the sidelines! Skills do not count against the maximum number of other Upgrades a model may attach (although a model may only attach a certain number of Skills). Unlike most Upgrades, Skills may be attached to Minions. Only Actions and Abilities which specifically reference Skills may remove or discard them.

A model may only have a certain number of Skills attached, depending on its Station (remember, Skills do not count against the number of non-Skill Upgrades a model may attach). Consult the chart below:

STATION	MAX SKILLS
Peon	0
Minion	1
Enforcer	1
Henchman	2
Master	3

When a model that is already at its maximum number of allowed Skills has the opportunity to gain a new Skill, it may Annihilate one of its current Skills in order to gain the new one.

EQUIPMENT: Equipment Upgrades function just like the normal Upgrades from previous Malifaux books. When a Crew purchases an Equipment Upgrade, it is added to the Crew's Arsenal and may be attached to any model which may legally equip it at the start of a game.

Campaign Upgrades have a Soulstone cost which must be paid when they are purchased at the start of a game, just like regular Upgrades (although the cost of Skills is often 0).

Some Upgrades note that they are Annihilated to have an effect. In this instance, the Upgrade is removed from the Crew's Arsenal entirely; it may not be used again. However, if an Upgrade is discarded or otherwise removed during a game without being Annihilated then it still remains in its Crew's Arsenal.

On the following pages is a list of general Campaign Upgrades which may be purchased by any Faction. Their Barter Rating (BR) and Campaign Cost (CC) are noted here as well:



NAME	BR	TYPE	CC	SS	EFFECT
Good Lead	Always	Skill	2	0	Does not affect Campaign Rating. After making a Barter flip, Annihilate this Upgrade to add or subtract 1 from the result.
Lucky Gremlin's Foot	Always	Skill	2	0	Does not affect Campaign Rating. After flipping this model's Injuries, Annihilate this Upgrade to add or subtract 1 from the result.
Change of Station	Always	Skill	1	0	This Upgrade may be attached to a Peon. If this model is a Peon, it becomes a Minion. If it is a Minion, it becomes an Enforcer. Multiple copies of this Upgrade may be attached to one model. Does not count against the maximum Skills the model may have.
Can O' Beans	1	Equipment	1	1	(0) Fire In The Hole! (**Ca** 6 / TN: 10 / Rg: (⁑)2): All models in range must pass a TN 15 **Wp** duel or suffer 2 damage.
Coffee	1	Equipment	1	0	Coffee: This model may Annihilate this Upgrade at the start of its Activation to gain **Fast**.
Arcane Background	1	Skill	4	0	This model gains +1 **Ca** to all of its **Ca** Actions, up to a Maximum **Ca** of 7.
Whiskey	2	Equipment	2	0	Whiskey: This model may Annihilate this Upgrade at the start of its Activation to gain + to all duels for the remainder of the Turn.
Helmet	2	Equipment	3	1	Hard to Kill: While this model has 2 or more **Wd** remaining when it suffers damage, it may not be reduced to below 1 **Wd**.
The Hag's Kiss	2	Skill	3	0	The Hag's Kiss: Models damaged by this model's **Ml** Attack Actions gain **Poison +2**.
Clockwork Seeker	2	Equipment	5	1	(1) Clockwork Seeker (**Sh** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐12): Target suffers 3/4/5 damage. This damage ignores **Hard to Wound**.
Expanded Palate	3	Skill	2	0	(0) Jerky Time! (**Ca** 5 / TN: 10 / Rg: (⁑)3) Discard all Corpse Markers in range. Heal up to 2 damage on this model for each Marker discarded.
Tool Kit	3	Equipment	3	1	Tool Kit: This model may take the (1) Interact Action as a (0) Action.
Fortitude of Mind	3	Skill	2	0	This model gains +1 **Wp**, up to a maximum **Wp** of 7.
Flammenwerfer	3	Equipment	4	1	(1) Flammenwerfer (**Sh** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐10): Target suffers 2/3🌳/4🌳🌳 damage. This Attack ignores cover.
Off-hand Fighting	4	Skill	4	0	Paired Melee Weapons: **Ml** Attacks this model makes gain +.
Off-hand Shot	4	Skill	4	0	Paired Range Weapons: **Sh** Attacks this model makes gain +.
Field Experience	4	Skill	2	0	Field Experience: This model is immune to **Slow** and **Paralyzed**.
Collier Pistol	4	Equipment	5	1	(1) Collier Pistol (**Sh** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐10 or ⫻ 2): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage. This Attack Action gains +.
Steady Aim	5	Skill	3	0	This model gains the following Trigger to all **Sh** Attack Actions: ***Critical Strike:*** When damaging the target, this Attack deals +1 damage for each in the final duel total.
Steady Hands	5	Skill	3	0	This model gains the following Trigger to all **Ml** Attack Actions: ***Critical Strike:*** When damaging the target, this Attack deals +1 damage for each in the final duel total.
Soulstone Ale	5	Equipment	3	0	Soulstone Ale: At the start of this model's Activation it may Annihilate this Upgrade to gain **Reactivate**.
Katanas	5	Equipment	2	1	(1) Katanas (**Ml** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 2/4/5 damage. This Action gains + to the Attack flip.

NAME	BR	TYPE	CC	SS	EFFECT
Agility	6	Skill	5	0	This model gains +1 **Wk**.
Berserk	6	Skill	4	0	(2) Flurry: This model may discard a card. If it does, this model may make 3 **Ml** Attack Actions with an AP cost of 1 against a single target.
Machete	6	Equipment	3	0	Unimpeded: This model ignores penalties for severe terrain when moving.
Ancient Scrolls	6	Equipment	4	1	(1) Ancient Words (**Ca** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐10 or ⫻ 1): Target suffers 2/4/5 damage.
Duelist	7	Skill	4	0	This model gains +1 **Ml** to all of its **Ml** Actions, up to a Maximum **Ml** of 7.
Fan the Hammer	7	Skill	4	0	(2) Rapid Fire: This model may discard a card. If it does, this model may make 3 **Sh** Attack Actions with an AP cost of 1 against a single target.
Freikorps Suit	7	Equipment	2	0	Freikorps Suit: This model may ignore damage from (☓) and 🌪 effects.
Tough As Nails	7	Skill	2	0	Tough As Nails: This model is only Finished Off on a result of 11 or higher.
Quick Study	8	Skill	4	0	(2) Furious Casting: This model may discard a card. If it does, this model may make 3 **Ca** Attack Actions with an AP cost of 1 against a single target.
Sharpshooter	8	Skill	4	0	This model gains +1 **Sh** to all of its **Sh** Actions, up to a Maximum **Sh** of 7.
Metal Plate	8	Equipment	3	1	Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1.
Greatsword	8	Equipment	6	2	(1) Greatsword (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 3/4/6 damage. This damage flip gains ✚ if this model did not Charge during this Activation.
Quick Reflexes	9	Skill	4	0	This model gains +1 **Df**, to a maximum **Df** of 7.
Scope	9	Equipment	3	0	Scope: This model ignores penalties for Soft Cover while Attacking.
Extended Blade	9	Equipment	5	1	Improved Reach: This model's **Ml** Attacks gain +1 Rg, to a maximum Rg of 3.
Neverborn Hide	9	Skill	3	0	Black Blood: All models without **Black Blood** within (☓)1 suffer 1 damage when this model suffers damage.
Enchanted Weapons	10	Skill	4	0	Enchanted Weapons: This model ignores the **Incorporeal** and **Armor** Abilities while Attacking.
Determination	10	Skill	5	0	Hard to Wound +1: Damage flips against this model suffer ⊟.
Aetheric Disruptor	10	Equipment	3	1	Nether Fluctuation: Enemy models within ☓4 of this model ignore any suits associated with their **Ca**, **Sh**, and **Ml** stats.
Snares	10	Equipment	2	1	Snares: Enemy models cannot end a Charge within ☓3.
Thick Hide	11	Skill	5	0	Regeneration +1: When this model Activates it heals +1 damage.
Dynamite	11	Equipment	2	0	KABOOM!: Models within (☓)3 suffer 3 damage when this model is killed, then Annihilate this Upgrade.
Pneumatic Legs	11	Skill	8	1	(0) Leap (**Ca** 5 / TN: 10🐺): This model immediately moves up to its **Cg**, ignoring intervening terrain and models during the move.
Flak Jacket	11	Equipment	5	0	Bullet Proof +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model from **Sh** Actions by +1 to a minimum of 1.

NAME	BR	TYPE	CC	SS	EFFECT
Bond	12	Skill	3	0	Companion: After a friendly model ends its Activation within 6" of this model, this model may Activate immediately as a Chain Activation.
Hydraulics	12	Equipment	2	1	Hydraulics: This model may Annihilate this Upgrade during its Activation to make a Charge Action for 1 AP.
Instinctual	12	Skill	5	0	Instinctual: This model may take two (0) Actions during its Activation, so long as they are both different.
Grotesque Trophy	12	Equipment	3	1	Terrifying (All) 12: Enemy models must pass a TN 12 Horror Duel if they end a Walk Action within this model's engagement range or target this model with an Action.
Jetpack	13	Equipment	5	0	Flight: This model is immune to falling damage and may ignore any terrain or models while moving.
Healing Salve	13	Equipment	3	0	Healing Salve: At the start of this model's Activation, it may Annihilate this Upgrade to Annihilate an Injury on target model within 6".
Relic Hammer	13	Equipment	5	1	(1) Relic Hammer (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 3): Target suffers 3/4/6 damage. If the target is a Construct or a Tyrant the damage flip gains +1 +1.
Gatling Gun	13	Equipment	7	2	(1) Steam Gatling Burst (**Sh** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐12): Target suffers 2/5/6 damage. This Action's Attack flip gains +1.
Fated	14	Skill	4	0	Fated: Damage flips against this model may not be cheated.
Those Who Thirst	14	Equipment	7	2	Flip a card and consult the following page.



Those Who Thirst

These ancient relics are terrible weapons infused with Soulstones which grow stronger with each victim they slay. A Crew may only have one of these Upgrades; ignore this result if you already have one. After purchasing the Those Who Thirst Campaign Upgrade, flip a card and gain the Upgrade matching the suit of the flip (reflip Jokers; your Aftermath Hand may be used to Cheat this flip):

Edict

(1) Edict (**Sh** 7 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 14): Target suffers 2/4/6 damage. If the target is killed, this Crew adds one Soulstone to its Pool.

Laws Written: After damaging an enemy, discard all Scheme Markers within 4 of the target.

Laid to Rest: After killing, the target is automatically Finished Off.

Insight

(1) Insight (**Ca** 7 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 8): Target suffers 3/3/5 damage. If the target is killed, this Crew adds one Soulstone to its Pool.

Visions Witnessed: After damaging, look at the top five cards of either deck and replace them in any order.

Laid to Rest: After killing, the target is automatically Finished Off.

Blight

(1) Blight (**Ml** 7 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 2): Target suffers 3 damage and gains the following Condition for the rest of the game: "**Spiraling Oblivion +1:** When this model Activates, it suffers +1 damage. When this model is killed, the opposing Crew adds one Soulstone to its Pool."

A Land Tainted: After damaging, place a Scheme Marker in base contact with the target.

Laid to Rest: After killing, the target is automatically Finished Off.

Covenant

(1) Covenant (**Ml** 7 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 3): Target suffers 3/4/6 damage. If the target is killed, this Crew adds one Soulstone to its Pool.

Promise Kept: After damaging, draw a card.

Laid to Rest: After killing, the target is automatically Finished Off.

Those Who Thirst are ancient relics of Malifaux's past. How they got into human hands has been forgotten, as their owners always seem to fall prey to a fatal misfortune. What is known are the forms they take:

Edict, a revolver etched with runes and symbols; **Insight**, a staff capped with the skull of an unidentifiable animal; **Blight**, a rusted and blood-stained sword; and **Covenant**, a barbed lash fashioned in the shape of a forked tongue. The hilt or handle of each weapon is infused with a Soulstone which powers itself with the souls of the weapon's victims.

Some say these weapons were wielded by the Tyrants themselves. While others say they are powered by elemental forces of magic beyond human understanding. All that we know for certain is that whoever wields them is often followed by tragedy.

PHASE 4: MAKE A REWARD FLIP

Any Crew which completed a Bounty (See pg. 24) during the game chooses either its Faction's Reward Chart or the Generic Reward Chart. The Crew makes a flip on the chosen Reward Chart and adds the Upgrade corresponding to the suit of the flipped card to its Arsenal, without spending any Scrip (reflip Jokers). This flip may be Cheated using the Aftermath Hand. If your Crew has a Master, that Master's Avatar may be selected regardless of the flip. If you flip a result you already have, reflip until a new result is reached.

GUILD

NAME	SUIT	TYPE	SS	EFFECT
Avatar	Any	Skill	-	Select one Avatar which a model in this Crew may attach and attach it to that model.
Retribution		Equipment	1	Retribution: Damage from this model's **MI** Attack Actions may not be reduced or prevented.
Modified Barrel		Equipment	1	Modified Barrel: This model's Attack Actions gain +4 Range.
Brutal		Skill	1	Brutal: This model gains to all damage flips it makes.
Improvised Explosives		Equipment	1	Improvised Explosives: This model gains an additional to the Moderate and Severe of all damage tracks on its Attack Actions.

RESURRECTIONISTS

NAME	SUIT	TYPE	SS	EFFECT
Avatar	Any	Skill	-	Select one Avatar which a model in this Crew may attach and attach it to that model.
Restless Dead		Equipment	1	Restless Dead: When this model is killed or sacrificed, summon a Resurrectionist Undead model with a cost of 5 or less into base contact with it before removing this model from play.
Anaphylactic Shock		Equipment	1	(0) Anaphylactic Shock (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 6): Target enemy model with the **Poison +2** Condition or higher gains **Paralyzed**.
Extra Limbs		Equipment	1	Extra Limbs: At the start of this model's Activation, it may discard a Corpse Marker within 6" and LoS to push up to 6" in any direction.
Edge of Eternity		Equipment	2	Edge of Eternity: At the end of the game, flip a card for each model which this model summoned that is still in play. Any summoned model which flips a 10 or higher is added to this Crew's Arsenal. This flip may not be cheated.

ARCANISTS

NAME	SUIT	TYPE	SS	EFFECT
Avatar	Any	Skill	-	Select one Avatar which a model in this Crew may attach and attach it to that model.
Tools of the Trade		Equipment	1	Tools of the Trade: At the end of this model's Activation, all friendly Constructs within (1)3 heal 2 damage.
Welding Torch		Equipment	1	(2) Welding Torch: Once per game, suffer 4 damage to Annihilate an Injury on target model within 6".
A Cold Wind		Equipment	1	A Cold Wind: After flipping for initiative, push this model up to 4" in any direction.
Stage Makeup		Equipment	1	Don't Mind Me: This model may take Interact Actions while engaged.

Neverborn

Name	Suit	Type	SS	Effect
Avatar	Any	Skill	-	Select one Avatar which a model in this Crew may attach and attach it to that model.
Echoes of Madness		Equipment	1	Echoes of Madness: Once per game, when the opposing Crew has the opportunity to Activate a model, it must Activate a model of your choice which it can legally Activate.
Blessings of Fate		Skill	0	(0) Blessings of Fate: Look at the top three cards of either deck and either place all of them back in any order or discard them.
Our Commands		Equipment	1	Our Commands: Friendly models within 6 gain + to all Attack duels which they make outside of their Activation.
On Our Ground		Equipment	1	On Our Ground: Friendly models within 10 are only Finished Off on an 11 or higher.

Outcasts

Name	Suit	Type	SS	Effect
Avatar	Any	Skill	-	Select one Avatar which a model in this Crew may attach and attach it to that model.
Well Trained		Skill	1	Well Trained: Once per Turn, another friendly model within 6" and LoS may take one of this model's (1) Attack Actions. This Action may not declare Triggers.
Aetheric Feed		Equipment	1	Aetheric Feed: When this model would discard a Soulstone, it may discard two cards instead.
Paid In Advance		Equipment	1	Paid In Advance: After flipping for Initiative, this Crew may draw a number of cards equal to the VP it has and then discard that many cards.
Torment to Spare		Skill	1	Torment to Spare: This model may attach one additional Upgrade during the hiring process.

Gremlins

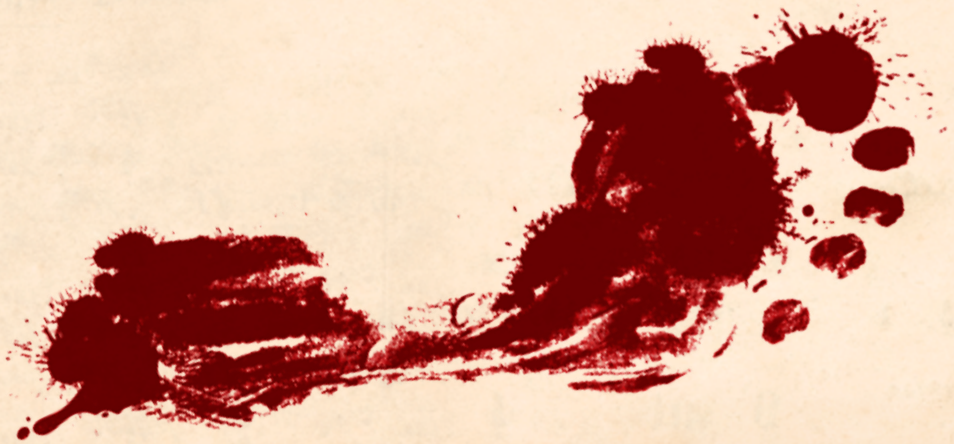
Name	Suit	Type	SS	Effect
Avatar	Any	Skill	-	Select one Avatar which a model in this Crew may attach and attach it to that model.
Dolly Makin' Time		Equipment	1	Dolly Makin' Time: Models which are damaged by this model's **Ml** Attack Actions must discard a card or gain **Paralyzed**.
Extra Powder		Equipment	1	Extra Powder: Blast Markers placed within 8 by friendly models which deal damage, deal +1 damage.
Long-Lost Cousin		Equipment	1	(0) Long-Lost Cousin (**Ca** 7 / TN: 15): If there are no friendly Totems in play, summon a Totem this Crew could hire.
Swamp Gas		Equipment	1	Friendly Gremlins within 8 gain the following Trigger to all **Ml** Attacks: ***Swamp Gas:*** After damaging, the target gains **Slow**.

Ten Thunders

Name	Suit	Type	SS	Effect
Avatar	Any	Skill	-	Select one Avatar which a model in this Crew may attach and attach it to that model.
Combo		Equipment	1	Combo: Once per Turn, after completing a Trigger generated by this model's Attack Action, this model may immediately take the Attack Action again.
Debts Paid		Equipment	1	Debts Paid: If this Crew has no Soulstones in its Pool, this model may discard a card when it suffers damage to prevent damage as if it had spent a Soulstone.
Introspection		Skill	0	Introspection: At the start of this model's Activation, if it has a Condition with a value, it may discard a card to increase the Condition's value by 1.
Lead From the Front		Equipment	1	Lead From the Front: Friendly Minions within 6 gain to all Attack and damage flips.

Generic Chart

Name	Suit	Type	SS	Effect
Favors of Treachery	Any	Skill	0	Favors of Treachery: Friendly models within 6 which are killed or sacrificed by a model they consider friendly do not flip to be Finished Off.
Favors of Steel		Equipment	0	(0) Favors of Steel: Once per game, all friendly models within 4 gain to Attack flips until the end of the Turn.
Favors of Wind		Equipment	0	(0) Favors of Wind: Once per game, give target model within 6" **Fast**.
Favors of Fate		Equipment	2	(0) Favors of Fate: Once per game, summon an Effigy belonging to this Faction within 6".
Favors of Death		Equipment	0	(0) Favors of Death (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 6): Target non-Leader model performs an Injury flip which may be cheated by the Attacker (reflip Jokers). Annihilate the Injury at the end of the game, before flipping for Injuries. This may not target a model which already has one or more Injuries. This Action may be taken once per game.



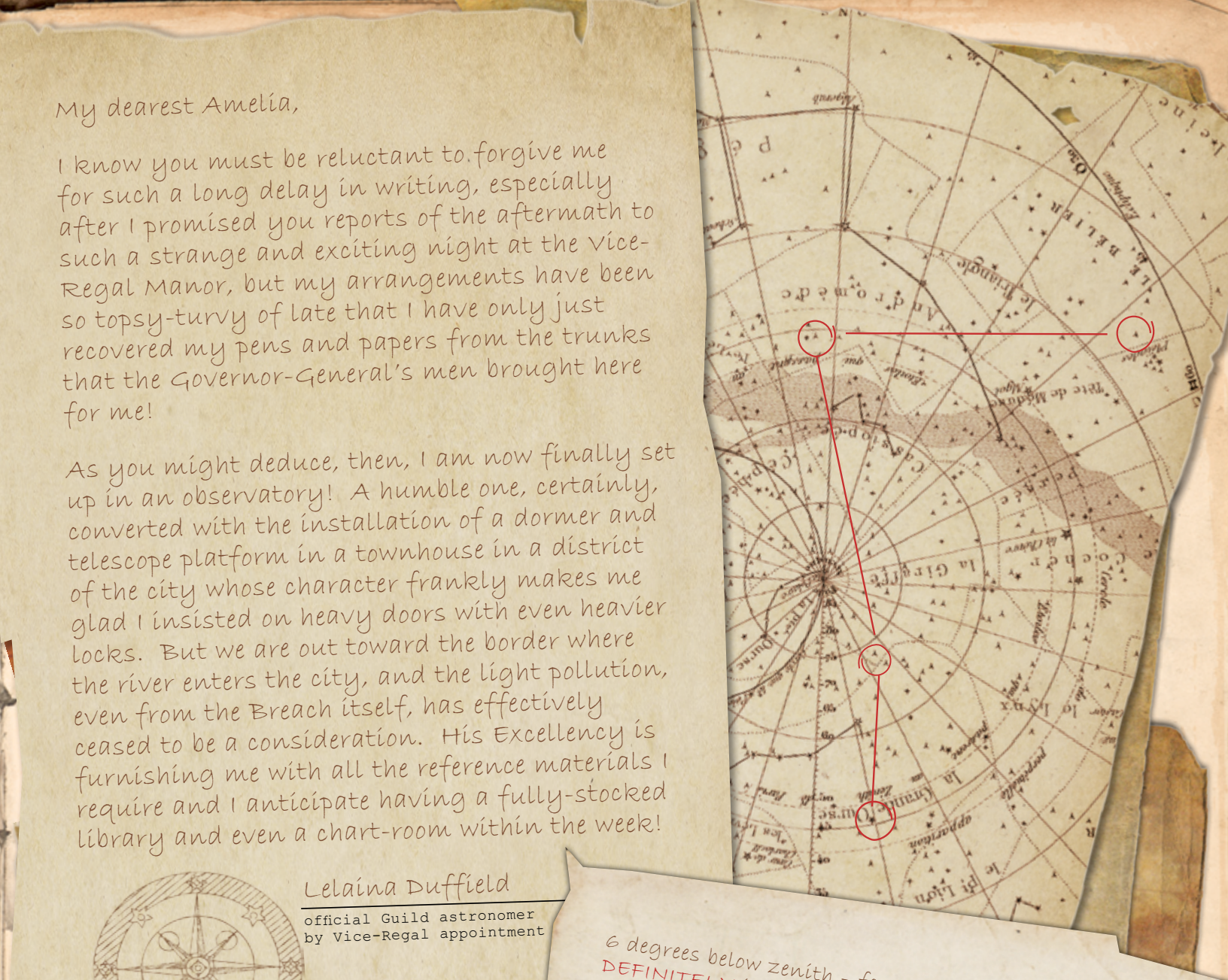
My dearest Amelia,

I know you must be reluctant to forgive me for such a long delay in writing, especially after I promised you reports of the aftermath to such a strange and exciting night at the Vice-Regal Manor, but my arrangements have been so topsy-turvy of late that I have only just recovered my pens and papers from the trunks that the Governor-General's men brought here for me!

As you might deduce, then, I am now finally set up in an observatory! A humble one, certainly, converted with the installation of a dormer and telescope platform in a townhouse in a district of the city whose character frankly makes me glad I insisted on heavy doors with even heavier locks. But we are out toward the border where the river enters the city, and the light pollution, even from the Breach itself, has effectively ceased to be a consideration. His Excellency is furnishing me with all the reference materials I require and I anticipate having a fully-stocked library and even a chart-room within the week!

Lelaina Duffield

official Guild astronomer
by Vice-Regal appointment



6 degrees below zenith – four new stars, definitely, DEFINITELY in new pattern. Crosscheck Moore, Kimura... translations?

Maps all = definite, same sky!!

Pre-settlement indigenous Malifaux charts, Edmonds and Yang translations both agree, records clear sky here

First settlement, Kimura map: formation he christened "Three Dancers", diagram lost? Descriptions of brightness/ color match, position does NOT.

Query Mattheson re access to Mansion library

Current settlement: ~~Exploration society maps~~ < no good

Pioneer, rangers, Ortega family? Navigation?

Re-mapping priority

What can rearrange a constellation in barely more than a century?

PHASE 5: PURCHASE BOUNTIES

Each player may purchase one Bounty for 4 Scrip. A Bounty represents a lead, job, or other ongoing plot which the Crew is trying to accomplish. The Scrip spent to get a Bounty represents the Crew gearing up before taking on the task.

A Bounty is an objective which is maintained from game to game over the course of a Campaign that, when it is accomplished, grants the Crew new items or skills. A player may only have one Bounty at a time. If you purchase a new Bounty while you still have one, the old Bounty is discarded. A single player may only accomplish a given Bounty once per Campaign. If you have already accomplished a Bounty, it is time to move on to one of the others!

Any time a portion of a Bounty is accomplished during an Encounter, mark it off on the Crew's Arsenal sheet. Once all portions of a Bounty are accomplished, the Bounty is complete and the Crew may perform a Reward flip as described in Phase 4 (pg. 20). Different Bounties may give different bonuses to the Reward flip. When a player purchases a Bounty, he or she may choose from the following (note that certain Bounties are specific to certain Factions):

Hunt Them Down: Kill or sacrifice 2 enemy Leaders. When this Bounty is accomplished, the Reward flip gains +1 +1.

Build a Reputation: Earn 3 or more VP from a single Strategy 2 times.

Covert Operation: Earn full VP from two of the following Schemes: Plant Explosives, Make Them Suffer, and Deliver a Message. This Crew may always choose one of the above Schemes, regardless of Scheme Pool, so long as they have not already completed it for Bounty purposes. Only one Scheme may count towards this Bounty per game.

On the Payroll: Earn full VP from two of the following Schemes at least once: Breakthrough, Protect Territory, and Bodyguard. When this Bounty is accomplished, the Reward flip suffers −1. Only one Scheme may count towards this Bounty per game.

Cleanup Crew: Remove at least one enemy Scheme Marker using the (1) Interact Action 3 times. This may be accomplished in one game. When this Bounty is accomplished, the Reward flip suffers −1.

Hunting Party: Kill or sacrifice three Neutral models.

Trophy Hunter: Kill or sacrifice the highest cost non-Leader model in an opposing Crew 2 times in two different games (if multiple models are tied, the first of the tied models killed or sacrificed counts for this Bounty).

Just Live Through This: Complete an Encounter without any friendly models being killed or sacrificed or using Strategic Withdrawal. The Reward flip gains +1 +1.

Strange Times: Earn at least 1 Scrip from the weekly Event 2 times during 2 different Encounters.

Mark Our Territory: Score full VP from A Line in the Sand, 2 times.

Take Their Land: End the game with more friendly models in the opponent's Deployment Zone than enemy models, 2 times.

Map It Out: End the game with a Scheme Marker in each quarter of the board after scoring all VP, 2 times. Scheme Markers within 6" of the center of the board or straddling multiple quarters do not count.

Escort Mission: At the start of each game, secretly note a friendly non-Leader model. End the game with the noted model in the opposing Deployment Zone, 2 times.

Hit List: At the start of each game, secretly note down a non-Leader enemy model with a Soulstone Cost of 6 or more. Kill or sacrifice the noted model, 2 times.

Roundup (Guild only): After deployment, name a Characteristic shared by at least three enemy models. End the game with no enemy models with the named Characteristic in play, 2 times.

Apprehend Their Leader (Guild only): End the game with at least two friendly models engaging the enemy Leader, 2 times.

Drive Them Back (Guild only): Kill or sacrifice 8 enemy Minions, Peons, or Totems.

Lend a Hand (Resurrectionists only): End a game with 5 or more Corpse Markers in play, 2 times.

The Dead Horde (Resurrectionists only): Summon 12 or more Soulstones worth of models during a game, 2 times.

Infectious Fear (Resurrectionists only): Have 4 enemy models fail a Horror Duel generated by your models.

Spare Parts (Arcanists only): End a game with 4 or more Scrap Markers in play, 2 times.

Leave Our Mark (Arcanists only): End a game with 4 or more friendly Scheme Markers in play after determining all VP, 2 times.

Sabotage (Arcanists only): Prevent the opponent from gaining more than 2 VP from the Strategy, 2 times.

Purge (Neverborn only): Kill or sacrifice at least 4 Living or Undead enemy models during a game, 2 times.

Unseen Objectives (Neverborn only): Win a game in which you took two unrevealed Schemes, 2 times.

Lessons Learned In Blood (Neverborn only): Kill or sacrifice 4 enemy Masters, Enforcers, or Henchmen.

Cursed Wretches (Outcasts only): End the game with three or more enemy models suffering a Condition applied by one of your models or with an Upgrade that was attached by one of your models, 2 times.

Collect the Ransom (Outcasts only): At the start of each game, secretly note down a non-Leader enemy model with a Soulstone Cost of 6 or more. End the game with 2 or more models engaged with the noted model, 2 times.

Do the Job, Get Paid (Outcasts only): Win three games.

Hog Wild (Gremlins Only): End the game with at least one Pig in every Quarter of the board, 2 times. Pigs straddling multiple Quarters count for none of them.

Burn Down the Barn (Gremlins Only): Have a friendly model be killed during its own Activation, 5 times.

Kablooowy! (Gremlins Only): Kill 3 enemy models using 🍄 or (ᛉ).

Purity of Spirit (Ten Thunders only): Kill or sacrifice 6 enemy models while this Crew has no Soulstones in its Pool.

Ancestral Artifacts (Ten Thunders only): Attach 3 or more Upgrades to models in this Crew during a game, 2 times.

Strike From Darkness (Ten Thunders only): Kill or sacrifice the first model during a game, 2 times. The model must be an enemy.



PHASE 6: DETERMINE INJURIES

Any model which was Finished Off during the course of the game must flip to determine what Injuries it suffers. Each player flips one card for each of their models that was Finished Off during the game. These flips may be Cheated using your Aftermath Hand. You must flip for one model at a time, deciding whether to Cheat before moving onto the next one. You may flip for your models in any order you choose.

If you Cheat to an Injury result which must be reflipped, then reflip as usual.

When a model suffers an Injury, it must attach the appropriate Injury Upgrade; this Upgrade is permanent and must always be attached to the model when it is hired. If a model flips an Injury result which it already has, do not apply the result again; the model got lucky and suffers no Injury this game. Some Injuries may reduce a model's stats; no model may have any stat reduced below 1 in this way. Injuries do not count against the maximum number of Upgrades a model may attach and may not be removed by Actions or Abilities unless they specifically reference Injuries.

If a model becomes too Injured, it will be Annihilated. To see a model's maximum number of Injuries, consult the following chart:

STATION	MAX INJURIES
Peon	1
Minion	2
Enforcer	2
Henchman	3
Master	3

If a model is at its maximum number of Injuries and it would receive another Injury, the model is instead Annihilated. It is worth noting that not every result on the Injury chart applies an Injury Upgrade. If a model is at its maximum number of Injuries and it must flip for another Injury, hope is not lost; it may flip a result it already has or a result which states that no Injury is gained to avoid being Annihilated.

If a model gets lucky and gets the Red Joker, it will be able to flip on its Faction specific Lucky Miss chart (this refers to the Crew's Faction, not necessarily the model's Faction). All of the results on these charts are good and count as Skills with a Soulstone Cost of 0 rather than Injuries, when applicable.



FLIP	INJURY
Black Joker	If this model is a Master, Henchman, or Enforcer, flip twice more on this chart and apply the results. If this model is a Minion or Peon, it is a Traitor. The Traitor's current Crew counts it as Annihilated, and the opposing Crew permanently adds it to their Arsenal and counts it as part of their declared Faction for Encounters. For whatever reason the model has switched sides, be it treachery, mind control, or just plain old slavery. If the opponent cannot add the Traitor (due to Rare limits), it is still Annihilated.
1 of ♠ or ♥	Fragile +1: Damage flips against this model gain +.
2 of ♠ or ♥	Shaky Nerves: This model may not Charge.
3 of ♠ or ♥	Amputation: Reduce this model's **Wd** stat by 2.
4 of ♠ or ♥	Knocked Out: This model may not be hired during the next game unless it is the Leader. No Injury is gained.
5 of ♠ or ♥	Hearing Voices: Reduce this model's **Wp** by 2.
6 of ♠ or ♥	Crippling Pain: Reduce this model's **Wk** by 1.
7 of ♠ or ♥	Not Quite Right: This model may not take Interact Actions. If this model is Insignificant, reflip this result.
8 of ♠ or ♥	Blow to the Head: This model must discard a card at the start of every Activation or gain **Slow**.
9 of ♠ or ♥	Slowed Reflexes: Reduce this model's **Df** by 1.
10 of ♠ or ♥	Cursed: This model loses all Suits printed on its Statistics. If this model has no Suits printed on its Statistics, reflip this result.
11 of ♠ or ♥	Swamp Hex: This model must discard a card in order to perform a (0) Action. If it has no (0) Actions, reflip this result.
12 of ♠ or ♥	Blood Hex: This model must discard a card in order to declare a Trigger. If this model has no Triggers, reflip this result.
13 of ♠ or ♥	Shaken: This model suffers − to **Df** and **Wp** duels. Annihilate this Injury during the Aftermath phase of the next game this model plays, before determining Injuries.
1 of ♣ or ♦	Broken Arm: Reduce this model's **Ml** by 1. If this model has no **Ml** Actions, reflip this result.
2 of ♣ or ♦	Fractured Wrist: Reduce this model's **Sh** by 1. If this model has no **Sh** Actions, reflip this result.
3 of ♣ or ♦	Missing Fingers: Reduce this model's **Ca** by 1. If this model has no **Ca** Actions, reflip this result.
4 of ♣ or ♦	Baggage: When this model is killed or sacrificed, the opposing player may place a Scheme Marker in base contact with it before removing it.
5 of ♣ or ♦	Big Head: Increase this model's Soulstone Cost by 1. If this model is the Leader, reflip this result.
6 of ♣ or ♦	Accident Prone: This model is automatically Finished Off when killed or sacrificed.
7 of ♣ or ♦	Easily Distracted: While calculating VP, this model counts as having the Peon Characteristic. Reflip this result if this model has the Peon Characteristic.
8 of ♣ or ♦	Flashbacks: When this model is targeted by a Charge, it must pass a TN 14 **Wp** duel or gain **Paralyzed**.
9 of ♣ or ♦	Wanted: The next time this model is killed or sacrificed, the opposing Crew gains 2 Scrip and then this Injury is Annihilated.
10 of ♣ or ♦	Unfocused: This model may not take the Focus Action.
11 of ♣ or ♦	Foolhardy: This model may not take the Defensive Stance Action.
12 of ♣ or ♦	Wanders Off: After flipping for initiative on the first Turn, the opposing player may push this model up to 6" in any direction.
13 of ♣ or ♦	A Wayward Adventure: Do not deploy this model during the next game it plays. Place it in its deployment zone at the start of Turn 3 instead. No Injury is gained.
Red Joker	Flip again on this Crew's Faction specific Lucky Miss Chart. No Injury is gained.

Guild Lucky Misses

Flip	Skill
	Martyr: When this model is killed or sacrificed, all friendly models in (↑)6 gain **Fast**.
	In the Name of Research: After this model kills an enemy model, it may draw a card and then discard a card.
	Relentless: This model is immune to Horror Duels.
	Secret Directive: At the end of the game, before calculating VP, this model may push up to 3" and place a Scheme Marker in base contact with itself.
Either Joker	Deep Pockets: Any time this model is still in play at the end of a game, this Crew gains 1 Scrip and makes one additional Barter flip.

Resurrectionist Lucky Misses

Flip	Skill
	My Lucky Stitches: When the Red Joker is flipped in a damage flip against this model, it is counted as the Black Joker instead.
	Too Many Pieces: When this model is killed, it places two additional Corpse Markers. (If it would otherwise place none, it now places two.)
	Embalmed: When this model would suffer damage due to the **Poison** Condition, instead, it heals 1 damage. When this model is deployed or summoned, it gains the **Poison +5** Condition.
	Pounce: When an enemy model ends a push or move within this model's engagement range that is not part of a Walk or Charge Action, this model may immediately take a (1) AP **Ml** Attack Action against the model without spending AP.
Either Joker	Spirit: If this model has the Incorporeal Ability, ignore this Injury. Otherwise, this model permanently reduces its **Wd** stat by half (rounded up) and gains the Spirit Characteristic and the **Incorporeal** Ability.

Arcanist Lucky Misses

Flip	Skill
	Hydraulic Limb: All of this model's Ml Attacks which deal damage, deal +1 damage. Metal Patchwork: This model gains the Construct Characteristic.
	Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1. Metal Patchwork: This model gains the Construct Characteristic.
	December's Hunger: At the end of this model's Activation, remove all Corpse Markers in (↑)3 and heal 2 damage on this model for each Marker removed.
	Bestial Rage: At the start of this model's Activation it may suffer 3 damage to gain **Fast**.
Either Joker	Steamborg Executioner. No Skill gained. This model may choose to be Annihilated. If this happens, this Crew adds a Howard Langston to its Arsenal. If the Annihilated model was the Leader, the new Howard Langston gains the Henchman Characteristic and becomes the Crew's new Leader.



Neverborn Lucky Misses

Flip	Skill
	To The Death: When this model is killed or sacrificed, it may perform a (1) Attack before being removed. This model is sacrificed after completing the Action.
	Silent: Models cannot ignore LoS or cover when targeting this model.
	Ravenous: When this model ends an Activation, remove all enemy Scheme Markers within (↑)2.
	Slippery: When an enemy model fails with an Attack against this model, this model may push up to 3" in any direction.
Either Joker	Doppleganger. No Skill gained. Add a copy of this model to this Crew's Arsenal. Ignore Rare restrictions when hiring the copy. If this model is a Master, it suffers no Injuries and ignores this result.

Outcast Lucky Misses

Flip	Skill
	The Hunter: When this model kills an enemy with an **MI** Attack, it may discard a card to add one Soulstone to its Crew's Pool.
	The Scholar: This model may draw a card and discard a card at the start of its Activation.
	The Scavenger: Models killed by this model are automatically Finished Off.
	The Murderer: When performing a damage flip, this model may suffer 2 damage to gain +.
Either Joker	The Chosen: This model may choose to ignore this result. This Skill does not count against the model's maximum number of Skills. This model becomes the Crew's new Leader so long as this Crew does not contain a Master. This model may use Soulstones as if it were a Henchman and may attach one additional Upgrade. Ignore this result if this model is the Leader.

Gremlin Lucky Misses

Flip	Skill
	Stop Hitting Yourself!: Reduce all damage this model suffers during its own Activation by 1.
	Lowered Expectations: Lower this model's Soulstone Cost by 1.
	Twitchy: After resolving a Trigger on an Attack Action which did not deal damage or generate another Action, immediately apply the Trigger one additional time.
	Fast Runner: When this model is pushed, it may push up to 3 additional inches.
Either Joker	Scapegoat: When this model is killed by another friendly model, the friendly model heals all damage and gains **Reactivate**.

Ten Thunders Lucky Misses

Flip	Skill
	Out of the Fire: This model gains +2 **Wd**.
	Arcane Disturbance: If this Crew has no Soulstones in its Pool, this model gains + to all duels.
	Clear Mind, Pure Body: This model is immune to **Slow** and **Poison**.
	Reserves: This model may begin the game buried. If this model is buried and a friendly model is killed or sacrificed, it may be unburied in base contact with the model before removing it.
Either Joker	Ninja Attack!: When this model is killed or sacrificed, summon two Torakage into base contact with it. These Torakage immediately suffer 3 damage each.

AVATARS

Avatars are special Skill Upgrades which are tied to a specific Master. They represent that Master unleashing powerful Arcane energy from "The Event." Avatar Skill Upgrades add 3 to a Crew's Campaign Rating (in addition to counting as a Skill Upgrade). For the rules on Avatars, see the M2E Core Rulebook pg. 56-57.

Rules for Individual Avatar cards are contained in the relevant Faction's Avatar chapter and they are generally gained as a Reward for completing a Bounty (see pg. 24), although there are other ways to get them. If a Bounty is completed and the Crew does not yet have a Master, then an Avatar Upgrade may not be chosen as the Bounty Reward.

All Avatars in this book have the Campaign Restriction, which means they can only be attached during a Campaign game. If two players both agree to use Avatars outside of a Campaign then that is perfectly fine, but the rules for Avatars contained here are not tournament legal and should only be used with the consent of all players.

MANIFEST OPTIONS

The five Manifest options for Avatars and their associated Manifest Events (if any) are listed here:

Delayed Manifestation

Manifest: On Turn 3, or any Turn after, this Master may choose to Manifest at the beginning of its Activation.

Manifest Event: After the Avatar is placed, immediately push this Master up to 6" in any direction.

Bloody Manifestation

Manifest: After killing or sacrificing a non-Peon enemy model this Master may Manifest immediately after the current Action is resolved.

Manifest Event: After the Avatar is placed, this Master may immediately perform a (1) Action without spending any AP.

Desperate Manifestation

Manifest: After this Master suffers damage caused by an enemy model's Action or Ability, if it has half or fewer of its starting Wounds remaining, it may Manifest immediately after the current Action is resolved.

Manifest Event: After the Avatar is placed, push this model up to 3" in any direction and draw a card.

Planned Manifestation

Manifest: This Master may discard 3 Soulstones to Manifest at the start of any of its Activations.

Sacrificial Manifestation

Manifest: At the start of the game, secretly note down a friendly model with a Cost of 4 or more. When the model is killed or sacrificed, reveal that it was noted down and then Manifest immediately. The noted model drops no Markers and summons no models as a result of being killed or sacrificed.



SUMMONED MODELS

Some models are able to summon or otherwise create new models during the course of an Encounter. A Crew may summon models which are not a part of its Arsenal if the Actions or Abilities of individual models allow it. Summoned models are never entered into the Crew's Arsenal and never carry over from one game to another.

Sometimes summoning represents one model changing into something else, such as a model shapeshifting into a beast. If a model has access to a Tactical Action or Ability which requires that the model sacrifice itself in order to summon something, then the model does not need to flip on the Injury chart after the game. However, if the model which was summoned in this way is killed or sacrificed it flips to be Finished Off as normal and if it gets a 3 or higher, then the model which summoned it will have to flip on the Injury chart (this applies to any other friendly models sacrificed in order to summon it as well). When a model sacrifices itself, all Skills and Injuries on it are discarded, although the model will still retain them after the game.

For example, if Myranda uses her Shapechange Action to sacrifice herself and summon a Beast, she will not have to flip on the Injury chart unless the Beast is killed or sacrificed and fails its Finished Off flip, and any Skills and Injuries associated with her are discarded (although they will still be attached to her after the game). Also, if two Coryphee Dance Together to summon a Coryphee Duet, then neither Coryphee will have to flip on the Injury chart unless the Duet is killed or sacrificed and fails its Finished Off flip, in which case they will both have to flip on the Injury chart. In the rare instance a model sacrifices itself to summon multiple models, the model will flip to be Finished Off if any of the summoned models are killed or sacrificed (although one model only ever flips to be Finished Off once).

ATTACHING UPGRADES

Some Actions or Abilities allow a model to attach Upgrades during a game. Much like summoned models, these Upgrades are not required to be in the Crew's Arsenal for these Actions and Abilities to work, and they are not added to the Arsenal when the game is over. Likewise, a model which discards or removes an Upgrade during a game does not remove the Upgrade from its Arsenal; this only happens if the Upgrade is Annihilated.

STARTING ANEW

A new player may wish to join a Campaign partway through. Or a player may wish to scrap their current Campaign Crew and start a new one. This may be due to an accumulation of Injuries or simply a desire for something new. In this instance, the player discards their old Arsenal and assembles a new one using the usual rules for starting a Campaign Crew, with the exception that they will gain 5 additional Scrip with which to hire models and purchase Upgrades for each week the Campaign has progressed beyond the first.

The Crew may also perform one Barter flip and be able to purchase one Campaign Upgrade for each week the Campaign has progressed (including the first week). The Crew does not have an Aftermath Hand with which to cheat these flips, and may attach Skills to models even though they haven't participated in any games. No more than one Skill may be attached to any single model in this way. Non-Campaign Upgrades may simply be purchased at their usual price as if it were the start of a new week.

ENDING A CAMPAIGN

At the start of the Campaign, the group agreed to an allotted amount of time for the Campaign to last (4, 6, 8, or 12 weeks). When the time is up, the Campaign ends. Campaigns need to end so that certain Crews do not become overly powerful and make it difficult for new players to join in. It also gives the community some breathing room to get some regular games in. When the Campaign is over, retire your Arsenal sheet and, if your group decides to play another Campaign, get out a new one!

Your group may also decide to play a competitive Campaign, in which players accrue points for the duration of the Campaign to determine a winner at the end. The rules for this are in the "Competitive Campaign" section of the Optional Rules (pg. 34).

OPTIONAL RULES

TAILOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

A Campaign is a living, breathing thing which changes and adapts over time. You and your group may find that you do not like certain aspects of this book, or that you want to add a few things of your own, and that's great! A Campaign is a perfect setting to incorporate house rules, specialized terrain, or fun new concepts. Here are a few optional ideas on how to modify this Campaign system. Use as many or as few as you like. But don't stop here! We encourage you to experiment and find what works best for your group! Just be sure that all participants are clear on all optional rules before starting the Campaign.

NO INJURIES

Some groups may decide that seeing their models become Injured and Annihilated is a negative experience; these groups are only interested in the aspects of the Campaign which grow a Crew and add new Skills. In this case, simply ignore the Finished Off and Injury rules for all Crews. You will also need to ignore any other aspects of the Campaign which interact with those rules (such as the Healing Salve Upgrade).

INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

Some groups may grow tired of playing the same Weekly Event for every game during a week. This may especially be true for groups which play a large number of games per week. In this case, players flip on the Weekly Event table at the start of every game (before hiring Crews) to determine an individual Event for each game. If you use this method, reflip Pit Fight, either Joker, and A Bullet With Your Name.

EXTRA SCRIP

Some groups may feel that they are not gaining Scrip fast enough to gain all of the fun Skills and models they want for their Crews. In this case, every Crew gains an additional 2 Scrip for every friendly Enforcer and Henchman which is still in play at the end of the game, and the maximum weekly Scrip is increased from 16 to 20.

UNAVOIDABLE INJURY

Some groups may feel that Injuries are too easy to avoid and would like to see higher consequences for models being killed and sacrificed. To increase the number of Injuries, the Finished Off flip may not be cheated. Any other Campaign effect which prevents the Finished Off flip from being cheated (such as the Bad Moon Rising Weekly Event) now causes models to be automatically Finished Off instead.

COLLUSION AND TRADING

Generally speaking, it is against the rules to collude with your opponent and agree to help each other gain Scrip, accomplish Bounties, etc. It is assumed that all players try their best to win the game and thwart the opponent where possible. However, some groups may wish to allow players to make deals with each other about allowing Scrip gain, accomplishing Bounties, or even ganging up on other players who are ahead! This sort of back-room dealing is fitting for the world of Malifaux, and certain groups may enjoy it. Just keep in mind that your word is not your bond, you are perfectly welcome (and encouraged) to betray anyone who tries to make a deal with you (and you should not hold a grudge outside of the context of the Campaign if somebody betrays you, it is a part of this format). Additionally, players will be allowed to trade Equipment Upgrades (but not Skills or non-Campaign Upgrades) and Scrip in between games, and can even use them to bribe other players. It is worth noting that this option requires a certain mindset and will not work for every group; you must not take things personally.

STAY DEAD

Any time a model with the Rare 1 Characteristic is Annihilated, its Crew may never add another copy of the model to its Arsenal for the remainder of the Campaign. This provides a more thematic experience where named models do not come back, but may leave some players annoyed at permanently losing a model they enjoyed.

THE GOOD DOCTOR

Add a seventh Aftermath Phase: A Trip To The Doc's. During this phase, a player may spend 2 Scrip to send a single model with an Injury to the Doc's to get patched up. The model flips on the following chart. This flip may be cheated with the Aftermath Hand. The player may spend an additional 2 Scrip to gain a +.

FLIP	RESULT
Black Joker	The model flips on the Injury chart (reflip Jokers).
	Remove one Injury from the model.
	Remove one Injury from the model. It permanently gains the Construct Characteristic.
	Remove one Injury from the model. It permanently gains the Undead Characteristic.
	Remove one Injury from the model and then it flips on the Injury chart (reflip Jokers).
Red Joker	Remove all Injuries from the model and it flips on its Lucky Miss chart.

BEFORE THE EVENT

Your Campaign can take place anywhere in Malifaux's history. If you choose to play a Campaign set before The Event, then players will not have access to Avatars. Avatars will not be available when completing a Bounty and any game effect which grants one will be ignored or reflipped.

CUT 'EM UP FOR PARTS

You would be surprised what you can sell in Malifaux. When using this option, in between games, any Crew may Annihilate any Crew members it wishes to gain an amount of Scrip equal to half of the model's Soulstone Cost (rounded up). This can be useful if a Crew member is injured beyond usefulness, or just generally being annoying. No other Scrip may be earned due to the model being Annihilated in this way.

THE WANDERING RELIC

There are many ancient and powerful relics in Malifaux. When using this optional rule, a random player flips on the Those Who Thirst chart (see pg. 19) and gains the noted Upgrade when building their initial Crew. Anytime the player with the relic loses a game, the Upgrade leaves its current Crew and is added to the Arsenal of the winning Crew. If the Crew with the Upgrade does not play at least one game during a given week, then it loses the relic and another, random Crew gains it.



COMPETITIVE CAMPAIGN

Sometimes, a group will wish to play more competitively and determine a winner once the Campaign is over. In that case, the group (or organizer) should choose a method of playing competitively before beginning the Campaign. Here are two ways to determine an overall winner.

TOURNAMENT STYLE

This is the most straight forward way to determine a winner and it may appeal to newer groups. It is also a good format to discourage certain players from abusing the system by doing things such as agreeing to ties to maximize Scrip, for example.

At the end of each game, players will score points in three areas: Campaign Points (CP), Differential (Diff), and Victory Points (VP).

CAMPAIGN POINTS

The player who wins a Campaign game earns 3 CP while the player who loses earns 0 CP. If both players tie, they each earn 1 CP. Players note the amount of CP they earned on their Arsenal sheet.

DIFFERENTIAL

Note the Difference between the players' **VP** at the end of each Campaign game. The player with the higher **VP** score receives a Differential equal to the positive amount of that difference, while the player with the lower **VP** score receives a Differential equal to the negative amount of that Difference.

For example, if a game ends with one player scoring 5 **VP** and the other 3 **VP**, the winner will gain +2 Differential while the loser will suffer -2 Differential. Each player marks their Differential on their Arsenal Sheet (players may have a negative Differential).

VICTORY POINTS

Finally, each player notes the total **VP** they scored for the game on their Arsenal Sheet.

MAXIMUM GAMES PER WEEK

Before starting, players must agree on a maximum number of Campaign games allowed to be played per week. This is to prevent one player racking up excess CP simply due to number of games played. Two games per week is the recommended amount, but your group may differ.

FINAL STANDINGS

Once the Campaign is over, calculate the winner in the following manner:

- First, players are ranked by their Campaign Points (CP), so players with higher CP finish above those with lower CP.
- Players who have the same CP as each other are then ranked by their Differential (Diff).
- Finally players who are still tied are ranked by their Victory Points (VP).

HIDE OUTS

In this version, each player is trying to build his or her ideal Hide Out, and the winner is the player with the most impressive one! During the Payday portion of the Aftermath step, players will earn Construction Material (CM) which they will spend during Requisitions to fortify their Hide Out. These Fortifications will generally have some sort of positive effect for the Crew. Certain Fortifications will require a Crew to already have some previous Fortifications to build upon. Fortifications may never be destroyed, lost, or traded; they are permanent.

At the start of the Campaign, each Crew chooses a specific type of Hide Out they will be building. This choice is permanent and the Crew will only be able to purchase Fortifications for their selected Hide Out, so choose carefully! A Hide Out may never have two of the same Fortification.

Certain Fortifications have prerequisites, which means the Hide Out must already contain certain Fortifications for them to be purchased.

CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL

During the Payday step each Crew earns 1 Construction Material (CM) if it earned at least 2 **VP** from at least one Scheme and 1 CM if the Crew earned maximum **VP** from the Strategy. The winning Crew will also receive a bonus 1 CM (this means that the maximum amount of CM any Crew can earn per game is 3). Each player notes their CM on their Arsenal Sheet; these may be spent immediately or saved for use after another game.

Types of Hide Outs

Here is a list of the types of Hide Outs available to the players at the start of the Campaign, as well as the Fortifications which go along with them.

Saloon

Name	CM	Prerequisites	Description
Grizzled Bartender	3	-	This Crew may reflip a Finished Off flip twice per game.
Gambling Tables	3	-	This Crew receives one bonus Scrip after each game.
Fine Liquor	3	-	This Crew may reflip one Barter flip, before Cheating.
Bouncer	5	Grizzled Bartender, Fine Liquor	Models in this Crew receive + to Finished Off flips.
Cash Box	5	Gambling Tables, Fine Liquor	After a game, this Crew may spend 3 Scrip to gain 1 additional Barter flip.
Steady Stream of Customers	7	Bouncer, Cash Box	All models in your Crew have their maximum number of Injuries increased to 4.

Wasteland Outpost

Name	CM	Prerequisites	Description
Soulstone Vein	3	-	This Crew adds 1 Soulstone to its Soulstone Pool.
Smuggling Tunnels	3	-	This Crew may add +1 to its Barter flips.
Scrap Pile	3	-	When one of this Crew's Upgrades is Annihilated, this Crew may spend 3 Scrip to keep it in its Arsenal (it is still discarded from play).
Fortified Walls	5	Smuggling Tunnels, Scrap Pile	Before flipping on the Injury chart, this Crew may spend a Scrip to gain + to the flip.
Extra Guards	5	Soulstone Vein, Scrap Pile	This Crew reduces the cost of the first New Hire each week by 6 instead of 5.
Advanced Scouts	7	Fortified Walls, Extra Guards	During the Draw Phase, this Crew may draw and discard one card.

Hidden Lab

Name	CM	Prerequisites	Description
Surgical Tools	3	-	This Crew may reflip one Injury per game, before Cheating.
Library	3	-	This Crew may reflip Reward flips before Cheating.
Electrodes	3	-	Models in this Crew ignore the Knocked Out and Shaken Injuries.
Brain In a Jar	5	Surgical Tools, Electrodes	This Crew may spend 1 Scrip to reflip initiative instead of a Soulstone.
Metal Servant	5	Electrodes, Library	This Crew may spend 1 Scrip to reflip the flip to determine the Strategy once per game.
My Creations!	7	Brain In a Jar, Metal Servant	The first time a model in this Crew is killed or sacrificed, summon a copy of the model into this Crew's Deployment Zone with 1 Wound remaining.

Mausoleum

Name	CM	Prerequisites	Description
Memento Mori	3	-	Gain 1 Scrip when a friendly model gains an Injury.
Loose Grave Dirt	3	-	Place a Corpse Marker anywhere on the center line at the start of game
Tasteful Dirge	3	-	Friendly models killed or sacrificed in your Deployment Zone can reflip Finished Off Checks.
Marble Headstones	5	Memento Mori, Loose Grave Dirt	Gain 3 Scrip when a friendly model is Annihilated.
Rousing Eulogies	5	Memento Mori, Tasteful Dirge	If your Leader is Injured, flip twice on the Injury table and choose a result.
Grand Tomb	7	Marble Headstones, Rousing Eulogies	Once per Campaign, add a copy of an enemy model killed during the game to your Arsenal. If the model could not be hired normally by your Crew, it may be hired but gains the Undead Characteristic.

Mobile Encampment

Name	CM	Prerequisites	Description
On The Move	3	-	You and your opponent may agree to play a different non-Joker Weekly Event than what was flipped.
Scouted Location	3	-	After determining deployment, this Crew may place one terrain piece within 4" of its current location.
Big Game Hunter	3	-	Your models gain + to Attack duels against Neutral models.
Hiding Place	5	On The Move, Scouted Location	Your models gain + to duels when Defending against Neutral models.
Trophy Rack	5	Big Game Hunter, Scouted Location	The first time per game this Crew kills a Neutral model, gain 1 Scrip.
A Fine Specimen	7	Hiding Place, Trophy Rack	You may choose to add a Sabertooth Cerberus as a Neutral model in every game. If you do, your opponent places it within 2" of the centerline before deploying Crews.

Swamp Village

Name	CM	Prerequisites	Description
Banjo Player	3	-	When you lose a game, gain 2 extra Scrip.
We Was Just Wrastlin'	3	-	Your opponent may offer you 1 Scrip to reflip one of their Injuries (you may refuse).
Pig Farm	3	-	Add a Piglet to your Arsenal. You may hire it regardless of Faction or other restrictions.
Drunken Revelers	5	Banjo Player, We Was Just Wrastlin'	Gain 3 Scrip when you complete a Bounty.
BBQ	5	Pig Farm, Banjo Player	Once per Turn after flipping Initiative, you may spend 1 Scrip to heal 1 damage on a model.
Hootenanny	7	Drunken Revelers, BBQ	Gain an additional Barter flip each Aftermath.

Junkyard

Name	CM	Prerequisites	Description
One Man's Trash...	3	-	You may reduce your Barter Card's value by up to 3.
Pick and Pull	3	-	Place a Scrap Marker anywhere on the center line at the start of game.
Junkyard Dogs	3	-	Gain 2 Scrip during Aftermath if there are five or more Scrap Markers on the table at the end of the game.
Appraisals	5	Junkyard Dogs, One Man's Trash...	Equipment Upgrades cost 1 less Scrip to purchase.
New Tools	5	Pick and Pull, One Man's Trash...	Gain one additional Barter flip for each friendly Upgrade Annihilated during the game.
Salvage Operation	7	Appraisals, New Tools	After Crews are revealed, a friendly model may gain a copy of an opponent's Equipment Upgrade for the duration of the game, at no cost.

Guild Outpost

Name	CM	Prerequisites	Description
Wanted Posters	3	-	Before each game, secretly note down an enemy model. If it is killed or sacrificed, gain 1 Scrip.
Gallows	3	-	Once per game, choose one Finished Off flip to reflip (friendly or enemy).
Deputy	3	-	Before each game, secretly note down a friendly model. If it is in play at the end of the game, gain 1 Scrip.
Warrant	5	Wanted Posters, Deputy	When playing a relevant Story Encounter, this Crew may choose to Attack or Defend.
Posse	5	Wanted Posters, Gallows	Take Prisoner is always an available Scheme for this Crew and the opposing Crew.
Executioner	7	Warrant, Posse	Add an Executioner to your Arsenal. This model may be hired regardless of Faction or other restrictions and costs 2 Soulstones less than its normal cost.

Flair

If a Crew already has all six possible Fortifications, then it gains one Flair each time it wins a game. This represents the Crew decking out its Hide Out in style.

Final Standings

Once the Campaign is over, the winner is the player with the most Fortifications. If two players have the maximum of six Fortifications, the player with the most Flair is the winner. If two or more players are still tied, they play one last game, winner takes all (this may be a multiplayer game).



GUILD AVATARS



AVATAR OF BALANCE

PREMANIFEST

COST: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Steady Advance: This model is Immune to **Slow** and **Paralyzed**.

- Manifest Event:

  Perfectly Balanced: If the opposing Crew has more Scheme Markers in play than you, place Scheme Markers into base contact with friendly models until you have the same number as the opposing Crew.

RESTRICTIONS

Lady Justice, Avatar

THE LEVELER

MANIFESTED

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Steady Advance: This model is Immune to **Slow** and **Paralyzed**.

  Swift Justice: If this model suffers damage from an enemy model's Attack Action, the model which inflicted the damage suffers an equal amount of damage after the current Action is resolved, up to a maximum of 2 damage.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Order Restored: All friendly models in play with the **Inspired** Condition may push up to 3" in any direction. Then this model heals 1/2/4 damage.

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Lady Justice, Avatar

Avatar of Conflagration

PREMANIFEST

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Followers of Flame: This model may hire Fire Gamin and Iggy regardless of Faction.

  Df/Wp (📖) Smoldering Heart: After this model succeeds, the Attacking model gains the **Burning +1** Condition.

- Manifest Event:

  It's All Ash In the End: All enemy models in play gain **Burning +1**.

RESTRICTIONS

Sonnia, Avatar

The Inferno

MANIFESTED

- This model gains the Tyrant Characteristic.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Df/Wp (📖) Smoldering Heart: After this model succeeds, the Attacking model gains the **Burning +1** Condition.

- This model gains the following Trigger to its Attack Actions:

  Cherufe's Bite: After damaging, take the **Flameburst** Attack Action, ignoring the ⌐ icon. This Action may not declare Triggers.

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Sonnia, Avatar

Avatar of Revelation

PREMANIFEST

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Rush of Magic: During the Draw Phase draw an additional card and then discard a card.

- Manifest Event:

  Know Thine Enemy: Look at the opponent's hand and any unrevealed Schemes.

RESTRICTIONS

Perdita, Avatar

The Witness

MANIFESTED

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  From the Heavens: After flipping initiative, this model may be buried. After a friendly Family model ends an Activation, this model may be unburied within 3" and LoS of it. This model is eligible to Activate using **Companion** immediately after being placed in this way, so long as it is eligible to Activate.

  Rush of Magic: During the Draw Phase draw an additional card and then discard a card.

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Perdita, Avatar

Avatar of Amalgamation

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Mechanical Limbs: This model receives +1 to duels while taking Tactical Actions.

- Manifest Event:

  One Giant Circuit: All friendly models in play receive the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Power Loop:** At the start of a duel, this model may use the printed numerical **Df**, **Wp**, **Ca**, **Sh**, or **Ml** (ignoring suits) from another model with **Power Loop** instead of its own."

PREMANIFEST



RESTRICTIONS

Hoffman, Avatar

The Natural

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Mechanical Limbs: This model receives +1 to duels while taking Tactical Actions.

  Armor +1: This model reduces all damage it suffers by +1, to a minimum of 1.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Scrapped Together (**Ca** 6 / TN: 10 / Rg: 6) Summon a Guild or M&SU non-Totem Construct with a Cost of 5 or less into base contact with target Scrap Marker and then discard the Marker. The summoned model suffers damage equal to half its **Wd** (rounded up) which may not be reduced.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Hoffman, Avatar

Avatar of Bureaucracy

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Procedure: This model may treat it flips or plays as .

  Subversion: This model may treat it flips or plays as .

- Manifest Event:

  Best Laid Plans: This Crew selects a Scheme from the Scheme Pool which was generated at the start of the game; this Crew now counts as having the selected Scheme (it may be revealed or unrevealed). At the end of the game, before calculating **VP,** this Crew must discard one of its Schemes and any **VP** gained from it.

PREMANIFEST



RESTRICTIONS

Lucius, Avatar

The Liar

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Procedure: This model may treat it flips or plays as .

  Subversion: This model may treat it flips or plays as .

  Two Faced: When an enemy model targets this model with an Action, this model may discard a card face down. If it does, the enemy model must pass a TN 5 **Wp** duel. If it fails, this model controls the Action and may choose a new target; the model performing the Action is considered a legal target, even if it was an Attack Action. Increase the TN of the **Wp** duel by the value of the card this model played face down, but do not reveal it until all cheating for the duel is resolved.

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (1) A Treacherous Knife (**Ml** 7 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Target suffers 1/2/4 damage. If the target is engaged with at least one other friendly model, deal +2 damage.

  Flay: The damage flip resulting from this Attack may be cheated if it suffers one or more .

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Lucius, Avatar


IN CASE OF NEPHILIM WET SELF + RUN BEHIND SHIELD!
GIVE 'EM HELL
AARON'S HIDING PLACE
SPEAK FOR YOURSELF AARON JUSTIN

RESURRECTIONIST AVATARS



Avatar of Dread

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Ability:

  My Pretties: This model may summon Living non-Totem Showgirl Minion models with its **Arise, My Sweet** Action. Showgirls summoned in this manner lose the Living Characteristic and gain the Undead Characteristic permanently.

- Manifest Event:

  Run and Hyde: All friendly models in play which do not have the **Terrifying** Ability gain the following Ability for the rest of the game: "**Terrifying (All) 10**: Enemy models must pass a TN 10 Horror Duel if they end a Walk Action within this model's engagement range or target this model with an Action."

PREMANIFEST

RESTRICTIONS

Seamus, Avatar

The Ripper

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  A Delightful Rage: This model's **MI** and **Ca** Actions which deal damage deal +1 damage.

  My Pretties: This model may summon Living non-Totem Showgirl Minion models with its **Arise, My Sweet** Action. Showgirls summoned in this manner lose the Living Characteristic and gain the Undead Characteristic permanently.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Seamus, Avatar

AVATAR OF DEATH

COST: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  My Minions!: Friendly Mindless Zombies lose the **Unhirable** Ability and may be hired normally at the start of the game.

  Endless Zombies: When a non-Peon model is hired into this Crew's Arsenal during the New Hires step, it may add a Mindless Zombie to its Arsenal for free.

  Close to Death: Friendly Mindless Zombies within ❶6 lose the **Insignificant** Ability.

- Manifest Event:

  Dust to Dust: Summon a Mindless Zombie into base contact with all Corpse Markers in play, then discard all Corpse Markers in play.

PREMANIFEST



RESTRICTIONS

Nicodem, Avatar

THE REAPER

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Close to Death: Friendly Mindless Zombies within ❶6 lose the **Insignificant** Ability.

  Psychopomp: Whenever this model succeeds on an Action which summons a model, it may discard a card with a value of 8 or higher to take the Action again without spending any AP.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Nicodem, Avatar

AVATAR OF FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

COST: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Numb: This model is immune to Conditions applied by enemy models.

- Manifest Event:

  From My Lab: All models in play gain the **Poison +1** Condition.

PREMANIFEST



RESTRICTIONS

McMourning, Avatar

THE REANIMATOR

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Numb: This model is immune to Conditions applied by enemy models.

  He's Insane!: Once per Turn, when this model kills an enemy model with an Attack Action during its Activation, it may discard a card with a value of 9 or higher to immediately gain 1 additional general AP.

  "Apply Liberally": If this Crew declared Guild as its Faction, friendly Guild Minions and Enforcers within ❶6 gain the following Ability: "**Poisoned Weapon:** Enemy models damaged by this model's Attack Actions gain the **Poison +1** Condition."

  Live Again!: If this Crew declared Resurrectionists as its Faction, after this model kills an enemy model with an **MI** Attack Action, it may discard three cards to summon a Student of Steel or Student of Sinew into base contact with the killed model before removing it.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

McMourning, Avatar

Avatar of Vengeance

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Instinctual: This model may take two (0) Actions during its Activation, so long as they are both different.

- Manifest Event:

  Possessed: This model gains the following Ability for the rest of the game: "**Incorporeal**: This model ignores, and is ignored by, other models and terrain during any movement or push. Reduce all damage this model suffers from **Sh** and **MI** Attack Actions by half."

PREMANIFEST



RESTRICTIONS

Kirai, Avatar

The Revenant

- This model gains the Spirit Characteristic.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Right Wrongs: If a friendly model within 8 suffers damage from an enemy Attack Action, this model may discard a card to be placed into base contact with the Attacking model.

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (1) Razor Sharp Fingernails (**MI** 7 / Rst: **Df** or **Wp** / Rg: 2): Target suffers 3/4/5 damage. This Attack Action ignores **Armor**. When this Action is declared, this model chooses if the resist is **Df** or **Wp**. This Action may not be taken while a friendly Ikiryo is in play.

  Tear to Shreds: The damage flip gains +1.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Kirai, Avatar

Avatar of Memories Lost

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (1) Forgotten Toys (**Ca** 6 / TN: 14): Discard an enemy Scheme Marker in play which does not have an enemy model within 3" and LoS.

- Manifest Event

  Remembrance: This model may immediately take the **The Ones Left Behind** Action without spending any AP. This Action may name Enforcer models instead of Minion models, following all other restrictions.

PREMANIFEST



RESTRICTIONS

Molly, Avatar

The Forgotten

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Lost Destiny: When this model succeeds on an opposed duel with an enemy model, the enemy model must discard 1 card or suffer 2 damage after resolving the current Action.

  Stolen Vigor: When this model Activates, it may discard a card. If it does, this model adds +1 to all of its final duel totals for the duration of the Activation.

- This model's gains the following Tactical Action:

  (1) Forgotten Toys (**Ca** 6 / TN: 14): Discard an enemy Scheme Marker in play which does not have an enemy model within 3" and LoS.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Molly, Avatar

Squidpiddge

Case notes update, day 4 of tracking Molly Squidpiddge

Excellent results today. First is that I can properly label this file the Squidpiddge bounty, because I have verified it is indeed her. I picked up her trail last night in Bearpaw Mews and got a good look at her face when she wandered under a lamp. Dead, but not a bestial wreck like most of them. Posture and behavior for all the world like a live girl ten years younger.

Secondly, I am overwhelmingly confident that Sutton was right and she was one of the chief perpetrators in the Gray Lord massacre. Still waiting on his reply but last we spoke there were three different private bounties on her that add up to more than double the official Guild figure.

One oddity on tonight's tracking, which I will note down here while it is fresh in my mind. I had tailed the creature through the southside New Construction Zone toward the crossbridge promenade when she came to a sudden halt at the head of one of the steep, stepped paths down to the riverbank. From a position slightly ahead of her I was able to see consternation on her face and wariness in her posture, where up to then she had been skipping and tripping along as gaily as a child in a meadow.

After a moment a second figure came into the light, as if it had hailed her to stop, although the street was quiet and I had heard nothing. Much more the sort of creature I expect to see along Resurrectionist trails: emaciated, unsteady on its feet, eyeless, face in tatters. It took me a moment to understand what was odd about its torso, until I saw that the hide had been pulled out in two flaps and then tanned while still attached, and between these leather panels pages had been stitched into place so that the zombie formed the walking cover for a book embedded in its chest.

It made its way into the light to confront Squidpiddge, who threw out a hand in a clear "come no closer" gesture. In reply the creature leafed through the great ledger sewn into its body to a particular point and then, holding the pages wide, it raised a hand and silently pointed to a certain place on the page, which I was too far away to discern. Again, her reaction was angry, shaking her head and obviously rejecting whatever the thing was putting to her. After a moment more she stormed away, and when I turned from marking her path the other creature was gone too.

I broke off not long after; no matter how trivial a creature she looks, I know better than to try to take her when her guard is up. If I expect to be near that path again I may take Vitaly with me. The creature with its book was clearly made with uncommon skill and dedication. The bounty on something like that is bound to be worth it.

ARCANIST AVATARS



AVATAR OF INNOVATION

COST: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Guild Assets: Crews led by this model may hire up to four Constructs from the Guild Faction that are not the Crew's declared Faction.

- Manifest Event:

  Unrelenting Genius: All models in play permanently gain the Construct Characteristic.

PREMANIFEST

RESTRICTIONS

Ramos, Avatar

THE FATHER OF INVENTION

- This model gains the following Ability:

  My Creations!: If this model has not yet Activated this Turn, all friendly Constructs in 6 gain to Attack flips.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (1) Advanced Construction (**Ca** 8 / TN: 18 / Rg: 6): Summon a Large Arachnid in base contact with target Scrap Marker, then discard the Marker. The summoned model suffers 4 damage which may not be reduced. This Action may only be taken once per Turn, and only by this model.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Ramos, Avatar

Avatar of Hunger

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1.

- Manifest Event:

  Hunger Pains: This model gains the following Condition until the end of the game: "**December's Influence:** When determining a target using **Ice Mirror** or **Shattered Mirror**, all models in play count as having **Frozen Heart**."

PREMANIFEST

RESTRICTIONS

Rasputina, Avatar

Feast and Famine

- This model gains the Tyrant Characteristic.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  All My Children: When using the **Ice Mirror** and **Shattered Mirror** Abilities, this model may draw LoS and range using enemy models as well as friendly models and ignores all penalties to its **Ca** from either Ability.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Feast on the Dead: Target a Corpse Marker within 6". Push this model into base contact with the Marker and then remove it. If this happens, this model heals 1/2/3 damage.

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (1) Devour (**Ml** 8 / TN: 13 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Sacrifice target Living model. The target must be **Ht** 1 or have the **Paralyzed** Condition.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Rasputina, Avatar

Avatar of Instinct

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Trophies: After killing or sacrificing an enemy model, this model may draw two cards and then discard two cards.

- Manifest Event:

  Found the Scent: All non-Leader enemy models in play gain the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Hunted:** Enemy Beasts gain to Attack flips against this model."

PREMANIFEST

RESTRICTIONS

Marcus, Avatar

The Chimera

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  The Wall of the World: This model may perform (0) Actions printed on friendly Beasts within 8.

  The Ravenous Beast: After killing or sacrificing an enemy model, this model may choose to heal all damage it has suffered and end its Activation. Then, this model may draw a card.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (1) Cower Before the Wilds: All enemy models within 4 are immediately pushed 3" away from this model.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Marcus, Avatar

Avatar of Momentum

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Getting Psyched: This model may discard a card to gain the following Condition until the end of the game: "**Adrenaline +1:** At the end of the Turn, this model heals exactly 1 damage and then lowers this Condition's value by 1."

- Manifest Event:

  Velocity: This model gains the **Adrenaline +4** Condition until the end of the game.

PREMANIFEST

Restrictions

Ironsides, Avatar

The Unstoppable Force

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Driven: This model gains +📖 to **Df**.

  Barrel Through: This model ignores other models and terrain while moving during Walk and Charge Actions. After this model completes the movement portion of a Charge Action, all enemy models in (↗)2 must immediately pass a TN 16 **Df** duel or suffer 2 damage.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Getting Psyched: This model may discard a card to gain the following Condition until the end of the game: "**Adrenaline +1:** At the end of the Turn, this model heals exactly 1 damage and then lowers this Condition's value by 1."

MANIFESTED

50mm

Restrictions

Ironsides, Avatar

Avatar of Deception

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Don't Mind Me: This model may take Interact Actions while engaged.

- Manifest Event:

  The World is a Stage: All other friendly models in play may immediately push up to 5" in any direction.

PREMANIFEST

Restrictions

Colette, Avatar

The Illusionist

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Don't Mind Me: This model may take Interact Actions while engaged.

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (1) Magician's Duel (**Ca** 7📖 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 8): Target model suffers 2/3/5 damage.

  📖🎀 **Back Stage Pass:** After damaging, push the target up to 5" in any direction.

MANIFESTED

50mm

Restrictions

Colette, Avatar

AVATAR OF REBIRTH

COST: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Hard to Kill: While this model has 2 or more **Wd** remaining when it suffers damage, it may not be reduced to below 1 **Wd**.

- Manifest Event:

  From the Ashes: Heal all damage on this model.

PREMANIFEST

RESTRICTIONS

Kaeris, Avatar

THE PHOENIX

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Flames of the Sun: When an enemy model with the **Burning** Condition is killed within ❶6, this model may discard a card to summon a Fire Gamin into base contact with the killed model before removing it.

  Heart of the Inferno: When this model is killed or sacrificed, it may discard all Upgrades to summon Kaeris anywhere in its Deployment Zone. This model must flip to be Finished Off as normal.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Kaeris, Avatar

MINER'S FATE

It is well known that one of the more disconcerting aspects of Soulstones is that they recharge their powers when in the presence of a person at the moment of death. What most citizens of Malifaux seldom think about, however, is what this means for the Soulstone miners who lose their lives deep below ground, surrounded by the precious stones. Some of the more hazardous mines regularly put out Soulstones which have already been charged by the lives of unlucky miners. This, of course, makes the stones more valuable, and many cynics have pointed to this as the reason for certain unsafe working conditions. It is a rare miner who hasn't lost a friend in the lonely dark, and they often shudder to think about what fate the afterlife holds for those who ultimately help power a spell.

NEVERBORN AVATARS



Avatar of Fate

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Ability:

  My Eyes And Ears: This model does not need LoS when targeting friendly models with the **Obey** Action.

- Manifest Event:

  The Pattern: Look at the top 5 cards of each deck and put them back in any order.

PREMANIFEST



RESTRICTIONS

Zoraida, Avatar

The Weaver

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Victims Of Fate: This model does not need LoS when targeting friendly models with the **Obey** Action. This model may target a model with **Obey** regardless of whether the target has performed an Attack due to **Obey** this Activation.

  Foresight: This Crew always wins the initiative flip, regardless of the result. If both Crews have this Ability, ignore this Ability.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Zoraida, Avatar

Avatar of Nature

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

PREMANIFEST

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Forceful Indoctrination: Friendly models hired into this Crew gain the Nephilim Characteristic and the following Ability for the rest of the game: "**Black Blood:** All models without **Black Blood** within (ɣ)1 suffer 1 damage when this model suffers damage."

- Manifest Event:

  Ours: Enemy models in base contact with terrain immediately suffer 1 damage that cannot be reduced or prevented. Any model damaged in this way may push up to 2" in the most direct route to leave the terrain.

RESTRICTIONS

Lilith, Avatar

The Wrath of Malifaux

MANIFESTED

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Forceful Indoctrination: Friendly models hired into this Crew gain the Nephilim Characteristic and the following Ability for the rest of the game: "**Black Blood:** All models without **Black Blood** within (ɣ)1 suffer 1 damage when this model suffers damage."

  The Land Rebels: All severe terrain in play gains the hazardous trait. All friendly models ignore the severe and hazardous terrain traits.

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (1) Primal Vines (**Ca** 6🗡 / TN: 10🗡 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 12): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

  🗡 ***Grasping Vines:*** After damaging, the target gains the **Slow** Condition.

  🗡🗡 ***Pulled In:*** After damaging, push the target up to 6" towards any terrain piece.

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Lilith, Avatar

Avatar of Insanity

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

PREMANIFEST

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Paranoia: Enemy models within ❶6 must pass a TN 11 **Wp** duel to target models friendly to them with Actions or the Action fails.

- Manifest Event:

  Impossible Whispers: All enemy models within (ɣ)10 gain the following Condition until the start of their next Activation: "**Mood Swing:** When this model's controller has the opportunity to Activate a model, the opponent may choose for this model to Activate instead if it is available to Activate."

RESTRICTIONS

Pandora, Avatar

The Death of Hope

MANIFESTED

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Paranoia: Enemy models within ❶6 must pass a TN 11 **Wp** duel to target models friendly to them with Actions or the Action fails.

  Anathema: Enemy models within ❶6 lose any immunity to Terrifying, Horror Duels, and **Paralyze**, except for immunity gained from passing a Horror Duel.

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (1) Tentacles (**Ml** 6🗡 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 3): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage. Models damaged by this Action must take a TN 13 Horror Duel.

  🗡🗡 ***Gripped by Madness:*** After damaging, target gains the following Condition until the end of the game: "**Mood Swing:** When this model's controller has the opportunity to Activate a model, the opponent may choose for this model to Activate instead if it is available to Activate."

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Pandora, Avatar

Avatar of Imagination

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Sleepwalking: When this model succesfully uses the **Safe In My Bed** Trigger, it may push up to 3" in any direction after resolving the current Action.

- Manifest Event:

  It's My Dream, Not Yours!: This Crew may discard one of its Schemes; it loses any **VP** gained from the Scheme and may not gain any more **VP** from it. If it does so, it may select a new Scheme which must be revealed. The new Scheme is not limited to the original Scheme Pool. Any models named by the new Scheme must still be in play.

PREMANIFEST



RESTRICTIONS

Dreamer, Avatar

The Sandman

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Sleepwalking: When this model succesfully uses the **Safe In My Bed** Trigger, it may push up to 3" in any direction after resolving the current Action.

  Twist the World: This model counts as **Ht** 5 when it is drawing LoS, and **Ht** 1 when other models are drawing LoS to it.

  Imagination Land: At the end of the Turn, if this model has the **Waking** Condition, it may choose to raise or lower the value of its **Waking** Condition by 1.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Dreamer, Avatar

Avatar of Performance

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Creative Salvage: Models killed by this model drop a Scrap Marker in addition to any other Markers dropped.

- Manifest Event:

  The Encore: All friendly Puppets in play immediately perform a (1) Action.

PREMANIFEST



RESTRICTIONS

Collodi, Avatar

The Puppeteer

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Prized Collection: Friendly models with the Personal Puppet Condition gain +1 to all duels they make.

  A New Act: Friendly Puppets within 6 gain the following Attack Action:

  (1) Thrown Needle (**Sh** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐10): Target suffers 1/3/4 damage and gains the **Poison +1** Condition.

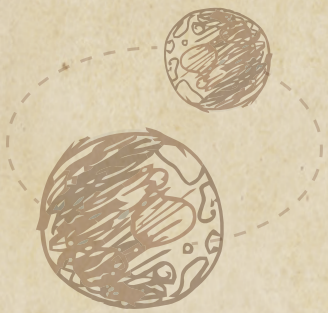
MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Collodi, Avatar





Malifaux's human settlers have quickly ascribed meanings and superstitions to the two moons that pass over them, bright Illios the revealer of truths and sullen Delios whose light deceives. The Neverborn, who have lived beneath the moons for uncounted generations, have their own relationship with them, based not on the qualities or phases of each moon but of the movements they make together in the sky. The Neverborn lunar cycle revolves around particular juxtapositions whose irregular rhythms are tracked by their shamans and masters the way Earthside cultures have always tracked solstices and equinoxes.

When both moons align together in the sky they create a predator's night, their combined light seemingly brighter than it should be and the shadows strangely darker, all the better to conceal the hunter and illuminate the prey. Such nights have special significance for the Nephilim, who use them to swear oaths, make pacts and settle grievances.

When the moonlight shines down from opposed angles, everything casts a doubled shadow and when the moons are placed just so, all of the crisscrossing shadows seem twisted and wavering, tricking the eye as it tries to judge movement and distance. These are the nights for the shapeshifting Neverborn breeds, the Doppelgangers, Changelings and their even stranger kin, who flit through the tangled shadows in silent and intricate dances, stealing one another's forms and faces, twisting them and stealing them back again.

OUTCAST AVATARS



AVATAR OF SLAUGHTER

COST: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Called to Slaughter: When a friendly model within ❶10 kills an enemy with an **MI** Attack, it may place a Scheme Maker in base contact with the enemy before it is removed from play.

- Manifest Event:

  Call of the Masamune: Target friendly model in play gains the Sister Characteristic until the end of the game.

PREMANIFEST

RESTRICTIONS

Viktoria of Ashes, Avatar

THE MASAMUNE

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Horizon's End: At the start of this model's Activation, it may push up to 4" towards any friendly Sister model in play.

  Twist the Blade, Sister: After this model damages an enemy model with an Attack Action, another friendly Sister within ❶2 may discard a card to take a (1) Action without spending AP. This Action may not declare Triggers.

  My Turn, Sister: After another friendly Sister within ❶2 deals damage with an Attack Action, this model may discard a card to take a (1) Action without spending any AP. This Action may not declare Triggers.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Viktoria of Ashes, Avatar

THE AVATAR OF CONFLICT

COST: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) "With You, Sir!": Until the end of the Turn, friendly models within 6 do not flip a card for friendly Freikorps models when shooting into an engagement.

- Manifest Event:

  MEDIC!: This model may be placed in base contact with target friendly model within 10". The target heals all damage and gains the Freikorps Characteristic for the rest of the game.

PREMANIFEST

RESTRICTIONS

Von Schill, Avatar

THE WOUNDED SOLDIER

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Strategist: Friendly Freikorps gain the following Ability while in LoS of this model: "**Companion**: After a friendly model ends its Activation within 6" of this model, this model may Activate immediately as a Chain Activation."

  "JOOOHHHNNNNNYYYYY!": When a friendly Freikorps model within LoS is killed by an enemy, this model receives the **Fast** Condition.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Von Schill, Avatar

AVATAR OF OBLITERATION

COST: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Obliteration's Pull: This model gains + to all opposed duels against models with any Conditions.

- Manifest Event:

  Void Echoes: Immediately make a **Soulstone Sword** Attack Action against target enemy Minion in play regardless of LoS without spending AP. This Attack gains +X to the final duel total.

PREMANIFEST

RESTRICTIONS

Tara, Avatar

OBLIVION

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Obliteration's Pull: This model gains + to all opposed duels against models with any Conditions.

  Heart of the Void: When an enemy model within 6 with the **Fast** Condition is killed, this model may discard a card to summon a Void Wretch in base contact with the killed model before removing it.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Tara, Avatar

Avatar of Condemnation

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Condemned: Enemy models treat the Red Joker as if it were the Black Joker while opposing this model in a duel or flipping damage against this model.

- Manifest Event:

  Dead Man Walking: This model immediately takes a **(1) Suppressed Memories** Action against all enemy models within 6" and LoS without spending AP.

PREMANIFEST

RESTRICTIONS

Jack Daw, Avatar

The Betrayed

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Condemned: Enemy models treat the Red Joker as if it were the Black Joker while opposing this model in a duel or flipping damage against this model.

  Scent of Betrayal: This model ignores LoS while targeting Tormented models.

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (1) Verdict (**Ca** 7 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 8) Target Tormented model suffers 4/5/6 damage.

  "***Justice" Done:*** After killing the target, draw 2 cards.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Jack Daw, Avatar

Avatar of Contagion

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Sepsis: This model gains + during opposed duels with models which have at least one Upgrade attached.

  Endless Rats: When a non-Peon model is hired into this Crew's Arsenal during the New Hires step, it may add a Malifaux Rat to its Arsenal for free.

- Manifest Event:

  Blight the Land: All enemy models in (↕)10 gain the following Condition until the end of the game: "**Blighted +1**: At the end of the Turn, increase this Condition's value by 1."

PREMANIFEST

RESTRICTIONS

Hamelin, Avatar

The Black Death

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Sepsis: This model gains + during opposed duels with models which have at least one Upgrade attached.

  Endless Rats: When a non-Peon model is hired into this Crew's Arsenal during the New Hires step, it may add a Malifaux Rat to its Arsenal for free.

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (1) The Gnawing Death (**Ca** 7 / TN: 11 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 10): Push all friendly Vermin models within (↕)6 of the target into base contact with the target. Then, any friendly Vermin in base contact with the target may immediately make a (1) Attack Action against it which may not declare Triggers.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Hamelin, Avatar

Avatar of Entropy

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

PREMANIFEST

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  The Ground Trembles: This Crew may hire Horseman models regardless of Faction.

  Call Forth: During the Aftermath step, choose one Horseman model which is not already in your Arsenal and add it to your Arsenal for each enemy Master or Henchman killed or sacrificed by this model.

  The End Draws Nigh: Whenever a friendly Horseman model within ❶10 suffers damage, this model may suffer 1 damage to reduce the damage suffered by the Horseman by 1.

- Manifest Event:

  The Final Ride: All friendly Horseman models in LoS heal 1 damage and then may push up to 4" towards this model.

RESTRICTIONS

Leveticus, Avatar

The Rider

MANIFESTED

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Call Forth: During the Aftermath step, choose one Horseman model which is not already in your Arsenal and add it to your Arsenal for each enemy Master or Henchman killed or sacrificed by this model.

  Blackened Scepter: While this model is in play, friendly Horseman models which are killed or sacrificed are buried instead and heal 1 damage. When this model is buried, unbury any Horseman buried in this way within 2" of this model before removing it.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Ride Forth: This model may discard a card to make target friendly Horseman model within 6" immediately perform a (0) Action.

50mm

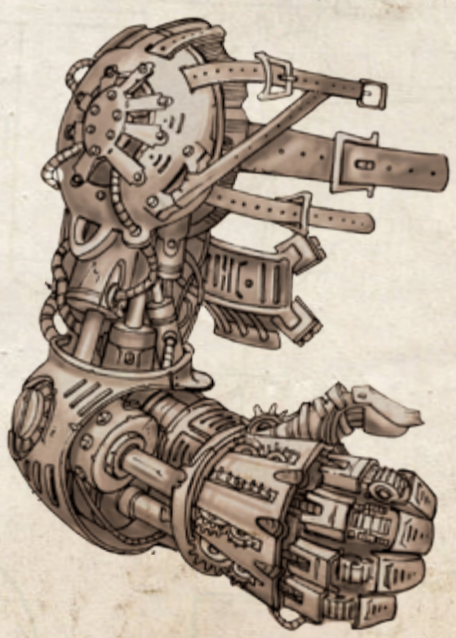
RESTRICTIONS

Leveticus, Avatar

The Lender's Fail Safe

The Lender's Fail Safe is a nasty little device that is used to ensure that anyone who receives a pneumatic limb also pays it off. Generally, it is one half of a Soulstone which is built into the limb. The other half of the stone is enchanted to resonate with its twin, allowing whoever holds it to control the limb. It is frequently used by the Union and various artificers who specialize in creating these prosthetics. After all, very few can afford to pay for an entire limb in one lump sum, and most people do not plan on having their arms torn off. The Lender's Fail Safe (or Taelor device, after one rather notorious non-payer) has caused many debtors to hop right into the bank on their own metal leg.

While Soulstones are expensive, one is often worth it to create an indentured servant. After all, it can always be removed upon repossession.



GREMLIN AVATARS



Avatar of Big Hats

PREMANIFEST

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Stagnant Water: Whenever a friendly Skeeter within 8 is killed or sacrificed, this model may discard a card to summon a friendly Skeeter into base contact with this model.

- Manifest Event:

  Get 'em, Boys: All friendly Gremlins in play may immediately take a (1) **Sh** Action.

RESTRICTIONS

Somer, Avatar

Heart of the Bayou

MANIFESTED

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Stagnant Water: Whenever a friendly Skeeter within 8 is killed or sacrificed, this model may discard a card to summon a friendly Skeeter into base contact with this model.

  Pig Wranglin': Whenever a friendly Pig Activates, if there is a friendly Gremlin within 4" and LoS of it, the Pig gains **Fast**.

  Make My Own Luck: This model gains + to all flips while there are no cards in its controller's hand.

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Somer, Avatar

AVATAR OF PERFORATION

COST: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This Upgrade may only be purchased at the start of the game; it may not be attached during the game.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Claim The Kill: After killing an enemy model, this model may discard a card to place a Scheme Marker in base contact with the killed model before removing it.
- Manifest Event:

  Walking Arsenal: This model may immediately attach up to three Upgrades with the restriction Ophelia which it does not already have attached.

PREMANIFEST



RESTRICTIONS

Ophelia, Avatar

THE PERFORATOR

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Instinctual: This model may take two (0) Actions during its Activation, so long as they are both different.

  Uncharitable: When this model takes a Tactical Action targeting another friendly Kin, it may discard a card with a value of 9 or higher to target itself instead.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Ophelia, Avatar

AVATAR OF INDULGENCE

COST: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Triggers to its **Hangover** Action:

  ✕ ***The Good Stuff:*** After succeeding, target gains **Slow**.

  ⋓ ***Hops:*** After succeeding, target gains the following Condition until the end of the turn: "**Bouncy Drunk:** +1 **Wk** and +1 **Cg**."
- Manifest Event:

  A Refill?: Place this model anywhere in play, not in terrain, then all models within ⟟6 receive **Poison +2**.

PREMANIFEST



RESTRICTIONS

Brewmaster, Avatar

THE DRUNKEN MASTER

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Drunken Gremlin Kung Fu Master: This model treats all of its ⍁ modifiers as if they were ⚅.

  Perfect Tolerance: Friendly models within ⟟6 may choose not to suffer damage from the **Poison** Condition.
- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (1) Barstool (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 2/4/6 damage.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Brewmaster, Avatar

Avatar of Droves

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- Friendly Pig models in LoS gain the following Ability:

  Companion: After a friendly model ends its Activation within 6" of this model, this model may Activate immediately as a Chain Activation.

- Manifest Event:

  Join the Drove: All friendly Pigs in play may move up to 3" and heal 1 damage.

PREMANIFEST

RESTRICTIONS

Ulix, Avatar

The Swineherd

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Companion: After a friendly model ends its Activation within 6" of this model, this model may Activate immediately, this is a Chain Activation.

  Grow up to be Strong: At the end of the game, before calculating **VP**, place a Scheme Marker in base contact with every friendly Piglet within ❶8, then sacrifice those Piglets.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Herd 'um: All friendly Pigs within (↑)6 may push up to 3" in any direction.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Ulix, Avatar

Avatar of Pyrotechnics

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Rocket On My Back: This model gains +1 **Wk**.

  Preparations: At the start of this model's Activation, look at the top two cards of this model's deck and place them on the top or bottom of the deck in any order.

- Manifest Event:

  Start the Show: Select up to three friendly models in play. Deal 2 damage to all models within (↑)2 of the selected models and then sacrifice the selected models.

PREMANIFEST

RESTRICTIONS

Wong, Avatar

The Grand Finale

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Light Them All!!!: This model may Activate a total of three times per Turn instead of the usual once per Turn. At the end of the Turn, sacrifice this model; it is automatically Finished Off.

  Rocket On My Back: This model gains +1 **Wk**.

  Pretty Lights: Enemy models may not declare Triggers in duels with this model.

  Nonstop Explosions: Immediately before declaring a Trigger, this model may discard a card to add any one suit to its current duel total.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Wong, Avatar

AVATAR OF UNDERDOGS

COST: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Juggernaut: This model may discard a card to heal 1/2/4 damage.

- Manifest Event:

  Never Give Up: This model gains **Reactivate**.

PREMANIFEST

RESTRICTIONS

Mah Tucket, Avatar

THE MATRIARCH

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Take Care of It Myself: This model gains +3 **Cg**.

  Search Their Pockets: After killing an enemy model, draw a card.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Juggernaut: This model may discard a card to heal 1/2/4 damage.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

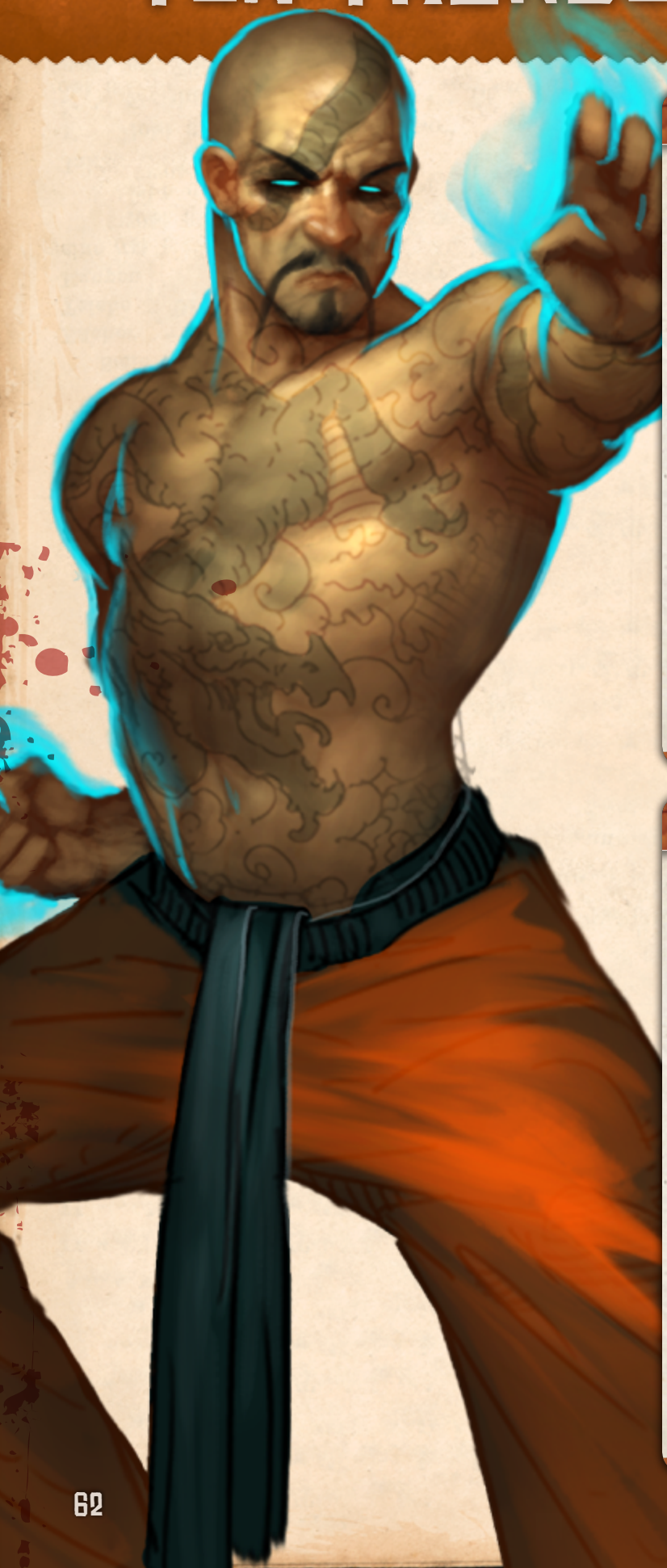
Mah Tucket, Avatar

GREMLIN 'SHINE

The affinity of the Bayou Gremlin for liquor has become well known in Malifaux City. So much so that many bar owners and shop keeps have started stocking "Genuine Gremlin 'Shine" for those customers who just have no desire to remember the next several hours of their lives. The purchase of Gremlin 'Shine is illegal, so it is asked for in hushed whispers; the notion that the stuff is prohibited seems to help drive its popularity. This notion is something most vendors of the stuff help along, winking and whispering that 'you didn't get it here' as they pass the bottle across the bar. Of course, none of it actually is genuine. Usually it's just cheap, hard liquor mixed with turpentine or other noxious chemicals to give it a kick. But why deny a customer their fantasies?



TEN THUNDERS AVATARS



AVATAR OF REBELLION

COST: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Throw Off Your Shackles! (**Wp** 6 / TN: 13 / Rg: (↑)6): Up to two friendly Minion models within range remove all Conditions. Any model that removed a Condition in this way receives **Fast**.

- Manifest Event:

  The Working Class: All friendly Minion models in play gain the following Condition for the rest of the game: "**Rise Up!** This model gains ↑ to Attack flips."

PREMANIFEST

RESTRICTIONS

Mei Feng, Avatar

THE PROLETARIAN

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Together We Stand: Friendly Minion models within ↑8 gain ↑ to all **Df** and **Wp** flips.

  For Our Leader We Fall: When a friendly Minion within ↑6 is killed or sacrificed, this model gains the **Reactivate** Condition.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Mei Feng, Avatar

Avatar of Thunder

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (1) Airburst (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 10): Push target model up to 5" in any direction. This Action may not target the same model more than once per Turn.

- Manifest Event:

  Thunderclap: All enemy models in play must succeed on a TN 12 **Wk** duel or gain **Slow**.

PREMANIFEST



RESTRICTIONS

Misaki, Avatar

The Eye of the Storm

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  The Storm: When this model Activates, it may choose to gain the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Stillness:** This model reduces its **Wk** and **Cg** to 0 and gains +X to **MI**."

  Lightning Strike: If this Crew has at least 1 Soulstone in its Pool when this model Activates, this model may discard all Soulstones to gain 2 additional AP for the duration of the Activation.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) On the Wind: Push this model up to 4" in any direction.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Misaki, Avatar

Avatar of Debt

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Ability:

  The House Wins: This model wins opposed duels with enemy models on a tie, even if it was the Defender.

- Manifest Event:

  All In: Your opponent may play any number of cards from their hand onto the table, face up. Then you may do the same. Then each player flips a card from the top of their deck. Determine a total value for each player by adding all of the cards they played and the card they flipped. The player with the highest total wins. If either player goes above 21, they automatically lose. If both players go over 21, they both lose. The winning player immediately scores 1 **VP**.

PREMANIFEST



RESTRICTIONS

Jakob Lynch, Avatar

Collector of Debts

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Interest: Enemy models within 8 do not remove the **Under the Influence** Condition at the end of the Turn.

  The House Wins: This model wins opposed duels with enemy models on a tie, even if it was the Defender.

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (1) Default (**Ca** 8 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 8): Select a friendly Hungering Darkness in play and place it in base contact with the target. The Hungering Darkness may immediately Activate after the current Activation as a Chain Activation.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Jakob Lynch, Avatar

Avatar of Adventure

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Loot the Body: When an enemy model is killed or sacrificed within 6, draw a card.

- Manifest Event:

  I Didn't Want To Have To Do This: This model may immediately attach one Upgrade with the Restriction Lucas McCabe which is not attached to any friendly model in play, ignoring all other restrictions.

PREMANIFEST



RESTRICTIONS

Lucas McCabe, Avatar

The Raider

- If this model is affected by the Dismount Ability, the Dismounted McCabe is summoned with a 50mm base.

- This model gains the following Ability:

  X Marks the Spot: Friendly models Activating within 3 of a Scheme Marker gain +3 **Wk** for the duration of the Activation.

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (1) Ancient Runes (**Ca** 7 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 12): Target model suffers 3/4/6 damage.

  - **Curse:** After damaging, the target must discard a card if able.
  - **Revitalize:** After damaging, this model heals 2 damage.

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Lucas McCabe, Avatar

Avatar of Seeking

Cost: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Traveler: When this model gains the **Chi** Condition, it may immediately push up to 2" in any direction.

- Manifest Event:

  Ask the Ancestors: Name an Upgrade with the Ascendant restriction which this model does not already have attached. This model may immediately attach the named Upgrade regardless of other restrictions.

PREMANIFEST



RESTRICTIONS

Yan Lo, Avatar

The Enlightened

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Whispers on the Wind: Whenever this model gains the **Chi** Condition, it gains an additional **Chi +1** and draws a card.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Channel The Ancestors: Lower this model's **Chi** Condition value by 3 to summon an Ashigaru or Komainu within 6".

MANIFESTED

50mm

RESTRICTIONS

Yan Lo, Avatar

THE WEEPING WELL

The Weeping Well can be found in an abandoned corner of the Little Kingdom. It is part of the structure of the original city, so it was not built by human hands. It is said that a woman whose children were murdered threw herself into the well in despair and drowned. Faint moans and whimpers can be heard coming from the well at night, but most dismiss these as some sort of natural phenomenon, a breeze echoing from a small connecting tunnel, or perhaps some sort of bird or animal. Children often throw coins into the well and make a wish, and more than one swears that a new toy showed up under their pillow that night, or candy appeared in their pocket out of nowhere. Adults who wish upon the well never seem to be so fortunate; often falling victim to accidents, murder, and bloody disappearances. Of course, most hold that it is all just superstitious nonsense…

AVATAR OF MORNING LIGHT

COST: 0 SS

Campaign, Skill

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Steps Toward Enlightenment: Once per Turn, after damaging an enemy model, this model may add 1 Soulstone to this Crew's Soulstone Pool.

  Eternal Dragon: Enemy models may not remove or end Conditions on this model.

- Manifest Event:

  The Tide Washes Forth: Enemy models may not take Interact Actions for the remainder of the Turn.

PREMANIFEST

RESTRICTIONS

Shenlong, Avatar

THE DRAGON

- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Eternal Dragon: Enemy models may not remove or end Conditions on this model.

  Cower Before the Dawn: Enemy models within 6 may not take Interact Actions and count as having the Peon Characteristic.

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (1) Howl of the Dawn (**Sh** 7 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 10): Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.

  Our Power Grows: After killing target non-Leader enemy model, all non-Injury Upgrades which were attached to the target are attached to this model, ignoring all restrictions. This does not affect either Crew's Arsenal in any way.

MANIFESTED

50mm

Shenlong, Avatar



This chapter contains a story as well as new models and Upgrades for **THE GUILD** Faction.
These models and Upgrades are not a part of the Campaign and may be hired normally during any game.

ROLE REVERSALS

BY: GRAEME STEVENSON

Dark alleys and skullduggery go together like death and taxes, and this particular alley was no exception. It was typical of the southern Quarantine Zone in that its walls were high and menacing, the bricks were black with soot and mold, and the dirt floor was buried under layers of rotting matter. There was also a strong chemical funk hanging in the air that seemed to be seeping from the crumbling building beyond the alley mouth, where no lights burned in the broken windows but there was an undeniable sense of occupation and a lurking presence within.

There were presences in the alley, too. Three of them, huddled together and clearly involved in some nefarious purpose.

The first was tall and gaunt, with a shock of wild red hair and a filthy surgeon's smock. The mad light in his eyes was exacerbated by the unhinged breadth of his smile. He looked exactly like the sort of person one should never consider buying anything from, and yet that appeared to be precisely what was going on. The second figure was short and extremely broad, and wheeling a very large crate into the alley with the assistance of a trolley. The crate creaked and rocked periodically, although it was unclear whether this was due to the rutted surface under the trolley or movement from within.

The third figure stood a head taller than the mad surgeon, and was swaddled in a heavy, hooded cape, in accordance with the clothing guidelines when attending underhand deals in which anonymity is considered expedient.

"There we are," said Dr. McMourning, spreading one gore-stained glove to indicate the arriving crate. "Just as you ordered."

"And the...additional specifications?" asked the hooded figure. Its voice was disguised, McMourning couldn't even tell if it belonged to a man or a woman.

The doctor nodded, his grin magnified. "All in place. I am certain you will be satisfied."

"Very well," nodded the figure. It drew a velvet bag from the folds of its cloak and handed it to McMourning. Its contents clinked like crystal as it settled. "I have a carriage waiting in the next street. Have your man wheel it out for me."

"You heard the order, Sebastian," McMourning echoed. "Get to it."

Sebastian looked at him.

"And be quick about it," McMourning added over his shoulder, grinning reassuringly at the robed figure.

Sebastian looked at him.

"Are you still here?" McMourning craned his head around to glare. "You were given an order, in case you weren't paying attention."

Sebastian looked at him.

"Don't take that tone with me," McMourning snapped, putting his hands on his hips. "It wasn't my fault, you know."

Sebastian looked at him.

"Well how was I to know it would cause an explosion?" the doctor continued, getting exasperated. "I can't be responsible for everything that goes into a laboratory, you know."

Sebastian looked at him.

McMourning turned back to the shrouded figure and made an apologetic face. "Sorry about this. He's been particularly obtuse ever since 'the incident.'"

"The incident?"

McMourning rolled his eyes. "Well, he's been a good assistant and I thought I'd make him a companion for his birthday." The doctor held up his hands. "I know, I know! I'm a sentimental old fool, but I thought he might like it. Nothing too complex, you understand. Just a pair of legs I got from an ex-dancer and a few other bits and bobs I had lying around. Vacuous, to be certain, but easy on the eye."

Sebastian looked at him.

"Yes, well it was an honest mistake!" McMourning rounded on his silent companion again, apparently forgetting the client was still standing there. "This new microwave technology is very tricky! Not something you'd understand!"

Sebastian looked at him.

"Well, you should look where you're going when you're dancing! Don't swing her into the beam, next time!"

Sebastian looked at him.

"Fine! Fine!" the doctor threw up his hands, evidently at the end of his tether. "I'll make you another one! Okay? Will that make you happy?"

Sebastian sniffed and marched off with the crate.

"Honestly," the doctor grumbled, running a glove through his crazy hair. "You just can't get the staff these days."

Outside the city, to the south east where the wyrdwood trees bent and sagged as they met the sweating vegetation of the Bayou, was a clearing. In that clearing stood a fat man in travel-worn leathers. One side of his face was shiny and crimson from old burns and his hands were covered in scar tissue. Behind him stood a sturdy wide-wheeled wagon and a small crate that rattled and jiggled vigorously. The crate had been chained down to the wagon's flatbed and jingled constantly as something inside fought viciously for freedom.

A tall hooded figure stood sweltering in the afternoon heat, its cloth damp and muddied by the terrain.

"There ye go," the scarred man said. "Cain't think what you want it for. Nasty critter."

"Why is not your concern," said the figure, and handed over a velvet bag of clinking objects.

The man took the bag and hefted it—the weight was clearly to his satisfaction.

"Nice doin' business with ye," he said. "Might ye be lookin' for anythin' else in this line? I got me a pair o' horned—"

"This will be sufficient, thank you," the figure cut him off. "I will have the wagon returned to you when the cargo has been off-loaded."

The man nodded and watched the figure climb aboard and snap the reins. The mule brayed and jerked forward, dragging the rattling crate and its contents into the trees and out of sight.

He opened the bag and looked inside, his grin widening. A very nice little earner. In truth, he hadn't needed to go out and catch it in the wild—he'd had one already locked up for just such an eventuality—but it didn't hurt to make the client think they were getting their money's worth.

Well, he mused as he tucked his payment into his waistcoat, he wasn't sure why that creature in particular was required but whoever opened that crate was going to have a lousy afternoon.

The Star Theater was busy, but then it always was. Quiet corner booths were very difficult to obtain at any time of the evening unless you happened to be a somebody, or knew them well enough to garner their favor.

The man settled in the booth watching the dancing girls was a somebody. The hooded figure beside him, however, was an enigma.

"The package is ready?" the figure asked in its curiously disguised voice. "As I specified?"

"It is," Victor Ramos nodded, "but I should tell you that I am not in the habit of dealing with unknown parties."

"I wish to remain anonymous for the moment," the figure said, "but rest assured I am on your side. I imagine that is obvious now that I have advised you of the intended purpose for the package."

"Which I still think is a mistake," Ramos warned. "I fear you have underestimated your adversary. She is not to be trifled with under any circumstances."

"That is a risk I am willing to accept. Besides, you will not be implicated. Your involvement in this will never be uncovered."

Ramos was silent, but his expression conveyed his unease well enough.

"I trust that my donation to your cause was sufficient?"

"Very generous, but the money is not in question," Ramos

said. "Will you at least re-consider my offer of assistance? Between us, we stand a far better chance of ridding ourselves of this particular thorn for good and all."

"Thank you for the offer, but this is something I must do my own way." There was a coldness stealing into the figure's voice. "Something *personal*, you might say." The figure stood, looming over the Union leader. "You will be reading about my triumph soon enough. Good evening."

Ramos watched the figure move away through the crowd. He was certain he'd be reading *something* in the periodicals, but he doubted very much it would be the headline his mysterious associate had envisioned.

Sonnia Criid fingered the shot glass for a while then downed the bourbon, flicking her head back in a practiced manner that got the alcohol through the slit in her mask and into her mouth. She knew she should probably have stopped by now, but her headache was only starting to dissipate and the bottle was still half full.

The bar was quiet (and had become considerably more so since she had arrived), which suited her fine. She needed some peace to think.

The parchment was spread flat out on the table in front of her and she read it for the hundredth time:

My Dearest Friend,

Only you can help me now. I know I should have told you sooner, but I didn't know who I could trust and now I fear it may be too late. They are coming for me. I don't have much time.

Meet me tonight in the old brickworks off Ash Lane, in the Quarantine Zone. Come alone. I'll tell you everything.

The note was unsigned, and the hand was unfamiliar.

Sonnia poured herself another shot while she stared at it. Nothing new had occurred to her in the half-hour she'd been sitting here drinking, and she wasn't sure what inspiration she expected a bottle of cheap bourbon to bestow upon her anyway.

It was a trap. It was obviously a trap, but she couldn't for the life of her figure out who was trying to spring it. The street urchin that delivered it had actually been trying to slip it into her overcoat pocket when she caught him. All he'd been able to tell her was a big feller in a cloak had promised him a coin if he sneaked this note into her pocket—he hadn't seen his face, and when Sonnia went to where the urchin was meant to go and claim his reward she found the alley deserted.

She rotated the shot glass slowly in her hand, frowning down at the note.

Who would want to set a trap for her? *Take your pick*, she mused. Any number of Arcanist scum had it in for her, and it seemed that one of them had hatched a plot to try and knock her off. It didn't feel like any of the big players—Ramos was much too subtle for such a clumsy hook and Marcus was too direct.

A lieutenant, then. A low-ranker looking to make a name for themselves by chalking up the Guild's highest profile Arcanist hunter. Whatever. She realized she didn't really care.

Sonnia downed the bourbon and stood up, crumpling the note and stuffing it into her duster. She was tired of speculation, tired of being a bulls-eye for every magic freak that felt the Guild was to blame for their lack of judgment. She'd go to the brickworks, and she'd let them spring their trap. And then she'd burn them.

Ash Lane, she reflected. They couldn't have picked a better spot.

Lady Justice sat quite still at her desk, hands on the paper. She slid her index fingers across the lines, reading the message once again:

My Dearest Friend,

Only you can help me now. I know I should have told you sooner, but I didn't know who I could trust and now I fear it may be too late. They are coming for me. I don't have much time.

Meet me tonight in the old brickworks off Ash Lane, in the Quarantine Zone. Come alone. I'll tell you everything.

The paper was thick, and of good quality, which suggested wealth. The writing was heavy, scored deep into the page, an indication of anger and physical strength, but the handwriting was elaborate and meticulous like a woman's.

She lifted the page and sniffed it again. Definitely rose

hips. The scent was vaguely familiar, but she couldn't place from where.

The letter had been on her desk when she returned to her office. There had been a faint scent of sweat in the chamber and crumbs of river mud on the boards when she crouched to sweep a hand about her—the stink of fish and human effluent was unmistakable.

But no corruption. No trace of the pungent odor of death or the malignant hand of a Resurrectionist. More likely someone commissioned a street waif to sneak in here and deposit the letter, one who spent a lot of time down by the river cadging fish off the boats. The author wanted to keep their identity a secret.

Lady Justice had no doubt that it was a trap. She had no close friends, childhood or otherwise, and no associate of hers would send a cryptic note begging for a mysterious rendezvous in the Quarantine Zone irrespective of what predicament they were in. The only purpose of this message was to get her to be there at the appointed time to allow the engineer of this affair to present their true purpose.

And she did not intend to disappoint them.

She got to her feet and strapped her greatsword across her back, a gesture as unconscious and automatic as breathing now. Without the heavy steel she felt incomplete, unable to execute her duty as an appointed lawgiver.

As she walked to the door of her office, the steel points of her heels rang against the floor, filling the room with high pitched echoes that fed back dimensions, shapes and distances. This was a deliberate design, and the truth behind the myth of her legendary irritability. While underlings scurried to complete their tasks for fear of being accosted by the terrifying apparition that was tapping her foot with impatience, she was in fact re-affirming the size of the room, the doorways, the furniture.

She did it near-constantly, without really thinking about it. Those echoes were her eyes in many respects, and so much the better if it put everyone else on edge. The quicker they jumped at her instruction, the quicker she got the job done.

She strode through the halls, her heels ringing like steel bells on the marble floor while serfs and cataloguists swerved out of her way.

She was heading for the Quarantine Zone and woe betide whoever was waiting for her.

Perdita Ortega was making good time.

The horse was strong, a big gray Andalusian mare called Polo from her father's stable, and it ate up the miles to Malifaux with ease. She seemed to sense her rider's excitement, which spurred her on, leaping scrub and low cacti and galloping across the hard dust plains.

Perdita squinted up at the afternoon sun as she rode. Another four hours of sunlight. She would reach the city just after dark, which was perfect. The note had said to come at night.

She played it again in her mind:

My Dearest Friend,

Only you can help me now. I know I should have told you sooner, but I didn't know who I could trust and now I fear it may be too late. They are coming for me. I don't have much time.

Meet me tonight in the old brickworks off Ash Lane, in the Quarantine Zone. Come alone. I'll tell you everything.

It had made no sense to her the first time she had read it. Who could possibly be needing her help? And why would they call her all the way to the city—all her friends lived near the Ortega ranch, or in Santa Philippe, less than an hour's ride.

The note was false. It was too vague, hinting at information but confirming nothing, leaving gaps for her to fill with her own conclusions like those phony fortune tellers that trawled through the farming towns looking for a gullible housewife to part from her silver.

A trap then—Perdita's heart had quickened with excitement. A fish hook dangled in full view, glinting with the promise of danger and revelation. She had not been able to resist.

Santiago had insisted on coming with her, to watch her back, but she had refused his help. It would be a pleasant outing to visit the city without her brothers bickering and arguing among themselves, and she was curious to find out who had written such a cryptic note.

She charged towards Malifaux, filled with the promise of a

mystery rendezvous and the knowledge that tonight would be nothing less than an adventure.

Sonnia had been watching the brickworks for a half-hour but there was no sign of life. She'd been out this way before some months ago to unearth an Arcanist cell but had never been inside this building in particular.

It had a storage yard at the far end, now a vast mound of collapsed brick stacks shot through with a labyrinth of narrow alleys and dead-ends. The brickworks itself was an oblong building that sported four vast chimneys, three of which were still standing. The fourth, and closest, had been sheared in half by some unknown force countless years ago and had crushed part of the building's front in its collapse, spreading itself and the building's entrance across the street.

Further back were glimpses of titanic ovens, and beyond that was a wooden annex that held hoppers of river clay, long since dried into rock-hard sediment. It was obvious that this place had once been a site of great industry, no doubt home to several thousand workers producing the components necessary to build the city around it.

Now, it was just another moldering relic; one more black husk that told the sad tale of a civilization long since gone back to the dust.

When she was certain that she wasn't being watched, Sonnia moved out to the street and walked cautiously towards the collapsed entrance of the brickworks. Although the entrance foyer had been smeared over a hundred yards by the toppling chimney, the wreckage had long since settled and it was an easy enough task to clamber up the shallow hillside of broken stone and slip through the waist-height opening and into the building proper.

It was a starry night, but inside the building, Sonnia immediately grew more cautious. It was black in here, with barely enough illumination to see twenty feet in front of her. She waited for her vision to adjust but it soon became evident this building was in complete darkness. Once she had ventured past the entrance and the gaping hole in its roof, she wouldn't be able to see her hand in front of her face.

Even knowing an ambush was up ahead didn't compensate for being blinded, and so she raised her hand and called a small cone of flame into being. Barely a match-head's worth, shivering in the palm of her hand, just enough to throw a dim orange glow about her, and help her discern her surroundings.

She sneaked slowly forward, adjusting her sword to make sure it was loose in its scabbard, found a black doorway and went through it. She could feel Cherufe somewhere inside, pacing like an animal. It too seemed to sense that a confrontation was approaching and was growing agitated, no doubt hoping it could twist circumstances in its favor, perhaps finally escaping its hated prison.

"Not tonight," she whispered as she crept along a dark corridor.

The Tyrant roiled and snarled inside her.

Sonnia moved deeper into the building, her little nimbus of orange light growing weaker as she moved further and further down the corridor until she turned a corner and it vanished entirely, leaving only inky black.

Night had fully fallen. She could sense it from the cooling air, from the night sounds beginning their chorus around her. The trap was laid; all that was required was the mouse.

Lady Justice stepped slowly and carefully through the maze of bricks. Her heels clicked piercingly on the stone slabs underfoot and her acute ears picked up the stacks all around. Where an uneducated ambusher might think they had the edge over a blind person in a maze, she knew better.

She could sense the bricks around her even in the dark, so she could "see" further than they could, and the proximity of the maze brought them into her melee circle, which was simultaneously better for her and far, far worse for them.

A cunning opponent would have drawn her into an open space where she would be more vulnerable, try to pick her off at range, but in here the ball was solidly in her court, which was the reason she had chosen to enter the brickworks through the storage yard.

Every so often she would freeze, letting the evening air carry the scents of old brick, lichen and damp to her, listening to the softest sigh of the wind sliding through the brick stacks, the distant squeal of some nocturnal animal falling prey to a predator, to the slow grating of the building settling infinitesimally on its foundations.

There was a presence here. It was elusive, but every so often she caught it. The faintest hint of rotting meat, a single scent molecule of corruption that did not belong in this dusty tomb of industry. The Resurrectionists were here.

She should not have been surprised. Who else would use such a blunt device to try and ambush her—the Resurrectionists were not known for their subtlety. However, this didn't *feel* like a Resurrectionist ploy for all that. It was a curious situation.

She reached back and drew her greatsword, slowly and cautiously so that there was not so much as a scrape of steel against leather. The stink of death was still very faint so they were not close, but they were here. She would find them, and then she would punish them.

She moved on.

Perdita took a deep breath and let it out slowly. It was a nice night, and it had been a nice ride. Even so, she hoped that she hadn't wasted the trip.

"Come out, come out where ever you are!" she shouted. "I rode a long way. This had better be a fun fight, pendejo."

Her fingers itched to draw her pistol from its waiting holster, but she left it. Someone had gone to some trouble to get her here. No need to get it over with too quickly. She grinned.

There was something up ahead. Sonnia raised the profile of her guiding flame just a fraction, enough to spread the ring of illumination another ten feet or so.

She had followed the corridor into a massive interior hall partly filled with the first of the four ovens that would have been used to bake the clay bricks. It was cold and dead now, but the oven was over thirty feet square and serviced by a titanic pair of iron double-doors at one end. Stacks of unfired bricks still littered the floor space around it, gray and dried-out, with a fuzzy top layer of dust and silt.



The light in here was fractionally better due to most of the skylights being smashed and admitting weak beams of silver light to the dusty interior.

Among the pallets of shaped clay at the entrance to the oven was a wooden crate. It stood up on its end and looked to be three or four feet square. She could tell from the relative cleanliness of the wood that it had not been here long, coupled with the scrapes and marks in the dust of someone trying to drag it into place, probably very recently. A pile of chains lay nearby along with an opened padlock, which made her nervous.

She looked up at the rusted gantries overhead that serviced the chimney stack and the skylights. Nothing. She checked again, but there was no sign of anything. Just black oblong shadows, stacks of old brick and the odd cobweb. Whoever this was, they had patience.

Well, she reasoned, *you've come this far.*

She took a step towards the crate and the top flew off with a bang, causing her to leap back and drop into a fighting crouch. The crate lid spun through the air and she saw something flashing before it fell out of sight and landed with a sound like shattering glass.

A black silhouette began to rise out of the crate, little more than a formless shadow that gradually began to coalesce into a humanoid figure. She squinted harder and saw that the figure was stepping out of the crate, wearing a heavy duster and boots just like hers. A long red mane of hair flashed as it caught the light from Sonnia's open palm and as the figure stepped into the circle of illumination, she saw that it wore the same baleful Mask as she.

Sonnia was staring at herself.

The storage yard had proven to be empty. Nothing had been through it recently—at least nothing had left a trail that Lady Justice could detect.

A large double door led into a sizeable chamber, judging by the reverberations of her echoing steps. This was where she was at a disadvantage and she slowed considerably, moving around the outer wall rather than into the center of the room. She detected large masses to her left and right that sounded as though they were made from the same bricks as the outer wall and, when she was close enough, she drew a hand across the surface to confirm it.

These must have been the ovens that cooked the bricks back when this place was still functioning. They would be put to use again now, as cover for Lady Justice as she worked her way around the room. She could also sense metal framework overhead, most likely service gantries from their faint hollow echoes, and that would be a prime place to put a sniper.

The smell of corruption was stronger here—still elusive, but she was definitely getting closer. There was another smell too, a steady permeation as there were no air currents inside the building. Sweat. Human sweat.

She had stopped to take another sounding when a piercing smash echoed from somewhere to her left, perhaps a hundred feet. It sounded like someone had dropped a pane of glass on the stone floor. She twisted in that direction, hunched, head cocked to pick up any sense of movement, and that was when the gantry overhead finally creaked.

She heard a strange *hiss-CRACK* and dived, rolling on her shoulder. Something streaked down from the gantry, sounding like a boiling kettle, and struck the stone paving where she had been a second before. The impact smashed the stone and she felt the flesh of her arms being stung by flying gravel as she came up to a crouch, her greatsword held horizontally across her body.

The gantry creaked again—someone was up there—and another *hiss-CRACK* made her jerk back the other way, feeling something like lightning passing her head, close enough to make her hair prickle with static electricity. The stone floor behind her exploded and her back was hammered with shrapnel.

It appeared she'd found her ambush.

The shadows were *everywhere,* Perdita realized, raising her paraffin lantern. She was confident that her reflexes were faster than anything else out here, but if she was ambushed from all sides at once there was a slim chance she might not be able to gun them all down before she herself was dragged to the ground.

With this in mind, she had found a wall and kept her back to it, sliding along and squinting into the gloom, swinging her lantern into archways and holes with her other hand resting on her pistol. The first thing to pop up with horns or blue skin was going to get a .45 caliber hole in its face.

Minutes went by while her boots got more and more scuffed and her frustration grew. Perdita had been born for battle; she was at her most alive when steel flashed and guns thundered, balanced on the knife edge of chance while those around did their best to kill and eat you. She was not a creeper or a sneaker, and had neither the patience nor sufficient control of her temper to persevere with this cloak-and-dagger nonsense for long. It had to be some Neverborn scheme.

"Where are you, diablo?" she muttered, coming to the end of a narrow passage and watching her lantern light spreading out into a wide pool. She had arrived at one end of a huge chamber, in which several hulking square shapes squatted like massive gargoyles. Her lamp illuminated one corner of the closest shape—it looked like a huge brick cube, but its purpose was lost on her.

Just then there was a sound of smashing glass from somewhere up ahead.

"Found you, monstruo."

Grinning, she drew her Peacebringer and advanced quickly into the huge chamber. She had only gone half a dozen strides before a sharp *crack* and a blue flash lit up the hall to her left. A second blast followed almost immediately after.

"Lo que...?"

Preternatural instinct made her duck and something heavy whooshed over her head, bringing with it a strong carrion stink. Perdita twisted away like a cat and spun around, revolver raised.

Her lantern illuminated a huge shape, close to seven feet tall and broad at the shoulder. It might have been a man once, but the crude stitching and unhealthy pallor informed her that this abomination was no longer living. It was garbed in a ragged brown shift from which long muscular arms projected and atop its broad, misshapen skull was a lank black-haired wig.

Whatever this absurd thing was, it certainly wasn't Neverborn.

"Yo no tengo tiempo para esto," she grumbled and shot it right between the eyes. The bullet *whanged* off its skull, jerking its head back and knocking the wig askew. Perdita saw a gleam of metal through the ripped flesh.

"Huh," she said.

It began to advance.

The doppelganger advanced with smooth strides.

It even walks like me, Sonnia realized, taking a step back. This was no Arcanist trick, this was something else. Something she'd never encountered before. Something alien.

Although there was no facial expression behind that blank Mask, there was a suggestion in the apparition's movements that indicated it was not friendly.

A loud *crack* sounded up ahead on the right and she caught a blue flash out of the corner of her eye. Her alter ego glanced that way for an instant and Sonnia saw her chance.

She raised both hands and *pushed.* Twin fireballs erupted from her palms, merging into a single whirling yellow planet of flame that washed over her opponent. Not leaving anything to chance, Sonnia kept the pressure on, turning the flames almost white as the temperature soared. Cherufe strained to be free, twisting within her, trying to exercise its power through her. If she let it, there was a chance the current of energy would become so great that she would be unable to stop it again.

Thick noxious smoke spewed into the air as she roasted the pretender, squinting against the glare to look for a staggering figure amid the scorching maelstrom, but there was nothing.

After ten seconds or so, she dropped her arms and sagged, having put a lot of effort into the blast while trying to restrain the angry Tyrant. The flames persisted a few moments longer, swirling around a shape that was emerging. It resolved itself as her doppelganger, quite unharmed and none the worse for wear. There wasn't even any charring around her duster.

"Fireproof, huh?" she said, disappointed.

The alter ego came forward again, opening its hands which were twisting into long jagged claws.

Sonnia reached over her shoulder and drew her runed blade with a jerk, holding the weapon with both hands as she settled into a combat stance. "Looks like we'll have to do this the old fashioned way."

The creature hissed and leapt at her.

Lady Justice swung her greatsword as another boiling hiss streaked towards her. The metal *spanged* as she deflected the attacking energy but she felt the nimbus of its power scorching the flesh of her face. That one had been close.

Whoever was up there, they were no Resurrectionist. Resurrectionists didn't throw balls of energy that blasted apart stone slabs.

It was similar to parrying a weapon. She heard the ripping air as the projectile lanced down towards her and those she could not twist around, she deflected with her sword. Unfortunately, these blasts of energy were more forceful than a sword impact and travelling many times faster.

She grunted as she took another strike on her greatsword, driving her back a step. She could feel the heat emanating from her weapon as the steel's temperature increased with every strike. There was no fear that the blade would shatter—indeed its manufacture had been so thorough she wasn't certain if *anything* could break it—but she had a legitimate concern over what one of those energy blasts would do to her body were it to get through her defenses.

Another *hiss-CRACK* and this time she rolled, letting stone splinters blast across her legs. The one saving grace of these attacks was that the detonations were so loud they gave her a very clear image of her surroundings for some distance.

She had already identified that there were four brick kilns in this chamber, all in a row. Multiple smaller shapes littered the floor in all directions but were inanimate and she had temporarily filed them under "furniture" until there was time for closer inspection. There were also two shapes moving about a hundred feet to her left, but their position and inclinations suggested to her they were currently too concerned with each other to present any immediate threat.

Gunfire started up unexpectedly to her right as she ducked against the closest oven and was showered in chunks of brick from another energy blast. Perhaps a couple of hundred feet away. Large caliber, most likely pistol fire. Very fast—an accomplished pistoleer.

This information processed through her mind while she sought respite from the sniper overhead. She bolted around to the far side of the oven, pressing herself against the rough brick and listened to the sniper change its position, smallish feet banging the metal gantry as they sought another angle to re-commence the barrage.

The figure was quick, but already breathing hard, she could hear. High pitched—female or a large child, and inexperienced. The stink of nervous sweat was stronger. Whoever was up there was no expert, but they had power. Almost certainly an Arcanist, from the nature of the attack. An alliance, she speculated as she slithered around another face of the oven, keeping the bricks between herself and the sniper. Arcanist and Resurrectionist finding common purpose against the Guild?

Such a thing was possible, she supposed. She'd be sure to ask the sniper before she killed her.

Perdita dropped her lantern, catching it on her boot to prevent it smashing, drew her left Peacebringer at the same time and emptied both pistols with blinding speed into the shambling cadaver. Bullets rang like rain against the creature's face and upper torso and bright blue-white sparks flashed in the darkness as each one caromed off thick steel plating.

The flesh of its face was mostly ripped away in the onslaught, and she could see more clearly why it had looked so distended. The head was little more than a metal bucket with two eyes fixed in sockets. The skin of the face had simply been stretched over the top like a pillowcase.

Perdita's pistols were powerful but that metal had to be an inch thick and she had done nothing more than dent it.

"Madre dios," she muttered, keeping her lantern balanced on one boot while she snapped open both revolvers and speed-reloaded the one and then the other.

The Resurrectionist cadaver, for it could not be anything else, continued to march inexorably forward, closing the distance from thirty feet to twenty to ten.

Perdita took a hop back, still balancing the lantern, and unloaded another twelve shots into the monstrosity in the space of three seconds. Another fusillade of sparks and more rolling gun thunder, but the cadaver was otherwise unharmed.

"Mierda," she cursed, holstering her left pistol and ducking under a huge swiping arm, snatching up her lantern and dancing back out of range. "Where did you come from, eh?"

The creature didn't answer, marching forward on thick armored legs.

"You think because you are duro you will beat me?" she snapped, walking steadily backwards to keep a buffer between herself and the meat hulk. "You're wrong, maloliente."

Anyone else would probably have balked in the face of this undead juggernaut, but it had never occurred to Perdita to be scared at any time in her life, such was her faith in her skills and in her family. This was just another obstacle to be surmounted, just another enemy to be beaten. All she needed was a plan.

"You're muy slow, maloliente," she goaded as the creature lumbered after her. "Lento y estupido. I got a surprise for you...wait and see, eh?"

Carrying the lantern was getting to be a hindrance, but she had an idea about that. She placed the lantern on the ground and stepped to her right. As expected, the iron cadaver swung to follow her. As it drew near, she began to circle away to her left, around the circumference of the lantern. The creature followed, trudging around in a circle which rather conveniently kept it within the area of illumination so she could see it clearly, and left both her hands free.

It kept its arms extended, no doubt to crush the life from her if she ever stopped moving, which she had no intention of doing. It appeared that this thing was already moving at top speed, and was evidently dumb enough to constantly follow her, circling the lantern.

"Not too smart, are you, amigo?" she laughed, spilling empty shell casings onto the stone as she reloaded. The cadaver crunched them flat with its heavy feet as it followed her.

It was clear that her .45 rounds were not going to get through that armored chassis, but she had another idea. The bucket head was just that—a bucket—open at the bottom, and somewhere in among all that meat and stitching was a spine.

She'd need something with a bit more grunt, but luckily enough, she had a few of those in her belt. She'd also need to be dead on target and after a moment's lip-chewing, she went for her right hand which was arguably the better shot (although the bias was microscopic).

"Let's see how you like this, pedo aliento," she said, snapping open her right Peacemaker and loading a witched bullet into the chamber.

Whatever this thing was, it was fast. As fast as she was.

Every slash with the runed sword was parried by those long black claws no matter what feint she tried, no matter what footing. It gave as good as it got, too, ripping at her with both hands and only through superhuman effort had Sonnia managed to avoid being torn open like a sandbag.

She had learned there were differences, though. A couple of times they had clinched and matched strengths, and in those moments she had seen its eyes through the Mask. Unlike hers, they were bright silver and highly reflective, like mirrors.

And it wasn't getting tired, like she was.

The battle felt more than a touch one-sided now. The doppelganger seemed to be on the attack more often, while she was on the back foot a lot more and fighting to keep her sword between herself and those razor claws.

It seemed that this creature had somehow inherited all of her strengths—her speed, her skill—and discarded her weaknesses, namely that humans felt fatigue. Whatever this thing was, it wasn't human.

Neverborn, Sonnia smirked. She didn't often have the pleasure. Where was Perdita when you needed her?

She had also noticed the interior of the crate was mirrored, which was more than passing strange. Exactly why that was the case she couldn't say, but she was beginning to realize it might be the only edge she had over her opponent and she'd better figure it out soon.

Those black claws came in for another pass and Sonnia knocked them away, her arms and shoulders trembling from the sustained effort. The bourbon was taking its toll now, and the sleepless nights with Cherufe scratching at the inside of her skull. Sweat sprang out on her forehead and neck, and her breathing was getting labored.

And it seemed she wasn't alone in her struggle. Lights flickered from far down the chamber, and the sounds of gunfire and explosions followed. Like everything else that had happened since she'd got that note, she had no real idea what was going on, but there simply wasn't time to worry about that now.

There was no way to drive the creature back—it was every bit as skilled as she, and had retained its energy while hers was draining away—but there was nothing stopping *her* from moving.

She fell back, masking the change of direction as a stagger, and circled around her alter ego, leaping backwards towards the crate while the doppelganger slashed at her throat. Her runed sword rang and vibrated with each parried strike, but she felt the crate nudge the back of her thigh and knew her position was as good as it was likely to get.

With all the strength she had left, she swung a two-handed blow aimed at its neck. Her alter ego jerked back as the tip of the sword whistled past its collar with inches to spare, but Sonnia was already twisting around. She kicked the back of the crate and flipped it forwards, tipping the open mouth of the crate right in front of the doppelganger.

The creature looked down and as its eyes met the kaleidoscopic interior of the mirrored crate, it shrieked. Its form instantly lost clarity and swam as though seen through a heat haze. Its silver eyes widened and bulged, having nothing to imitate but its own false reflection.

In that moment of weakness, Sonnia rammed her sword through her alter ego's chest with an exultant cry, sinking it almost to the hilt and projecting three feet of sharp steel out between its shoulder blades, smeared with black ooze.

The doppelganger howled and bucked on the sword, but Sonnia held on, teeth gritted. It was already shriveling, turning black and withering like a paper doll held over a bonfire. The Mask crumpled and the creature's limbs atrophied into twisted roots while viscous black goo pumped from the mortal wound.

Sonnia drew her sword out with a grunt and the thing folded over like an empty sausage skin, flopping half into the crate, half out of it as it continued to deflate and collapse into itself. In seconds, it was little more than a shriveled collection of blackened sticks in a puddle of tar.

"Well," she panted to herself. "That was unpleasant."

There was an enormous, jangling crash behind her.



Lady Justice had had her fill.

She'd been chased from pillar to post by blasts of energy and her flesh prickled in a dozen places where sharp stone splinters had pierced her. The greatsword was giving off so much heat that she suspected it was probably glowing a dull red, and her panting assassin in the gantry had shown no signs of running out of firepower.

But her time had been spent more constructively than just avoiding death by energy projectile.

She had led the assassin around the gantry twice to be sure, and from the explosions had picked out that the structure was reinforced by two iron girders, one on her side of the closest oven and one on the other. The whole assembly creaked anxiously every time the assassin moved and she had surmised that having the assassin's weight over one of these supports when it was removed would be more than enough to collapse it.

It took several more feints and one very close call where she almost took a blast to the small of her back, but she got the assassin to rush out to the end of the gantry in what they surely mistook for a chance to deliver the killing blow, and that was when she struck.

With preternatural speed, Lady Justice whirled and ripped the greatsword through the iron girder at her shoulder with a monumental blow. The keen weapon passed right through with a diagonal slash, splitting the metal and exposing the first clean iron the brickworks had seen in many a year.

She heard the gantry overhead screech in anguish—in tandem with her would-be assassin—and then it started to come down around her ears. Rivets popped, fatigued metal snapped and a long section of gantry dropped through twenty five feet of space to land with a thunderous impact on the stone.

Lady Justice held her ground, sensing the metal tumbling down around her, listening for the assassin. She heard her opponent's scream cut short by a heavy thud and muffled crunch of breaking bone, followed by a groan of pain.

Vaulting the toppled gantry, she landed on her foe, driving the breath from her with a sharp knee while simultaneously jerking her head back by the hair and pressing the still hot blade to her throat.

"Who are you?" she hissed, leaning hard on the knee.

The assassin wheezed and a single weak hand pushed ineffectually—presumably it was the other arm that she had heard break.

"Who are you?" she hissed again. "Who are you working for? Speak!"

"Please..." the assassin gasped. She sounded young. "Please..."

A double gunshot rang out somewhere behind her, the second shot by far the louder.

Perdita let the lurching cadaver close the distance. This had to be just perfect for it to work and the closer she was, the better the angle would be for the second shot.

Its arms raised again, thick fingers splayed in anticipation of closing around her neck and in turn she raised her two Peacebringers, the left and the right.

"Come and get it, estupido,' she whispered, bouncing on the balls of her feet.

Just as the huge Resurrectionist nightmare was about to grab her, she fired with her left. The bullet smacked the creature square in the forehead and jolted its head back, sending the ratty black wig flying.

In the same instant, Perdita squeezed the right trigger. The blast was enormous and the world flashed orange as the witched bullet screamed from the barrel. It went straight through the creature's neck, punching through layers of meat and tendon and smashing the spine to fragments. The concussion from the shot was so immense that it pulverized what was left of the cadaver's neck while the bullet ripped out the base of its skull, rang the bucket helmet like a bell and caromed off into the darkness.

The cadaver took another faltering step and then, ever so slowly, its bucket head peeled off with a slurp and thudded to the ground between its feet.

Perdita grinned as it hovered that way for some time, until she gave it a shove and it fell on its back like a dropped tombstone. It didn't move again.

"How do you like that, bucket head?" she snapped,

spinning both revolvers and slipping them back into their holsters with a flourish. “That was fun.”

“Noooo!” screamed an outraged voice behind her.

Snatching up her lantern, Perdita swung around to throw orange light over the area and saw a swathed figure racing across the chamber floor towards something hunched by one of the huge squat structures. The shape unfolded blindingly fast and put the point of its long sword against the throat of the robed assailant, stopping them dead in their tracks with hands raised.

Perdita squinted through the gloom and stepped closer.

“Lady *Justice?*”

When Sonnia arrived, in her opinion the situation had only become more confusing.

Lady Justice was standing amid the twisted ruins of a fallen gantry, covered in black soot and scratches like she’d been boxing a cat, holding the point of her greatsword against the throat of a tall, angular shape in a robe. At her feet was a squirming kid with long blonde hair and one arm bent all out of shape, and walking around the oven behind her was...was Perdita Ortega holding a lantern and a pistol.

Of course it was. And no doubt the Governor-General was hiding somewhere around here too, about to make an unexpected appearance.

Perdita glanced in her direction as she approached and judging by the way her eyebrows shot up, Sonnia wasn’t the only one astonished to find anyone else here.

“Perdita, Lady Justice—what’s going on?” she asked.

“You tell me, amiga,” Perdita shot back, looking nonplussed. “I just got here myself.”

“We should ask our mutual friend,”

Lady Justice said, the point of her sword held rock steady against the throat of the tall robed figure. Without moving the blade an inch, she leaned forward and sniffed. “Rose hips,” she said with some satisfaction.

“Rose hips?” Perdita echoed.



"Why don't you ask our friend here about the letters?" Lady Justice continued.

"You got one too?" blurted Sonnia in the instant before she realized *of course* they both got letters, otherwise they wouldn't be here now to look at her like she was an idiot.

"It wasn't meant to end like this!" wailed the garbed figure. "You weren't meant to *win*."

"Who are you?" Sonnia asked, although there was something about the strangely androgynous voice that suggested she might know this person.

"What does it matter now," the figure whined. "Just kill me and be done with it. My life is in ruins anyway."

"I remember you now," Lady Justice said. She tapped her steel heel on the stone twice in apparent impatience then flipped the heavy cowl up and away with the point of her sword.

"Cara de caballo!" gasped Perdita.

"Maude," Sonnia whispered to herself when she saw the long, miserable face streaked with tears.

It all came back to her in a flash. It had been at least a month ago or possibly two when the big, angular shape had first accosted her. Sonnia had momentarily mistaken it for a man due to its height and big bony hands and wrists, until she had taken a closer look and realized it was a woman. A huge, awkward, unlovely woman with burn marks on her face and neck. She had long bronze hair, a suspiciously similar shade to her own, combed out over both shoulders and had an abundance of makeup to cover the scars, which wasn't working.

She had babbled in an excitable fashion about how she wanted to be an Arcanist hunter just like Sonnia, how she already had grown out her hair like her and had a duster just like hers, and how it would be splendid if they could fight together, back-to-back like sisters, and how they looked a little bit like sisters in a certain light.

Sonnia had shrugged her off, but the woman persisted, following behind and yattering about how her name was Maude Mole and how her husband had recently passed on and she was considering using her inheritance to buy property in Malifaux so she could be close to Sonnia's headquarters in case she was needed in a hurry.

Sonnia endured days of questions on how come she looked so great, and what products did she use in her hair, and what was the best way to kill an Arcanist, and could she teach Maude how to summon fire like she did, before she finally snapped. She had come close to being killed by an especially vicious and unstable Arcanist in the badlands and returned to Malifaux intending to go on a two-day drunk. Maude had accosted her outside the saloon and Sonnia had given her a tongue-lashing.

She hadn't seen the woman since.

"Maude, why have you done this?" Lady Justice asked, great sword held dangerously in the air. Apparently she knew the woman as well.

"Yeah," Perdita jumped in. "Why'd you sic that Resurrectionist nightmare on me? I'll admit it was a fun challenge. But I thought you wanted to be me, not that you wanted to kill me."

"She's in league with the Resurrectionists?" Justice gritted her teeth and raised her sword.

Perdita held out a hand. "Let's hear your story, amiga."

Maude's eyes darted from woman to woman and she licked the sides of her lips. Her head was bald, the burns covering her scalp. "You took everything from me!" she shrieked. "I had a nice house in downtown. A rich husband. Looks, youth, children..." Her voice trailed off. "But one day the Guild came for my husband and he was so dangerous they had to send all three of you." She spat.

Sonnia's eyes gleamed with remembrance. There had been a high-ranking corrupt Guild official whom they had to dispatch last year. He had sold secrets to Arcanists, Resurrectionists, and even certain Neverborn. There was no knowing which of his contacts would be guarding him, so they took no chances. They went in force, and burned everything.

"At first...at first I snapped." Maude continued. "I couldn't handle the thoughts of you. How you were allowed to get away with it. Given accolades, worshipped as heroes." She wheezed. "As my children burned. I became obsessed. I had to understand. I had to know how you could...how you could..." Tears were streaming down her face.

Perdita leaned down and put a hand on Maude's shoulder. Surprisingly, she didn't flinch away.

"Eventually I came to my senses." Maude's voice was a whisper now. "I had to have my revenge. I used what was left of my husband's wealth, and his...contacts. I used everything I had setting this up. And I failed. I failed them." She wept into her hands. "Just kill me already! Don't make me relive it..."

"Nobody is going to kill you, amiga. It was a matter of family, I understand family." Perdita whispered.

"But she was using—" Justice started.

"Nobody is going to kill her." Perdita gave her companions a hard stare. "We've done enough to her. Besides, another challenge would never hurt, eh?" She smiled.

Justice ground her teeth.

"I need your word." Perdita glared at both of them.

Sonnia gave Lady Justice a meaningful squeeze on the shoulder. "You have our word that Maude will not be killed."

Perdita nodded. "It's a long ride back to Latigo. I know your word is good." She gave them one last glare and strode out of the warehouse.

Maude whimpered and looked up at the two remaining women. "But...but what do I do now?"

Sonnia helped her up. "There was a time you wanted to be me, wasn't there? Is there any of that left? Would you like to work with me? Maybe help to prevent future... collateral damage?"

Maude stared for a long time, then nodded. "You...you regret what you did to me?"

"Of course," Sonnia let out a breath. "I have the perfect place for you in my organization. I think you will be a perfectly loyal subordinate. And you will be able to hunt Arcanists all you like."

Lady Justice's mouth turned down slightly as she realized what Sonnia was implying. She was never pleased by the method; even so, better than having a Resurrectionist sympathizer running around unsupervised.

"We'll supply you with everything you need." Sonnia said, her voice conveying a grin that her cold, uncaring mask could not. "Weapons, clothing. Why, you'll even get your own room. I have just the one. A yellow room with a yellow door. Doesn't that sound lovely, Maude?"

As they left the warehouse, the groans of the Arcanist still trapped under the beams faded into the night.



BRUTAL EMISSARY

Here and now, in these times of all times, Malifaux needs unashamed strength and indomitable resolve, and the Brutal Emissary has arisen as that need's answer.

There will be no cowardice. There will be no retreat. There will be no abandonment of duty. No desertion, no disobedience. The wheels will turn, the machines will run. Men and women will labor. Dues will be paid. Laws will be laid down. Lines will be drawn against the outlaw, the subversive, the Arcanist and the Resurrectionist, the beast and the Neverborn, and those lines *will* be held.

When there is insurrection, invasion or disorder, the Brutal Emissary will know it in its core, and it will be there to face the threat. With blade and gun, with cage and irresistible command, it will stand on the battle line and teach the Guild's enemies the order of things.

May heaven help us all.



BRUTAL EMISSARY

Enforcer, Rare 1

EMISSARY OF FATE

COST 10

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	5	10	6	6	3

ABILITIES

Power Sink: When this Crew scores 1 or more **VP** from the Strategy, this model gains the following Condition for the rest of the game: "**Destined +1:** At the end of this model's Activation it heals +1 damage. This Condition may not be removed by other models' Actions."

Hard to Kill: While this model has 2 or more **Wd** remaining when it suffers damage, it may not be reduced to below 1 **Wd**.

Tyranny of Order: This model may perform (1) Actions belonging to friendly buried models, so long as those Actions do not list a model by name.

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1.

BRUTAL EMISSARY

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Rule of Law (**Sh** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 8 or 2): Target suffers 2/4/6 damage.
Never Bluff a Six-gun: After damaging a model within 4", take this Action against a model within 4" which was not targeted by this Action this Turn.
Critical Strike: When damaging the target, this Attack deals +1 damage for each in the final duel total.

(1) "Back In The Box!" (**Ml** 6 / TN: 12 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 3): Target non-Leader model is buried. Unbury the target in base contact with this model or any Scheme Marker in LoS at the end of this model's next Activation or when this model leaves play. This Action may only be taken once per Turn.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) A Cage For All (**Ca** 6 / TN: 10): Until the start of this model's next Activation, all enemy models which begin their Activation within 4 must immediately pass a TN 11 **Wk** duel or gain the **Slow** Condition.
Dues Paid: After succeeding, until the end of the Turn, all friendly models which begin their Activation within 4 heal 2 damage.

(0) Tyranny Lights The Way: This Action may only be taken while this model has the **Destined +2** Condition or greater. Remove the **Destined** Condition from this model to Activate exactly two additional friendly models after this Activation ends, ignoring the Chain Activation rules, but following all other rules for Activating a model.

50mm

MASTER QUEEG

Please note the compliance I have bred into the subject. Indeed, the whip remains at my belt and yet he jumps to my every command! The trick, my dear fellows, is to quash that great human illusion of individuality, just as I did when I taught school.

There are many subtleties to this practice which may go unnoticed when managing convict laborers, so please forgive the elaboration you are about to endure. First, the clothes. They are uniform, same as those of every other prisoner in sight. But there are no bright, garish oranges or stripes. Oh no! While those may aid in the valiant guards trying to watch for an escape, the bright colors excite the humors. Indeed, we do not wish to catch escapees, we want to make the criminal incapable of conceiving of escape in the first place!

Now, if you'll follow me into the next room, gentlemen, you'll see that Dr. McMourning has provided surgical equipment…



MASTER QUEEG

Henchman, Living, Rare 1
GUARDSMAN, BLACK SHEEP

COST 7
CACHE 6

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	6	7	5	6	2

ABILITIES

Sadistic Streak: When this model Activates, it may deal 1 damage to target friendly model within 6" to push up to 3" in any direction.

Hard to Kill: While this model has 2 or more **Wd** remaining when it suffers damage, it may not be reduced to below 1 **Wd**.

Put the Fear In 'em: After completing a Walk Action, this model may target a friendly Minion model within 6" and LoS. The target must pass a TN 12 Horror Duel. If it succeeds, the target may immediately take a (0) Action.

MASTER QUEEG

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Taskmaster's Whip (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 3): Target suffers 1/3/5 damage.
Critical Strike: When damaging the target, this Attack deals +1 damage for each in the final duel total.
Seize Contraband: After damaging, the target must discard a card if able. This model's controller may draw a card and then discard a card.
"Back to Work!": After damaging, push the target up to 3" in any direction.
Kneecap: After damaging, this model may discard a card to make the target gain the **Slow** Condition.

(1) Peacebringer (**Sh** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 10): Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.
Critical Strike: When damaging the target, this Attack deals +1 damage for each in the final duel total.
Kneecap: After damaging, this model may discard a card to make the target gain the **Slow** Condition.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) "Welcome To Hell, And I Am Your Devil." (**Ca** 6 / TN: 11): Until the end of the Turn, friendly models within 6 may take (1) Interact Actions as (0) Actions instead. This Action may only be taken once per Turn.

30mm

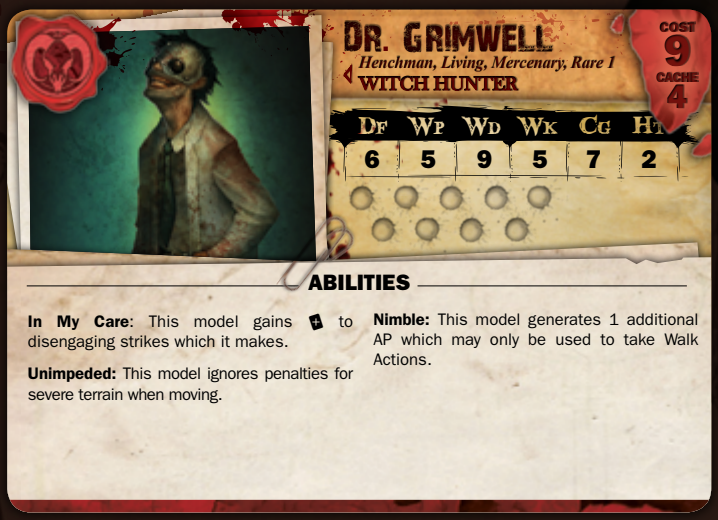
DR. GRIMWELL

Dr. Grimwell looked at the little sign which hung on the wall of his office in Smedley's asylum.

"Service With A Smile."

He leaned back in his chair and tapped his chin as he contemplated it. He really did believe in what it said, smiling did wonders for the mentally ill whom he had devoted his life to helping. This was one of his many daily rituals; they helped to clear his mind and prevent the very maladies he worked so hard to eliminate.

Had he been smiling when applying electrodes to that old woman this morning? Yes, he had. What about when he was forcing pills down the throat of that raving lunatic? Yes, smiling then too. And the business with the skull saw after lunch? Damn! Some of the blood had gotten in his mouth and he had given a bit of a grimace. He would work on that, he nodded to himself. He would work on that...



DR. GRIMWELL

Henchman, Living, Mercenary, Rare 1

WITCH HUNTER

COST 9

CACHE 4

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	5	9	5	7	2

ABILITIES

In My Care: This model gains ✦ to disengaging strikes which it makes.

Unimpeded: This model ignores penalties for severe terrain when moving.

Nimble: This model generates 1 additional AP which may only be used to take Walk Actions.

DR. GRIMWELL

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Skull Saw (**MI** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.

Critical Strike: When damaging the target, this Attack deals +1 damage for each ✦ in the final duel total.

"He's Gone Mad!": After damaging, the target's controller must discard one card if able.

(2) Lobotomy (**MI** 7 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 4/6/10 damage.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) Doctor's Orders: This model may discard a card to target a friendly model within 6" and then move the target up to 4" in any direction. This Action may only be taken once per Turn.

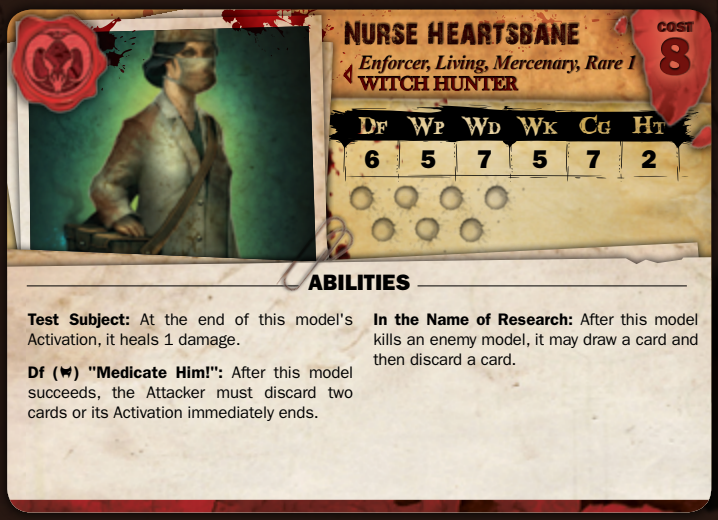
30mm

NURSE HEARTSBANE

Nurse Emily Heartsbane is Dr. Grimwell's closest companion and friend. Unlike many other employees of Smedley's asylum, she has a real medical background and was never a patient. She is a true believer in the work they are doing, and she is quite competent at her job. Indeed, she takes a great amount of satisfaction in her work and she never misses a day.

Many a patient has tried to sneak out of bed in the middle of the night, only to find her behind them gently pushing a needle into their neck and shushing them as they slump to the ground. She is also an expert in the application of electroshock, which Dr. Grimwell takes full advantage of.

Together the two of them keep the asylum clean and orderly. And they always have a smile for a new patient.



NURSE HEARTSBANE COST 8

Enforcer, Living, Mercenary, Rare 1

WITCH HUNTER

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	5	7	5	7	2

ABILITIES

Test Subject: At the end of this model's Activation, it heals 1 damage.

Df (🐏) "Medicate Him!": After this model succeeds, the Attacker must discard two cards or its Activation immediately ends.

In the Name of Research: After this model kills an enemy model, it may draw a card and then discard a card.

NURSE HEARTSBANE

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Electroshock (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 1): Target suffers 2/4/6 damage.

⚔ ***Convulsions:*** After damaging, move the target up to 3" in any direction. Then the target may discard a card; if it does not, move it up to 3" again in any direction.

🐏 ***Put the Restraints On:*** After damaging, the target gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: **"Straight Jacket:** This model may not take Attack Actions."

(1) "Hold Still, Dear..." (**Ca** 6 / TN: 9🃏 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 10): Target model gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Strapped Down**: This model may not take Walk or Charge Actions."

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) "Right Behind You, Dear..." (**Ca** 6 / TN: 14): Move this model up to 4" in any direction.

🐏 ***"Back to Bed!":*** After succeeding, this model may immediately perform a (1) Attack Action.

30mm

GREED

There was never much more to the town of Crossroads than the big ramshackle hotel for which it was named, pushing up head and shoulders out of the little huddle of wooden houses, looming over the patch of corduroy road where the trails in off the Badlands all met.

Then came that one moonless, fiery night, and now there's nothing left any more. Not after what happened when the music started. Not after *he* and *she* stepped up to dance, eyes shining bright as their grins. Not after they said what they said. Not after the stroke of midnight.

The young woman who walked out of the burning, crumbling hotel with her guitar over her shoulder never looked back. And never has. She got what she wanted from the deal she struck that night...but that deal was not all she wanted. She wants more. And more. And *more.*



GREED COST 8

Enforcer, Living, Mercenary, Rare 1

CROSSROADS SEVEN, TORMENTED

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	5	8	6	7	2

ABILITIES

Take What Is Yours: Enemy models which end their Activation within ❶3 must discard a card or suffer 2 damage, unless they used a Soulstone during their Activation.

Manipulative 12: If this model has not yet Activated this Turn, when an enemy model targets this model with an Attack Action, the enemy model must pass a TN 12 **Wp** duel or the Action immediately fails.

Df (🗡) Give It To Me: After resolving, the Attacker must discard a Soulstone or suffer 2 damage.

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) A Song To Die For (**Ca** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 1): Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.

(1) The Greed Spreads (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 8): Target suffers 4 damage. The target may immediately discard any number of Soulstones to reduce this damage by 2 for each Soulstone discarded. This Action may be taken once per Turn.

🗡 ***Another for the Purse:*** After killing the target, add 1 Soulstone to this Crew's Pool.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Use It On Yourself: Target friendly model within 6" may discard a Soulstone to heal 1/2/3 damage.

GREED

30mm

SANCTIONED SPELLCASTER

Not every magic-user who is caught can reasonably be transformed into a Witchling Stalker. And while executions are effective, there are those among the Guild who see them as wasteful when such talent is involved. To answer this problem, the Witch Hunters devised the Control Collar.

The Collar is not necessarily worn around the neck, but can be placed around a wrist or even an ankle. It allows a Guild officer who is attuned to it to control all of the aetheric fluctuations which the wearer creates; in other words, it allows them to control the magic of the captured individual.

While the criminal has full control of their own body, all of their spells belong to the Guild. And should they misuse the freedom of their body which the Guild has graciously allowed them, the Collar can be made to detonate quite spectacularly.



SANCTIONED SPELLCASTER — COST 5

Minion, Living
ACADEMIC

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5📖	6📖	5	4	6	2

ABILITIES

The Collar: All friendly Masters and Henchmen in play gain the following Tactical Action: "**(1) Activate Collar:** Target friendly Sanctioned Spellcaster within 8" immediately performs a (1) Action."

Arcane Shield: If this model has not Activated during this Turn, reduce all damage it suffers by 1, to a minimum of 0.

Df/Wp (📖) Charge Collar: After this model succeeds against an enemy, it gains the following Condition for the rest of the game: "**Soulburst +1:** When this model is killed or sacrificed, all models in (↯)3 suffer +1 damage. Add 1 Soulstone to this Crew's Pool for each other model killed by this (↯)."

SANCTIONED SPELLCASTER

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Elemental Bolt (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐10): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.
- 🐏 ***Flare:*** After damaging, the target gains the **Burning +1** Condition.
- 🐏 ***Earthbound:*** After damaging, the target gains the following Condition until the end of its next Activation: "**Earthbound:** This model may not declare Charge Actions."
- 📖 ***Tidal Blast:*** After damaging, the target gains the following Condition until the end of its next Activation: "**High Tide:** This model may not declare (0) Actions."
- 📖 ***Burst Damage:*** While dealing Moderate or Severe damage, this Attack gains +💥 to damage.

(1) Elemental Burst (**Ca** 5🐏 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 1): Target suffers 1/3/3 damage.
- 📖 ***Life Leech:*** After damaging, this model gains the **Soulburst +1** Condition until the end of the game.
- 🐏 ***"NO! GIVE ME ANOTHER CHA-":*** After failing during this model's Activation, kill this model.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Singularity (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12): Until the end of the Turn, friendly models within ❶3 may not be pushed or moved by the Actions, Abilities, or Triggers of enemy models.

30mm

ORDERLY

The orderlies at Smedley's asylum are grim fellows, and they are all under the direct supervision of Dr. Stanley Grimwell. In fact, many of them are former patients. Dr. Grimwell believes that they make the perfect attendants as they know exactly what the afflicted are going through.

Where hiring people through traditional means results in complaints like "You can't possibly expect me to do that!" or "This is beyond even the remotest of human decency!" or "Are you mad?!" Employees recruited from ex-patients have no such qualms. They understand the full necessity of a bit of electroshock every now and again, and they know better than anyone what a relief removing a bit of brain can be.

They are the perfect employees, and Dr. Grimwell delights in seeing his patients flourishing in their new positions.



ORDERLY — COST 5

Minion, Living, Mercenary, Rare 2
WITCH HUNTER

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	5	6	6	8	2

ABILITIES

Test Subject: At the end of this model's Activation, it heals 1 damage.

Unimpeded: This model ignores penalties for severe terrain when moving.

In the Name of Research: After this model kills an enemy model, it may draw a card and then discard a card.

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Medical Instruments (**MI** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 1): Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(2) Emergency Surgery: Heal up to 2 damage on target model within 6".

ORDERLY

30mm

MOUNTED GUARD

Many have questioned why the Guild guard did not form mounted units far sooner. Aside from the usual problems associated with maintaining a mounted unit, such as the cost of feeding and housing the animals, there are other concerns unique to Malifaux. Up until recently, almost all of the Guild's focus has been on the city itself, where mounted units would be less effective. Additionally, there was some hesitation at the notions of breeding horses in Malifaux after certain difficulties with the canine units.

However, the Guild has acquired funding and equipment to form its first mounted units whose purpose will be to aid in excursions outside of the city. Only the best of the best are chosen from the ranks of the guard; even so, they are keenly and frequently reminded that the lives of their animals are worth more than their own. They aid in lightning strikes against Arcanist encampments and provide quick relief when an unfortunate outpost suffers a Neverborn attack.



MOUNTED GUARD COST 7

Minion, Living
GUARDSMAN

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	5	8	6	10	3

ABILITIES

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Cavalry Charge: When this model declares a Charge Action against an enemy model, select a friendly non-Leader model within 2" and LoS of this model which has a printed **Cg** of 7 or greater. After this model completes the move portion of the Charge Action, the selected model may be placed within 2" of this model.

Reinforcements!: When this model declares a Charge Action targeting an enemy, all friendly models engaged with the target may be pushed 3" away from the target before this model moves.

MOUNTED GUARD

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Saber (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 2): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.
Critical Strike: When damaging the target, this attack deals +1 damage for each in the final duel total.
"For the Guild!": After damaging, another friendly model within 2" and LoS of this model gains the option to Activate immediately after this Activation ends as a Chain Activation.

(1) Peacebringer (**Sh** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 10): Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.
Critical Strike: When damaging the target, this Attack deals +1 damage for each in the final duel total.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) "Mount Up! Rank and File!": This model may discard a card. If it does, until the end of the Turn, friendly models within 3 gain to **Df**.

50mm

GUILD UPGRADES

RESEARCH GRANT

COST: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Advanced Research: After this model kills an enemy model, add one Soulstone to this Crew's Soulstone Pool.

RESTRICTIONS

Dr. Grimwell

CONFLUX OF JUDGMENT

COST: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Lady Justice is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Slowed Reflexes: On the first Turn of the game, this model may not be buried or gain **Reactivate**.

  Hitch A Ride: This model may target friendly Leaders with its **Back In The Box** Action.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Condemnation: Until the end of the Turn, this model and friendly Guild Marshal models within 4 gain +1 to **Df** and **Wp** duels when targeted by **Ca** or **Sh** Actions.

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

CONFLUX OF INCINERATION

COST: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Sonnia is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Visions of Flame: Attack Actions this model takes against targets with the **Burning** Condition ignore LoS and cover.
- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (0) A Spark in the Night (**Ca** 6 / TN: 14 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 10): Target gains the **Burning +1** Condition. This Attack does not require LoS.

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

CONFLUX OF THE HUNT

COST: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Perdita is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Circular: Models do not flip a card for this model when determining a random target while shooting into an engagement.

  A Breath of Power: While within 8, friendly Master models gain +1 to **Ca**.

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate



Brutal Conflux

Cost: 0 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  The Power Rages: Friendly Minions within ❶4 gain ✦ to all Attack duels.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) On the Tides of Fate: Discard a Soulstone to draw two cards and then discard two cards.

Restrictions

Emissary of Fate

Conflux of Amalgamation

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Hoffman is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the Construct Characteristic.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Enhanced Circuitry: Other friendly models within ❶3 with the **Power Loop** Condition gain ✦ to Attack flips.

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (0) Radical Deconstruction (**Ca** 6 / TN: 13 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 6): Place a Scrap Marker in base contact with target model and deal 2 damage to it.

Restrictions

Emissary of Fate

Conflux of Tyranny

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Lucius is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Amazing Rhetoric: Friendly Minions which Activate within ❶6 of this model heal 1 damage.

  Typical Politician: While this model is in play, this Crew's Leader gains the following Attack Action:

  (1) Backstab (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 1/2/3 damage. This Attack deals +2 damage if the target already Activated this Turn.

  ✕ ***He's Prone, Gut Him:*** When damaging, if the target did not Cheat Fate during this duel, this Attack deals +1 damage.

Restrictions

Emissary of Fate



This chapter contains a story as well as new models and Upgrades for **THE RESURRECTIONIST** Faction.
These models and Upgrades are not a part of the Campaign and may be hired normally during any game.

THE DEAD MAN'S BALL

BY: CHRISTOPHER GORHAM

Gwen laid the silver dagger gently, reverently, on the square of dark cloth laid out across the floor of her room. She'd wanted black velvet, of course, but Mrs. Dearly down at the clothier's had run out of black dye and wasn't sure when the next shipment would make it through the Breach, and velvet was expensive and conspicuous, so she'd had to settle for a dark blue linen. *The color of midnight*, she quietly assured herself.

She took a moment to admire the design she'd embroidered into the fabric. A sweeping ring, adorned with tiny symbols. A nagging doubt reminded her that she wasn't entirely sure what the symbols represented—she'd simply started stitching in whatever fashion felt most natural, and they had emerged. They could have been letters in some kind of alphabet, perhaps, but not one she'd ever seen before. The red thread stood out starkly against the blue—*crimson, like blood*, she thought, though in truth she knew it was a few shades too bright—and it lent the proceedings a proper air of dignity. The tallow candles flickering and dripping at each corner of the linen helped too.

Next to the dagger, gleaming softly in the candlelight, was her greatest treasure—a tiny shard of Soulstone, barely larger than a grain of sand, but charged and potent. It had taken weeks of scrimping and saving to afford it, even with the allowance from her parents' estate. Now that it was in her possession, she had everything she needed—the circle of power, the ritual knife, and the magic stone.

And, of course, the puppy.

Gwen realized that her eyes had been avoiding the center of the circle where the puppy lay. Something about the way that his body was twisted, the perfect stillness of his form, brought up some unfamiliar emotion, a wrenching in her gut that she couldn't quite put into words. Pushing that feeling aside, she forced herself to look. He lay on his side, legs sprawled and limp. The tip of his tiny pink tongue poked out of his snout, just like it had sometimes when he was sleeping. When he was alive.

Take the blade, came the whisper.

She still couldn't tell whether she was hearing the words, or thinking them—the voice, she was certain, was her own, but the things it said were certainly not. There was an urgency to its words, a strength and confidence she had never been able to imitate, and which she found difficult to resist. Sometimes it required her, compelled her, to do things she would rather have avoided. Most of all, it had knowledge—secrets she was not privy to, events she hadn't witnessed. Magic the likes of which she could barely understand...but she was learning fast. She picked up the knife.

Cut the flesh.

Kneeling on the hard wooden floor, she reached over the circle and held the puppy's body. His fur was soft and thick under her fingers. Carefully, she placed the tip of the dagger against his ribs. She could feel it was in the right spot, though she wasn't sure why—she presumed it was over his heart. Taking a shaky breath, she pressed down.

Making the incision was more difficult than she'd expected—in her mind, the knife should have slid in clean and easy, but she had to put some of her own weight behind it, forcing it between the puppy's ribs. When she felt it was deep enough, she reached for the Soulstone shard, anticipating the next instruction.

Plant the seed.

The Soulstone was slightly warm as she rolled it between her fingers. With her other hand, she withdrew the dagger and placed it carefully aside. Then, reaching forward...

The knock at the door was so startlingly loud that she dropped the tiny stone. Her heart pounded—who could it be? She blanched at the thought of having to explain the dead dog to Mrs. Bletcham, who ran the house. Or worse...could she have been found by the Death Marshals already? She cast about frantically for something to cover her ritual, or a place to hide. From the other side of the door she heard soft giggling, and her panic turned to rage.

"Go away!" she roared, fuming as the giggles turned to mock screams and a pattering of feet as Mrs. Bletcham's twin girls retreated to find another victim for their game.

Gwen took a few deep breaths to try to calm herself before an icy fear gripped her—where was the stone?

Dropping to her hands and knees on the wooden floor, she searched frantically, hands sweeping, eyes darting. She smoothed the midnight fabric, checking its wrinkles for any hidden gleam. Minutes passed and her despair deepened—if she never found it, then all this was for nothing.

Just as she was on the verge of giving up, she felt an uncomfortable pricking in her left foot. Surely it couldn't have... Before she'd even finished the thought she was sitting on the floor, her shoe in one hand and the tiny Soulstone in the other. A feeling of relief welled up inside her, spilling out in a gale of uncontrollable laughter. Even to her own ears it sounded a bit mad, but she couldn't stop, so she sat and laughed silently, rocking back and forth, tears streaming down her face.

Plant the seed.

The instruction was more insistent this time, and she resumed her work with renewed focus. She inserted the stone into the incision she'd made in the puppy's flank and, using her little finger, forced it deep into the creature's body. The press of internal organs against her skin made her squirm a bit, but this was no time to be squeamish—she'd have to get used to this sort of thing.

Speak the words.

This was the easy part. The words filled her mind, and all she had to do was open her mouth and set them loose. She had no idea what they meant, but she could feel their power. It gave her goosebumps.

The little dog's legs began to twitch and kick as she chanted, as if he were chasing rabbits in his sleep. The cut in his side closed over with only a scar to mark its passing. Her excitement grew, and the last few words flew from her in a near-shout—then everything was still.

The puppy opened its eyes. They were creamy white, without pupils, but he seemed to be able to see her just fine. He scrambled to his feet and barked at her, though it came out as more of a gurgling croak. She held out her hand and he sniffed her fingers, then nuzzled in so she could scratch behind his ears.

"Good boy. Who's a good boy?" she cooed. "You are! Yes you are!"

She hadn't been sure exactly what the result of the ritual was going to be, but this seemed a resounding success. The puppy didn't look healthy, exactly, but he certainly wasn't dead. He stared up at her with his milky eyes.

"You need a new name, don't you? Something befitting your new station. I think we'll call you...Terror."

The little dog made another soggy yap which she took as approval, and the matter was settled.

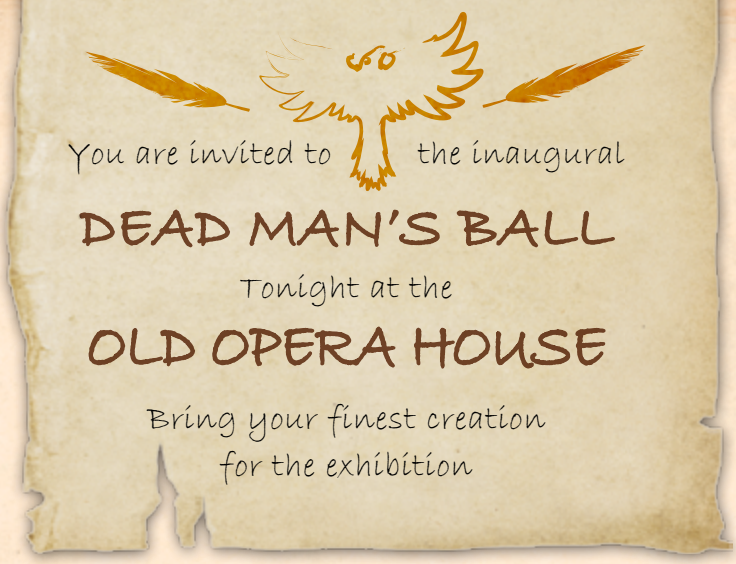
Gwen had spent so much time planning the ritual that she hadn't had a chance to think about what she was going to do afterwards. She watched him explore the room, poking his nose into every corner, and wondered how she was going to keep him secret. Mrs. Bletcham's nosy children would definitely find out sooner or later. Would he still need to eat?

Her train of thought was derailed by an almighty racket at the room's only window—a cracking impact that made her jump, then a flurry of thumps and scratches that shook the pane. Through the bottle-green glass, she could only make out a shadow of beating wings—the bird seemed determined to break in or beat itself to death. Terror dashed across the room and scrabbled at the windowsill with a wretched bubbling howl.

All this noise was sure to draw attention, so Gwen did the only thing she could think of. She hurried to the window and pulled it open—for once, it didn't get stuck—then leapt back as the bird flew in and circled the room, coming to rest on her desk. It sat and glared at Terror.

It was a big, glossy raven, with nothing more than a few feathers out of place from its fight with the window. Gwen watched as it methodically smoothed them back into place, then ruffled itself up to appear twice its normal size and let out a guttural caw. There was something fixed around one of its legs. Gwen's curiosity overcame her hesitation. The raven fixed her with one beady eye as she approached, but didn't resist as she unfastened a slip of paper from its cunning little message-case. As soon as she'd taken it, the raven launched itself past her and disappeared out the window.

Gwen unfurled the tightly folded message. In a flamboyant but oddly inconsistent hand, it read:



"What in the wor— Ow!"

Terror's needle-sharp teeth gnawing on her heel were a reminder that she hadn't had a moment to put her shoe back on. She pushed him off, and he came running back at her, snapping.

"Terror, no! Bad dog! Down!" she reprimanded. Shoving him away again, she commanded, "Play dead!"

The puppy immediately went stiff-legged and fell over with a thump, and for a moment she thought she'd actually killed him again. His eyes, almost closed, watched her slyly.

"What can it mean?" she mused, looking over the invitation as she wriggled back into her other shoe. She didn't know anyone who would invite her to a ball, let alone one with such a dramatic name. For that matter, she knew of only one opera house, and it wasn't particularly old. And who would deliver such a thing via raven? For that matter, *how?*

The Dead Man's Ball. She resisted the obvious conclusion, searching for alternative explanations but finding none. Eventually, she was forced to admit to herself the unthinkable—someone had identified her as a Resurrectionist.

The thought filled her with panic. She'd been so careful! She was sure that Mrs. Bletcham suspected nothing. The dealer who'd arranged her Soulstone purchase had definitely been shady, but she'd been very discreet about her plans for it, and he hadn't pressed her on the subject.

As she mentally eliminated her list of suspects one by one, she wondered at the intent of the message—was it to draw her out, to lure her into a trap? Were there Death Marshals waiting outside in the shadows, ready to pounce? She tried to calm her swirling thoughts. The Death Marshals wouldn't need to plan an elaborate ruse—if they knew what she was up to, they'd simply kick the door down and arrest her, or kill her on the spot. That notion wasn't exactly calming, but at least it didn't seem to reflect her current circumstances.

Another Resurrectionist, then. The thought sent a shiver of excitement down her spine. She had just successfully completed her first ritual, after all—perhaps the raven was simply attracted by her magic. That in itself was worrisome—if a mere bird could detect it, surely others could too. She would have to learn to conceal the process somehow.

Terror, apparently deciding that he'd played dead for long enough, laid his head on her foot and whined.

"Do you want to go out?" she asked, making her decision. The chance to meet another practitioner of the Dark Arts—the words sounded ridiculous and childish in her head, but she wasn't sure how to properly address such a person—was not one to be missed.

"Come on. We need to find out where the Old Opera House is. And I suppose I need a new gown!"

Gwen was beginning to regret her decision. The Old Opera House, as she'd learned from a sharp-faced clerk at the library, was deep in the Quarantine Zone, a relic of Old Malifaux. The area had been explored by the Guild but deemed too costly to reclaim for unspecified reasons.

It hadn't been terribly difficult to sneak into the Quarantine Zone. When she'd been a few years younger, much to the consternation of her governess, she'd often escaped to play with the street children. Venturing into the Zone—though never too far—had been one of their favorite adventures.

She was much further into the Zone now than she'd ever been before, and the pleasant evening was beginning to fade with the promise of a cold and bitter night. The deep green satin of her dress was very flattering, but did almost nothing to protect her from the steadily rising wind. Terror trotted along at her heels, seemingly unaffected by the cold.

It was getting dark very quickly, and a thick fog was building. Out here, away from the lights of the city, the night would be all but impenetrable. The sickly light from Delios, just

now beginning to rise, would not be enough to let her find her way. She pulled her black lace shawl tightly around her shoulders and hurried through the abandoned streets.

Well, almost abandoned. Was that a flicker of movement in the corner of her eye? The briefest glimpse of a pale face watching her through a broken window? Perhaps it was just shadows playing tricks on her eyes.

From somewhere far too close for comfort, a gravelly howl split the still air. Gwen skidded to a stop and froze. The howl came again, and was answered by another, and another—each subtly different, but equally chilling. She tried to locate them, but the stark, crumbling faces of ancient buildings sent echoes from every direction. The darkness pressed in on her, suffocating.

There were eyes in the fog. She could see them glowing faintly, moving obliquely, cautiously circling but remaining fixed on her. Terror growled, his hackles raised, head low and sweeping from side to side as he tried to keep them all in view. The darkness moaned back, a low and mournful chorus. She could feel them closing in.

All around, she could hear feet slapping in lurching steps, claws clicking on stone cobbles, and...faintly, in the distance...hoofbeats? She cast about for something to use as a weapon—she wasn't about to resort to slapping feebly with her handbag like some hapless grandmother accosted by a thug. A twisted metal rod caught her eye, and she yanked it free from a pile of debris. It looked like a bar from a jail window that had been wrenched free with great force. The cold metal was heavy and slick, but she gripped it tightly in both hands and hefted it, drawing confidence from the weapon, and turned to face whatever was coming.

A figure stumbled out of the fog towards her. It looked like a man, but she barely had time to register its features—hollow cheeks, bared teeth and sunken, milky eyes—before her makeshift club connected with its jaw. With a sickening crack its head snapped to the side, a handful of teeth flying free from its gaping mouth, and it crumpled to a heap as she stumbled backwards.

Another zombie, and a creature that she guessed had once been some kind of large dog, advanced from the shadows. Some of the flesh had sloughed away from the dog's face, and the light gleamed off the exposed bone of its skull. She brought the bar down on its head and one of the thing's eyes sprang loose, dangling grotesquely from its socket. More figures shuffled around it as it fell.

Bind the dead, came the whisper. *Make them serve.*

Her back bumped into a rough brick wall as she tried to back away, so she took what she hoped was a defiant stance, held out her hand, and commanded, "Sto—"

One of the creatures—she guessed it had been a young woman, because it was wearing a tattered bonnet, though the face beneath it was barely recognizable as human—surged forward and slammed her into the wall hard enough to knock the breath from her body and the bar from her hand. The zombie pressed in, and Gwen braced her forearm across its throat as it lunged, jaws snapping barely an inch from her face. She could see every line and wrinkle in the woman's sagging, grayish skin, the traces of makeup lingering around her eyes, the brown stains of rot spreading through her teeth. Somewhere, in a detached part of her mind, she wondered how she could see so clearly. Where was the light coming from? When had the hoofbeats gotten so loud?

It took every ounce of her strength to shove her assailant off, back into the advancing throng of walking corpses. Gwen felt as though she ought to be terrified, but all she had inside was anger.

"How dare you touch me?" she hissed at the zombie woman. Her eyes were hot, but she wasn't crying. It felt like there was steam building up in her head, looking for a way to escape. She took a step forward, and the zombie cringed away. "You are f—"

There was a sudden movement in the fog, and the creature's head exploded with a noise like a giant cracking an egg.

Gwen was just quick enough to cover her face before the spray of gore hit. She felt bone fragments patter against the sleeves of her new dress and fall to the cobbles.

"Sorry miss," said a slightly sheepish voice. She lowered her arms. There was warm lamplight filtering through the fog, and a dark shape silhouetted against it. The silhouette was holding a shovel, and using it to prod the headless body of the young woman. "I wasn't sure if this lass here was gonna go for ya again, see? It looked like you had things under control, so to speak, but some of these rotters can be downright tricksy."

Gwen looked around for the other zombies, but it seemed they had scattered into the mist. She circled carefully

around the dark figure until she could see his face in the lamplight. He had a calm, jovial smile that seemed quite at odds with having just decapitated a dead woman with a garden implement.

"Won't be fooling anyone now, though," he continued, wiping brain matter off the blade of his shovel with a well-used hanky. "Now then, miss. What brings you out here after dark? No place for young ladies, especially not alone."

Terror, who had been hiding behind Gwen's skirts, jumped out and gave a sharp bark to indicate that she was most certainly not alone, and that he resented the accusation. Gwen shushed him, but the man carried on without pause.

"Probably best if you come with us, really. Well, maybe." He seemed lost in thought for a moment, as if working out a complex problem. "Almost certainly better than getting eaten by a pack of hungry corpses, at any rate. Er, hopefully," he finished, with what was clearly meant as a reassuring grin.

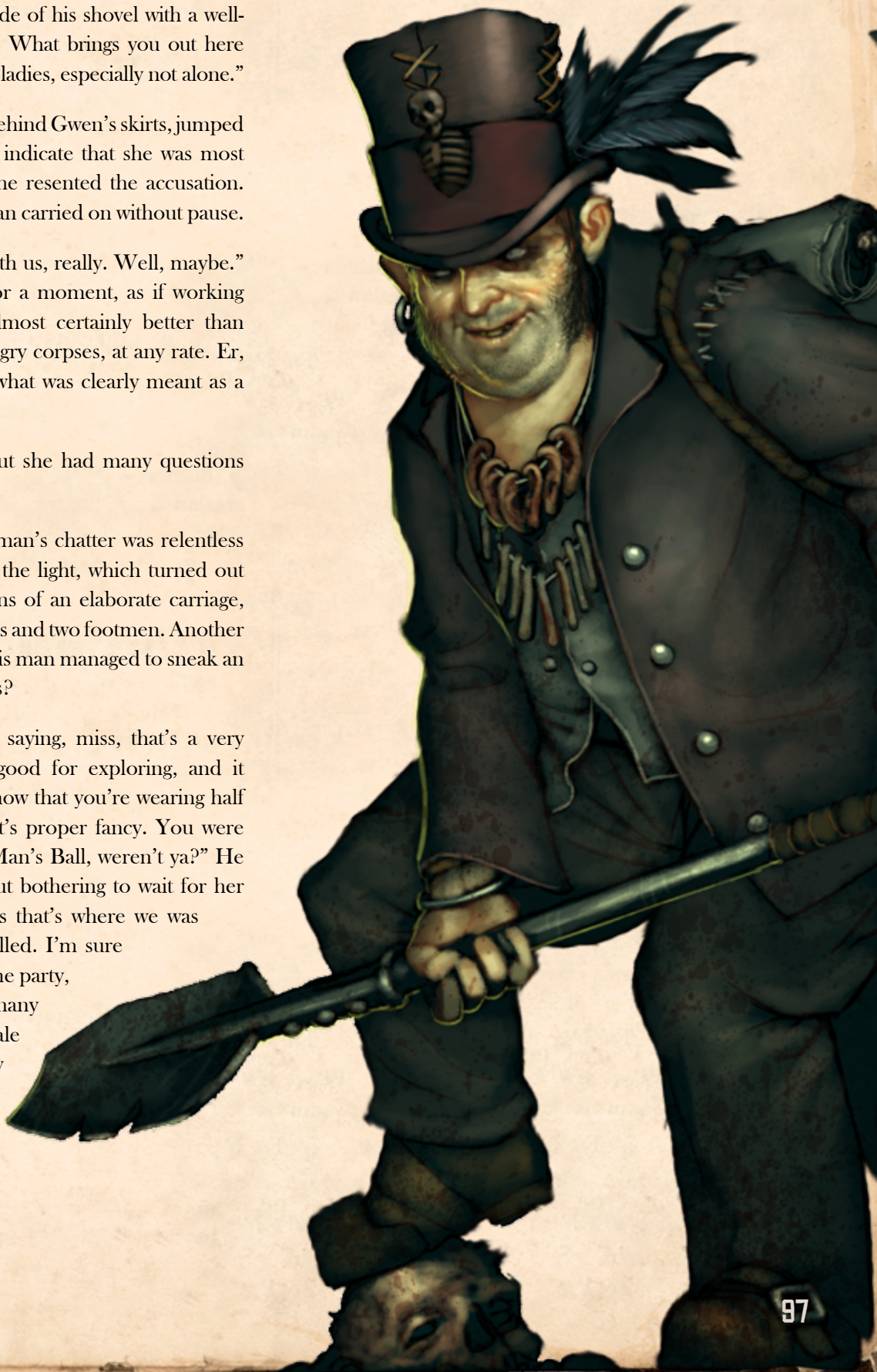
Gwen's head was spinning, but she had many questions clamoring to be voiced.

"Who—", she began, but the man's chatter was relentless as he lead her gently towards the light, which turned out to be coming from the lanterns of an elaborate carriage, complete with four black horses and two footmen. Another question surfaced—how had this man managed to sneak an entire carriage past the Guards?

"I hope you don't mind me saying, miss, that's a very nice dress. Not particularly good for exploring, and it might need cleaning up a bit now that you're wearing half of that poor girl's head, but it's proper fancy. You were already headed to the Dead Man's Ball, weren't ya?" He winked conspiratorially without bothering to wait for her to answer. "It just so happens that's where we was going. Ser-ren-dipity, that's called. I'm sure you'll be the, hah-hah, *life* of the party, as it were. There aren't too many practitioners of the, er, female persuasion, y'see. A pretty young thing like you's bound to turn some heads, eh?"

He reached up to knock against the side of the carriage. One of the footmen leaned over to observe them—in the lamplight, his face looked waxy and desiccated, and his teeth showed in a rictus grin.

"There's a certain young lady to see you, sir. She'd like a ride to the Ball."



Gwen started as the carriage door flew open to reveal a tall, sharply-dressed older man. He wore an intense expression—somewhere between eagerness and anger, though Gwen had never been particularly good at reading emotions. As his dark eyes met hers, though, his face immediately softened into a practiced mask of politeness.

"I'm sorry, my dear. I was expecting someone else. Do come in." He looked thin and pale, but his voice was deep and rich. He shot a momentary glare at his companion, who grinned and offered a hand to help Gwen up the stairs.Inside, the carriage was well appointed, if a little ostentatious. Gwen settled onto a seat of plush crimson velvet, and Terror bounded up the steps and into her lap. The old man's eyebrows arched spectacularly.

"Is that yours?" He reached out a hand towards the puppy, who began to growl. "May I?"

May I what? Gwen wondered, but out of politeness, she said "You may. I'm not certain that he'll let you, though. My name is Gwenifer Howell, how do you do?"

He smiled a thin smile. "Ah, my manners. Nicodem. At your service, my dear."

The carriage lurched into motion, but Nicodem's attention remained fixed on Terror, whose rattling snarl was becoming steadily more threatening. The extended hand came within inches of the dog's teeth, and Gwen could feel the dog's little body shift and tense to spring. Suddenly, the old man clicked his fingers—in the close quarters, the snap was shockingly loud—and Terror went abruptly and completely rigid.

"Oh," was all Gwen could manage.

Nicodem picked up the puppy by one leg and turned him over in his hands, giving him a thorough examination.

"Soulstone implantation," he mused, "A curious method. Rather wasteful, though it should keep the body well preserved. Entirely too much autonomic motivation, I would suspect. Tell me, does it follow your bidding?"

"He. And I suppose so, mostly. I haven't had time to train him, yet."

Nicodem nodded gravely. "I thought as much. Psychic contamination, you see? It complicates the relationship, allows room for disobedience. Never a good idea, in my experience," he reflected, tapping distractedly on his left leg, which Gwen suddenly realized was a mechanical prosthetic.

"Forgive the assumption," he continued, "but it—he—is your first creation, is he not?"

Reluctantly, Gwen nodded. "Is it...bad?"

"Oh, quite the opposite," he assured her. "For a beginner effort, it's more than passable. You have some natural talent. Who taught you? I don't recognize the technique."

Gwen tried to think of an answer that didn't make her sound insane. After a few awkward moments, Nicodem held up a hand and shook his head.

"How rude of me. You are, of course, entitled to your secrets—where would we be without them, after all?" He set Terror down on the carriage floor, and the little dog shook himself, looked up at the man, and dove under Gwen's skirts. "We needn't discuss it further. A pleasantly mild evening, isn't it?"

"Nobody taught me," Gwen blurted, and it was like a dam breaking. "Sometimes there's a voice and it tells me secrets that nobody knows, and it tells me to do things and it's like it's not really me doing them, and there's symbols and words that I don't understand, but they *feel* right, and sometimes I just sort of...know what to do," she wilted, running out of breath.

Nicodem looked aghast. "To lose the governance of your own mind...that must be terrifying."

"No!" Gwen exclaimed. "No, it's magnificent. When she—when I'm—when it's like that, there's so much *power.* I can do things, I can make things happen." She could feel her face becoming flushed with excitement. "But I have to—I *need* to learn more. Could...you teach me?"

Nicodem seemed taken aback by her sudden intensity, or perhaps the suggestion. "Absolutely not," he declared firmly, but seeing her disappointment, he softened a little. "It's not you, my dear. I'm just...not in a position to take on a student right now."

Terror poked his head out from between Gwen's feet and sneezed.

"On the other hand," Nicodem said thoughtfully, "we do still have some way to go, and I must admit that your condition is intriguing. Perhaps I might offer a few suggestions..."

The only clear understanding Gwen gained from the remainder of the journey was that there was an awful lot about necromancy that she didn't know—almost everything, it seemed. When Nicodem spoke, it was as though one of the great Impressionist painters was trying to explain how to capture the dappled play of sunlight to a child who had just completed their first finger painting. She hoped that some of what he said would stay with her, and eventually she might come to understand it.

There was almost a crowd as they stepped out of the carriage in front of the Old Opera House. Perhaps a dozen men, in various degrees of formal dress, were gathered in small groups engaging in small talk or rampant boasting. What caught Gwen's attention, however, was the host of nightmarish creatures that lurched, crawled, slithered or flapped aimlessly around the living guests.

Every sight seemed to present some unique horror—men, women and animals transformed by the conspicuous violence of their deaths, or collections of body parts so strange and disparate that Gwen couldn't begin to identify their species. Some of the creatures sported grafted limbs of brass and steel, carrying bulky steam boilers to drive oiled pistons. They were like sculptures, she realized—individualistic expressions of the necromancer's art. All of them were howling, moaning, screeching and hissing in a dreadful cacophony.

Gwen's heart nearly stopped as every undead creature fell silent and turned, as one, to stare at her.

It took her a few seconds to realize that, of course, they were *actually* staring at Nicodem. As he walked, they parted smoothly before him. Gwen trailed in his wake, trying not to draw attention to herself, but she could hear the guests' whispered speculations as they passed. *Nicodem's brought a* girl *with him.*

At the top of the stairs, a small man with a huge hat and an equally huge grin leaned against the wall, waiting.

"Nico!" he called in greeting, "Still wowing the masses wit' yer cheap parlor tricks?"

Nicodem waved a hand dismissively, and the congregation of zombies resumed their aimless wandering and squalling.

"It never hurts to make an impression, Seamus. I'm sure you'll agree."

"Oh, aye. *Last* impressions are always better, though. Speakin' of, who's yer lady friend?"

"Don't be crude," Nicodem reprimanded, motioning for Gwen to step forward. "She has an invitation. I merely provided transport. I assume this sordid spectacle is one of your schemes?"

Seamus doffed his hat. "Guilty as charged."

"Then she is your guest, and it is your *responsibility*," Nicodem continued, with grave emphasis, "to see that she comes to no harm. Will you swear to that?"

"Ye want swearin'? With ladies present?" Seamus' eyebrows waggled suggestively. "I don't think that would be proper."

The air around them seemed to grow colder. "Swear it," Nicodem insisted.

"Fine, fine. I swear she'll come to no harm as far as I can see. Ye know this place is full of dangerous lunatics, right? Anyway," he turned to Gwen and bowed with a flourish, "mighty pleased to make your acquaintance, love. Fabulous dress, the blood spatter's a beautiful bit of flair. I've got to talk to Old Nick fer a bit, but I hope I'll catch ye later." He gave her a wink, then took Nicodem's arm and led him inside. Gwen stood alone on the steps, unsure of what to do.

"All right then, miss," said a voice directly behind her, making her jump. Turning, she recognized Nicodem's assistant, who thankfully seemed to have left his shovel with the carriage. "How's about we do something fun, eh? I've heard tell there's a demonstration that's not to be missed."

The assistant—somewhere in his constant chattering, he had mentioned his name was Mortimer—led her down into the bowels of the opera house, through a maze of tunnels that she imagined had once been used by performers and stagehands. Occasionally, she managed to get a few words in edgewise.

"Will this be a necromantic demonstration?" she interrupted.

"What? Nah, miss. We leave the mumbo-jumbo to the high-and-mighties upstairs, mostly. They tend to get a bit, y'know, *focused* and miss the little details like where the

bodies are coming from, or how much they're paying their assistants," Mortimer replied, tapping the side of his nose. "This one's a dissection. Very handy in our line of work."

I am *one of the high-and-mighties, damn it*, Gwen thought to herself, and Terror growled as if echoing her sentiment.

"Here we are then," Mortimer indicated a decaying wooden door. "Blast, I think they've already started. That means we've missed the best bit. Still, always good for a laugh, come on!"

The room they entered stank of blood. A portly man in a stained surgical apron was the center of attention as he worked at an operating table. The partly dismembered body of a young man lay before him, and a crowd of roughly-dressed men were craning to see what he was doing.

"—can be a right gristly bastard if you come at it the wrong way, but see this? A couple of quick cuts *here* and *here* and *here*, and hey presto!" There was a grotesque tearing sound, and the surgeon hoisted aloft the cadaver's lower leg, ragged strips of skin hanging from the severed knee, to a round of applause. Taking a small bow, the demonstrator tossed the leg over the table onto a pile of body parts in front of the audience.

Terror's self-control, already strained by the smell of blood and the presence of so many people, snapped as the limb landed. He barreled through the crowd, causing shouts of confusion and surprise as he ran head-first into legs and nipped at ankles. When he reached the pile, he grabbed the first thing he could carry—a disembodied hand, still wearing a wedding ring - and scampered away with it, back towards Gwen.

"Hey!" A man in the crowd shouted, "I had dibs on that!"

Gwen grabbed Terror by the scruff and tried to pry the hand free, but he'd sunk his sharp little teeth into the bone and wouldn't let go.

The crowd glared at Gwen, muttering "Get out," and "Blasted mutt."

Gwen quickly ducked around the corner.

Mortimer poked his head around the door as she leaned against the wall, catching her breath.

"Sorry miss, should've warned ya. No dogs in the work area, it's more profesh'nal. Not to worry, we missed the best bit anyway. I'd better go smooth things over with the lads."

"Wait—what's the best bit?" she asked.

"The bit where they make the fellow into a cadaver, miss." Mortimer's grin widened with happy memories. Another round of applause filtered out from behind him and, with a final wave of his hand, he withdrew.



It took Gwen some time to find her way back through the Opera House's tunnels, and when she finally emerged it seemed the party was in full swing. The muffled roar of many loud conversations going on at once, punctuated by the occasional distant scream, guided her to the building's foyer.

The room was hot and crowded. She had no idea there were so many Resurrectionists in the city! Some were wild, shabby-looking creatures with tattered clothes and deranged eyes, but others were clearly respectable gentlemen of wealth and station. Most simply looked like ordinary men, dressed up for a night on the town.

She felt conspicuous. Aside from herself, there were only a handful of women in the room, and as far as she could tell they were all undead. They had been dressed up in scandalously revealing maid's outfits, and awkwardly carried trays of drinks through the crowd. The men laughed and made lewd jokes as they passed, and occasionally a drunken sort would go for a sly grope, but the zombie waitresses gave no reaction whatsoever. The sight of them made her feel queasy.

"Shovels! Picks! Those graves won't rob themselves!" A voice boomed over the crowd.

Gwen carefully made her way to the voice. It belonged to a man in a worn top hat and a tattered, dusty suit. Long, greasy hair spilled out from under his hat. He stood behind a table with an array of tools and gadgets, most of which Gwen had never seen before.

"Ah, young lady." The man said, tipping his hat. "Interested in some supplies? Only the finest, tailored to our... particular needs. Any shovel can dig a hole, must certainly. But how many have a sharpened edge, perfect for splitting a coffin!" He hoisted the instrument in one hand. "Ah, but no! You're a lady. Wouldn't want to get your hands dirty.

What about this makeup? It's my own concoction, perfect for covering up that dead, peeling skin. Or this perfume, to cover the stench of the grave?"

Gwen wrinkled her nose. "I'm not dead."

The man squinted at her. "Quite right, quite right." He leaned in conspiratorially, tapping the side of his nose. "But nothing lasts forever, eh?"

Gwen huffed and turned on her heel, ignoring the man's shouts and jeers as she continued on her way. There were rows of tables and even a few makeshift booths, each offering some sort of unique service. There were spot alterations to tighten up loose limbs, books bound in human skin, and even a man selling undead pets. "A companion for life...and afterlife," the sign read.

Over the noise of the crowd, Gwen was sure she heard the lighter tone of a woman's laughter. Jostling her way through the press of bodies, she eventually identified the source. It was definitely a woman, though she was dressed more like a frontiersman in a long duster and heavy riding trousers. Her face was weathered and plain, and her eyes were sharp and confident. It took Gwen several moments to pluck up the courage to approach, nervously.

"Why hello there!" The woman spotted her immediately and drew her into a conversation, dismissing the two men she had been speaking to. "Ain't you just the cutest little thing! What's your name?"

Surprised at the force of the woman's attention, Gwen managed to stumble through her name and shake the offered hand. She'd never shaken hands before—the woman's palms were rough and cool, and her grip was strong.

"Well, it's a downright pleasure to meet'cha. You can call me Tara, and somewhere around here... Ah, there she is," Tara indicated a gaunt woman in a tattered gray dress, who was hunched over a table laden with food, "That's Karina. So you're one of these graverobbin' types, then?"

"I..." Gwen wasn't sure how to respond. She'd never dug up any bodies, but Tara seemed to be watching her with a twinkle of amusement, so she assumed the term wasn't meant to be taken literally. "I suppose so," she ventured, then added, "Are you not?"

Tara laughed. "I'm mostly just along for the ride, but I know a trick or two. Karina was the one that wanted to come tonight, but now that she's here, she's gone shy. Must be all the handsome young fellers, eh?" She winked and nudged Gwen in the ribs with her elbow.

"There certainly are a lot of men," Gwen conceded. "It's nice to see another living woman, actually."

"Oh hun," Tara said kindly, drawing her coat open to reveal a gaping, ragged hole that passed entirely through the center of her chest, "I wouldn't call me alive, exactly."

Gwen recoiled in surprise. Questions crowded into her head and crashed together, leaving her bewildered. "But you're...I mean, you're not..." she struggled.

"Mindless, like most of these poor bastards?" Tara suggested with a grin, tapping one finger against her temple. "Nope. My heart's long gone but my brain's still tickin'."

"But...how is that possible?"

"Beats the heck out of me. But I *can* tell you that my gal Karina's the best damn Resser that ever lived. She's forgotten more about necromancy than all these men put together will learn in their lifetimes, and that ain't no exaggeration."

She looked toward the buffet table, where Karina was peering intently at a pile of roasted chickens, with a mixture of pride and pity. "Sad to say, I really mean that—the poor thing's forgotten damn near everything, including her own name sometimes. Oops, there she goes again—'scuse me. Hey!" she shouted at the hunched figure. "Sweetheart, I'm pretty sure you can't reanimate those. They're cooked." Turning her attention to another figure lurking in the shadows, she called, "Darlin', can you help her out?"

As the figure emerged into the light, Gwen's blood ran cold and she grabbed Tara's arm in panic.

"That's a Death Marshal!" she squeaked. Tara laughed and patted her white-knuckled hand.

"He surely was, once upon a time. Useful sort to have around."

As she watched the creature gently try to shoo Karina away from the buffet table, Gwen forced herself to relax and release her grip on Tara's wrist.

"But...the Marshals are trained to protect themselves from

necromancy, aren't they? People always say that they can't come back as zombies, that's why they're not afraid to fight...well, us."

"People say that, do they?" Tara chuckled. "I guess nobody told Karina. Or they did, maybe—like I said, her memory's bad. Sometimes she forgets that a thing is impossible, so she goes ahead and does it anyway."

There was a sudden commotion around the buffet table as several roasted chickens hurled themselves off the pile and began awkwardly flopping across the floor with surprising speed, leaving trails of grease and stuffing as they scattered into the crowd. Karina, cackling with delight, gave chase. Terror, the stolen hand still dangling from his mouth, looked like he very much wanted to join in.

"Well I'll be damned," Tara sighed, like a parent with a clever but unruly child—Gwen remembered the sound well. "It's been awful nice chattin' with you," she continued, "but I'm afraid you'll have to excuse me."

The noise and press of the crowd was getting too much for Gwen. Heading up a sweeping marble staircase to a landing, she found an outdoor balcony and took several deep breaths of the cold night air.

A soft voice, almost directly in her ear, said, "Marvelous night, don't ye think? I love a party."

She whirled to find a pair of brilliant green eyes staring intently into her own, far too close for propriety or comfort. There was a glittering fire in those eyes—in the darkness, they almost seemed to glow.

"Sh—Seamus, isn't it?" she stammered. She'd never been alone with a man in such close proximity before, but Mrs. Bletcham had always warned that it could lead to Bad Things.

"Oh, ye remembered!" He grinned, laugh lines creasing the skin around his intense, unwavering eyes. "What a charming girl. Don't worry, ye'll get used to the name. Do ye remember what else I said?"

"You liked my dress?" Gwen ventured.

"Aye, I liked the blood. Now that I look at it again, though, I'm not sure there's quite enough. What else? What did I say I'd *do*?"

The fire in his eyes was growing, becoming a terrible, all-consuming inferno. She couldn't turn away.

"You said..." she faltered, trying to gather her thoughts, "you said you'd catch me later." Her whole body was shivering, and she couldn't seem to stop it.

"Clever girl!" Seamus laughed. "Here's the thing. For me to catch ye, ye need to run."

He reached into his coat and slowly drew a long, serrated knife.

"Ye need to run," he repeated.

Gwen's hands gripped the balcony railing, but her legs were numb and unresponsive. Her chest was painfully tight, and her vision was starting to go dark at the edges. How long had it been since she'd drawn a breath?

Seamus leaned forward and whispered directly into her ear.

"*Run.*"

Gwen's body burst into action, seemingly of its own accord. She slipped past Seamus, ducking under his outstretched arm and knocking him off-balance. In the corridor, she hesitated, trying to remember the way to the stairs, trying to hear the sounds of the party over the pounding of her heart.

Seamus' hand caught the back of her dress. The fabric tore as he lifted her bodily off her feet and hurled her down the corridor, away from the stairs. She landed painfully on the wooden boards, but managed to scramble to her feet. Hiking up her skirts, she sprinted away with Seamus' mocking laughter ringing in her ears. She could hear his hobnailed boots thumping after her, but she didn't dare look back.

Skidding around a corner, Gwen spied an open door and made a dash for it, slamming it shut behind her and pressing her weight against it. She expected Seamus to come crashing through at any second, but there was no sound at all from the other side. She fumbled with the lock until it clicked, then looked around the room.

At one time, this had been a private dressing room, judging by the ornately mirrored table that was its centerpiece. Gwen grabbed the stool that sat in front of it and tried to jam it against the door as best she could. There was

also a heavy wardrobe, a washbasin, and a cot piled with blankets. The room was illuminated by oil lamps ensconced in the walls. With a sudden chill, she wondered why the lamps were lit.

Gwen stifled a scream as the pile of blankets moved, and a slender young woman—a very *dead* young woman—emerged from the bed. She had the same slack jaw and glassy stare common to most of the undead, but there was an air of puzzlement in the way she held her head. Her dry, pillow-tousled hair and sluggish movements completed the illusion—if it weren't for the ragged gash that ran across her throat, she could have been any woman unexpectedly awoken from a deep sleep. She wore only a stained cotton shift.

The zombie stood and made a few hesitant steps toward Gwen. Her hips made an exaggerated swaying motion with each step. As she advanced, she began to slide the hem of her nightdress slowly toward the top of her thighs.

"Oh, ah," Gwen averted her gaze and blushed furiously. "Sorry, I didn't...um...please don't."

The woman caught one of Gwen's wrists in a vice-like grip, then caught the other as she tried to pull free, and drew her into an embrace. Gwen struggled as one of the creature's legs wrapped around her waist and its arms wrapped around her neck, undead fingers twining through her hair. With relentless strength, the zombie began to force Gwen's mouth towards its own blue-black lips. Just before their faces met, the creature's jaw opened impossibly wide, revealing jagged brown teeth and a blackened tongue. Gwen gagged, hands beating ineffectually at the woman's chest.

"My, my, ye girls seem to be getting on famously. I almost hate to interrupt," Seamus chuckled, emerging from a dark corner behind the wardrobe, "but that's enough. Hettie, back to bed."

The zombie had paused with jaws poised to clamp shut on Gwen's face, and it seemed to hesitate for a moment before releasing its grip and sullenly shuffling over to the cot. Between gasping breaths, Gwen risked a glance at the door—it was still locked, with the stool propped against the handle just as she'd left it.

"You said I'd come to no harm!" Gwen tried to keep her voice steady. "You gave your word."

"Aye, that's a fair point, girl." Seamus paused, looking thoughtful. "Though I think ye'll find, what I actually said was that ye'd come to no harm *as far as I could see.*" He shook his head solemnly, and laid his knife gently on the dressing table, turning his back to her. "Can't be expected to watch ye all the time, now can I?"



Gwen hesitated, her mind racing as she tried to understand. Was he giving her a chance to fight back, or setting a cruel trap to toy with her? It hardly mattered—there was nowhere to run. In a movement so smooth she surprised herself, Gwen swooped up the knife and buried it into Seamus's side. He let out a howl and spun on her, wrapping a gnarled hand around her neck and tossing her to the floor.

Tears blurred Gwen's vision as she gasped for breath, but she saw Seamus casually pull the knife from his side. Horror and anger raged inside her like caged animals and she tried to call out, tried to get up, but she couldn't move. A pale green glow surrounded her, as if her own fear had become manifest and now danced before her eyes, taunting her. Seamus leaned forward and breathed deeply through his nostrils, the wound in his side closing with inhuman speed.

Seamus broke into a wide grin. "That's the stuff!" He cackled. "Don't ye worry, little lass. I won't kill ye, that would end our fun! Besides," Seamus whispered, lowering his lips to her ear and stroking her cheek gently, "you can hear them too..."

Gwen slowly backed to the door and fumbled for the latch, her eyes never leaving Seamus' grinning face.

"One more thing!" He held up his hand just as Gwen got the door open. "Ye forgot this. Seems to me ye earned it." In his open palm, Seamus offered the serrated knife, glistening with his own blood.

Gwen paused, torn between an overwhelming urge to escape and a defiant desire to maintain the last shreds of her dignity. She composed herself, gave Seamus the sharpest glare she could muster, and snatched the knife from his hand.

"Atta girl!" Seamus shouted, laughing and slapping his thigh.

The mad giggling followed Gwen down the hallway.

"I think we should leave," Gwen announced, and Terror barked his approval.

The two of them wandered the maze of corridors until they found a set of stairs. The noise of the crowd filtered up, and Gwen hesitated. She would surely be more likely to run into further trouble, or at least unwanted attention, if she rejoined the party—but on the other hand, perhaps there would be safety in numbers, and she felt alone and vulnerable. Terror began a clumsy, hopping descent, and she reluctantly followed.

On the ground floor, the passage led to an archway where she could see a crowd of men and monsters. They were all focused on a spectacle out of her view—the Opera House's stage, she supposed—and were shouting and cheering with great gusto. The noise and the press of bodies made her long to turn and run, to find another way around, but her trembling legs protested at the thought of climbing the stairs again. All she had to do was get through the crowd and out the main doors, and she would be free.

As she pushed her way through the forest of jostling elbows and shoulders, she couldn't help but be curious as to what all the fuss was about. Packed in by taller men and the occasional towering undead creature, she eventually fought her way into a clear area near the doors from where she could see the stage.

Two undead monstrosities were tearing each other apart. The first was a behemoth of rotting muscle and bone with rotating sawblades for hands. Its eyes had long since rotted from its face, and a metal band strapped to its forehead flashed with red light. Its opponent had the body of a gorilla with the head of a Bayou Gator sewn crudely on. It beat its chest and let out a hiss as it leapt towards its foe. But the sawblades were too fast, lopping the Gator head clean off and sending it careening into the crowd.

The man next to Gwen elbowed her. "That's why you always keep the original head! Stitches are always the weak spot!" He shouted over the noise of the crowd.



"I don't think it's over yet." Gwen replied, staring openly.

The decapitated gorilla kept on fighting, leaping on top of the rotting monstrosity. It grabbed the metal band around the creature's head and pulled. With a horrible sucking sound the metal came free, trailing wires dripping with gore. The behemoth went berserk, flailing its limbs and letting out a shill, inhuman screech. It fell into the crowd, dismembering several members of the audience in its death throes.

What was left of the gorilla stood proudly on the stage, beating its chest.

"Focus wasn't in the head, I suppose. Clever that," the man beside Gwen admitted grudgingly. "Everybody always goes for the head."

Money was changing hands and men were shouting and hollering at the outcome as Seamus took the stage.

"Ye were warned!" He bellowed, "The first row always gets a bit messy! But nothing that can't be sewn back on, right?" He laughed and clapped his hands as the great curtain swung closed behind him.

"But now for a bit o' fun! I give you the lovely ladies of lace and laceration... the most perfect pretties of putrification... me girls!"

The curtains swung open and a chorus line of less-than-living ladies danced something that was, Gwen assumed, supposed to be a can-can. She noticed that the women on stage were the same zombies that had been dressed as waitresses earlier—their sluggish, jerky movements were making the energetic dance into a shambolic parody as they flailed out of time, tripped on their flowing skirts and



kicked each other, to the delight of the jeering crowd. A hulking zombie with an organ grinder provided jangling, off-kilter musical accompaniment.

Seamus took a spot at the left of the stage, clapping his hands and laughing so hard there were tears streaming down his cheeks. To the right, in the lower balcony, Nicodem watched, rolling his eyes.

Seamus noticed it too. "Oh, learn to have some fun, old man!""

Nicodem stood, adjusting his monocle. "Necromancy is the path to perfection, Seamus. Its purpose is to overcome the weaknesses of the flesh and the mind, to shatter the barriers between *will* and *act*. There is nothing to be gained in leering at the wild flailings of dead harlots! Observe the True Craft."

Raising his hands like a conductor, Nicodem gestured and the undead figures around him and in the front row began an intricate dance. They moved in perfect harmony, like cogs in elaborate clockwork, each fitting seamlessly to support and complement the others. The annoyance on Nicodem's face was gone, replaced with a smug smile.

Seamus got to his feet. Gwen could see him mouth something under his breath that looked like, "Bloody show off."

But to the crowd he bellowed, "Harlots? That's me girls yer talkin' about!" And his pistol boomed like a cannon.

Nicodem's hat exploded into tatters. The dance ceased mid-arabesque.

Nicodem, his face pale and cold, threw his arms forward. The zombies around him surged, leaping from the balcony into the crowd. His two footmen, leading the charge, each drew a pair of long, curved swords and began cutting a bloody swathe through men and undead alike, heading toward Seamus.

"See? Now this is fun!" Seamus howled.

The dancing girls, led by an enormous, bald creature in a ballgown, shrieked and threw themselves off the stage into the melee, scratching and biting with ferocious passion. One of the footmen thrust both his swords through the huge woman's chest, and she looked down at the rents in her flamboyant gown with an anguished howl. Then she swung both meaty hands to meet in a thunderous clap on her assailant's head, bursting it like a grape.

The audience, who had been watching in stunned silence, erupted into pandemonium. Many simply tried to run from the unfolding horror, stampeding through the crowd. Others shouted declarations for one side or the other, sending their own minions to join the fray. Some seemed delighted to seize the opportunity for mayhem, using monsters and bursts of deadly sorcery to bar the way of those attempting to flee the scene.

Gwen, standing near the doors, saw the crushing press of people and zombies heading in her direction and desperately flung herself to the side to avoid being squashed. A colossal amalgamation of human parts and steam-powered machinery, ridden by a dapper young man with a riding crop, flattened its way to the front of the pack and charged the doors, smashing them into splinters with its sheer bulk. The rider's face met the lintel with a crack as his mount lumbered on, and he toppled to the floor. The crowd surged past Gwen in a torrent, people trampling and clawing each other in panic.

Taking refuge behind a huge pillar, Gwen tried to catch her breath.

"Hello, pretty," a tall, sharply-dressed man hissed in her ear, grabbing her upper arm. Under normal circumstances, she thought, this would be frightening...but after everything she'd been through this evening, it simply didn't seem worth getting worked-up about. She kicked the man savagely in the groin and then, as he doubled over, she drew Seamus' knife and cut his throat from ear to ear. He fell, staring up at her in shock from a spreading pool of his own blood. She held his gaze until his eyes glazed and he stopped gasping.

It seemed that the crowd had thinned—those trying to escape had mostly done so, though the floor of the auditorium was slick with blood and littered with bodies, which occasionally staggered brokenly to their feet and moved to join the fight that still raged around the stage. One enterprising soul had set a pile of broken furniture ablaze, and the flames were licking up the walls as smoke began to fill the room.

Stepping carefully, Gwen headed for the door, but couldn't help glancing toward the battle out of curiosity. The area around the combatants was scorched and blackened by sorcery and caustic ichor. Those left fighting were battered and frayed, continuing to hurl themselves into combat

despite shattered limbs and ragged wounds. Nicodem still stood on his balcony, directing his minions like a puppeteer and forcing those who fell to rise again regardless of their injuries. Seamus was...gone.

That realization was an icy grip around her heart. She saw that Nicodem had also noticed his opponent's disappearance—shaking his head, he retreated into the shadows, leaving those below to continue their futile struggle.

Gwen fled into the night with Terror at her heels, as the Opera House grew into a towering funeral pyre.

The night was dark and cold, the wind whipping at Gwen's heels and bringing with it the scent of smoke.

As she trudged on, a carriage came to a stop before passing her. Mortimer sat atop it, tipping his hat. "A ride, miss?"

Gwen proudly picked up the edges of her torn and bloodied dress, turning up her chin as she climbed aboard. "Thank you, sir. It has been quite a night."

Terror was barking insistently. Gwen forced one eye open, wincing at the bright sunlight that flooded through her bedroom window. Her bed felt so comfortable that she decided she was never getting out of it again, but the dog had other ideas, scrambling up alongside and poking at her with his nose.

She heard the twins running and shouting in the corridor outside, and forced her aching body to get up and dressed.

Her tattered evening gown lay in a crumpled heap on the floor, far beyond repair. Next to it, the gleaming polished steel of Seamus' knife caught her eye. Her knife, now.

Turning the blade over in her hands, she tried to order her thoughts. Last night's experiences had been terrifying and almost deadly, that was true—but at the same time, her thoughts buzzed with new insights, new possibilities, new avenues for experimentation. Her knowledge and power would grow, whatever the sacrifice. As she turned the blade over she noticed something that had escaped her the night before. It was engraved.

"*To my lovely Gwen.*

-Seamus"

Gwen tried to remember. Had this been there last night? She simply had been too occupied to notice either way. Could this be some spell, some trick of necromancy? No. Deep down, Gwen knew that the knife had been engraved before she'd ever seen it, and she shivered.

She watched Terror as he chased motes of dust through the sunbeam, and thought about the nameless puppy she'd found on the street and brought home. He had seemed happier then. Something was different, some undeniable and unseen spark. She missed those days, before the twins had gotten their cruel hands on him and left him still and broken. Before she'd first heard the whispers. She mused, turning the blade to catch the light. Her life certainly promised to be more interesting now.

Spare the rod, spoil the child, came the whisper..

Perhaps it was time to move on to greater things?

The pounding knock at the door interrupted her thoughts, but the soft giggling made her smile. She slipped the knife into the sleeve of her dress, its cool metal snug against her forearm.

"Come in, girls," she called.



CARRION EMISSARY

So the great man's machinations have torn themselves apart, as the Hag saw they would, and the catastrophe that this failure threatened to visit upon Malifaux has been averted. The land still sits beneath its sun and moons, and the days and nights turn, and the people move on anew.

But the end was never averted. The dark is still waiting. The Carrion Emissary knows this truth, carries it reverently like a funerary urn.

Death is patient. It waits ahead for life to catch up to it, all unknowing of what it races toward. The Carrion Emissary tells this truth, for those prepared to hear it.

And the Grave Spirit is moving again. Averting the disaster simply means Malifaux has been preserved for the power beneath Kythera to prey on it anew. The Carrion Emissary prophesies this truth, and perhaps soon someone will understand it.



CARRION EMISSARY

Enforcer, Rare 1

EMISSARY OF FATE

COST 10

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	6	9	6	6	3

ABILITIES

Power Sink: When this Crew scores 1 or more **VP** from the Strategy, this model gains the following Condition for the rest of the game: "**Destined +1:** At the end of this model's Activation it heals +1 damage. This Condition may not be removed by other models' Actions."

Hard to Kill: While this model has 2 or more **Wd** remaining when it suffers damage, it may not be reduced to below 1 **Wd**.

The Flesh Crawls: Other friendly models which begin their Activation within ❶6 gain +1 **Wk** for the duration of the Activation.

Flight: This model is immune to falling damage and may ignore any terrain or models while moving.

CARRION EMISSARY

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Rot and Rend (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 6 or ⫻ 1): Target suffers 3/3☠/4☠☠ damage.
- ✕ ***Infect***: After succeeding, target gains the **Poison +1** Condition a number of times equal to the number of ✕ in the final duel total.
- 🕮 ***Final Word:*** After damaging, the target must discard a card or this Crew may place a Scheme Marker in base contact with it.
- 🐈 ***Word of the Emissary:*** After damaging, take this Action again. This Action may not declare Triggers.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) Claims of the Dead: Target a Corpse Marker within 6". Place a Scheme Marker within 2" of the target, then discard the target.

(0) Shards of Kythera (**Ca** 6 / TN: 13 / Rg: 6): Place two 50mm Shard Markers touching each other in range and LoS, not in base contact with a model or other Marker. These Markers are **Ht** 4 impassable, blocking terrain. At the end of the Turn, remove all friendly Shard Markers. Before removing the Markers, a Mindless Zombie may be summoned in base contact with them.

(0) The March of the Dead: This Action may only be taken while this model has the **Destined +2** Condition or greater. Remove the **Destined** Condition from this model to summon a non-Master, non-Totem Resurrectionist Undead model with a cost of 6 or less into base contact with this model.

50mm

ANNA LOVELACE

Von Schill,

I am sending this letter on the matter of my little sister, Anna. She is most certainly capable in the ways of science, magical studies, and even combat. It is my understanding that she has proved valuable to you on some recent excursions; this does not surprise me. Even her skills in the less palatable forms of magical application can be put to good use by our outfit.

However, I must implore you not to seek out her services on any more occasions. It is not the nature of the power she wields that disturbs me, nor the creatures with whom she chooses to keep acquaintance. What worries me is simply her nature. I would like to tell you that she was corrupted by power, or necromancy, or that she is being used by some twisted god. But the truth of the matter is that she is cold, calculating, and sadistic; as always.

-Hannah



ANNA LOVELACE — COST 9, Cache 4

Henchman, Living, Mercenary, Rare 1

FREIKORPS

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	6	9	5	5	2

ABILITIES

Gravity Well: Enemy models may not end placement effects within ❶8 unless that effect was generated by a bury effect, summon effect, or a model in this Crew.

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Clockwork Dress: Enemy models may not end push or movement effects within ❶8 unless that effect was generated by a Walk Action, Charge Action, or a model in this Crew. Models which would be illegally pushed or moved into the ❶ stop at its edge.

Rush of Magic: During the Draw Phase draw an additional card and then discard a card.

ANNA LOVELACE

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Wretched Blade (**Ml** 5✕ / Rst: **Df** or **Wp** / Rg: ⫽1): Target suffers 2/2/4 damage. When this Action is declared, this model chooses if the resist is **Df** or **Wp**.

✕ ***Infect***: After succeeding, target gains the **Poison +1** Condition a number of times equal to the number of ✕ in the final duel total.

🕮 ***Glimpse the Void***: After damaging, if no other models are buried, the target must pass a TN 13 **Wp** duel or become buried. The next time a model in play is killed, unbury the target in base contact with the killed model before removing it.

❣ ***Life Drain***: After damaging, heal 1 damage.

(1) The Swirling Damned (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐10): Target suffers 3/3/4 damage. This Attack does not randomize when shooting into engagements.

🕮 ***The Damned Gather***: After dealing Moderate or Severe damage to an enemy, summon a Mindless Zombie or a Seishin into base contact with the target.

✕ ***Screaming From the Aether***: After damaging, the target and all models within ❶3 of it must take a TN 12 Horror Duel.

(0) Vortex (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 8): Push target enemy model up to 4" away from this model. Then all enemy models within ❶3 of the target must pass a TN 14 **Wk** duel or be pushed 3" away from the target.

40mm

SLOTH

Despite the frenzy that night, there was only one body in the ruins of the Crossroads Hotel come sunup. He had stood listlessly on the stage with the rest of them, carried his part of the tune, and hung his head as the man and woman all in red and black parted the crowd and danced in the center of the floor.

He's pretty sure they said things to him, but he didn't bother to listen. Wasn't much he did bother with any more. He was long past seeing the point. At midnight, when the madness lit up, he just lay where he'd been knocked sprawling, closed his tired eyes and waited for the end.

Joke was on him, of course. His body might be cold and his breath stopped, but his fingers are still nimble on the strings. A deal's a deal, and the music ain't done yet.



SLOTH COST 8

Enforcer, Undead, Mercenary, Rare 1

CROSSROADS SEVEN, TORMENTED, HORROR

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	5	10	5	6	2

ABILITIES

Lazy Sunday: Enemy models which start their Activation within 3 must discard a card or suffer 2 damage or gain the **Slow** Condition.

Hard to Wound +1: Damage flips against this model suffer .

Df (X) Just Lay Down: After this model fails, the Attacker immediately ends its Activation.

SLOTH

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Bored to Death (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 2): Target suffers 2/2/3 damage.

Nap Time: After damaging, the target gains the following Condition until the end of its next Activation: "**Bored:** This model suffers -2 **Wk** and -2 **Cg**."

(1) Lullaby (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 8): Target gains the **Paralyzed** Condition. The target may choose to suffer 2 damage to gain the **Slow** Condition instead. This Action may be taken once per Turn.

X ***Sleepwalking:*** After succeeding, push the target up to 3" in any direction.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Resting In The Blues: Target other friendly model within 6" may gain the **Slow** Condition. If it gained the **Slow** Condition, it heals 3 damage.

30mm

THE FORGOTTEN MARSHAL

He looked down at his right hand, marveling at its design. He opened and closed it, watching the tendons pull tight underneath his skin. He yearned to know more, to understand. And yet, that yearning was what got him here, in this alley, bloody and full of holes. He couldn't even remember his own name; the magic had stripped that from him. But it had given him so much more.

The others training to be Death Marshals didn't understand. Couldn't understand. His curiosity had grown with each day as they studied the art of death; he had asked so many questions. But questions had drawn attention, and attention had gotten him shot and left in this lonely alley. They assumed him dead, they were wrong. Maybe it was the dark magic. Maybe luck. He didn't know or care. He had lost his name. He had lost his title. He had lost his way. Even so, as he raised his bloody body to its feet, he smiled. He still needed to know more.



THE FORGOTTEN MARSHAL

COST 7

Enforcer, Living, Rare 1

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	6	7	4	6	2

ABILITIES

Hard to Wound +1: Damage flips against this model suffer ⍈.

"Never Me!": When this model is killed, it does not drop a Corpse Marker.

Forgot That Was In There: When this model is killed flip a card which can't be cheated, summon one of these models in base contact with this model before removing it, depending on the suit:
Black Joker: No summon
: Guild Autopsy
: Crooligan
: Necropunk
: Gaki
Red Joker: Student of Viscera

THE FORGOTTEN MARSHAL

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) With My Own Hands (**MI** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Target suffers 2/2/4 damage.
Choke Out The Life: After damaging, the target gains the following Condition until the start of its next Activation: "**Slowly Choking +1:** When this model suffers damage, it suffers +1 damage."
Infect: After succeeding, target gains the **Poison +1** Condition a number of times equal to the number of in the final duel total.

(1) Peacebringer (**Sh** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 10): Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.
Critical Strike: When damaging the target, this Attack deals +1 damage for each in the final duel total.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) The Madness Calls (**Ca** 6 / TN: 11): Until the end of the Turn, friendly Spirits and Undead which begin their Activation within 4 gain +2 **Cg** for the duration of the Activation.

(0) A Step Into Oblivion (**Ca** 6 / TN: 11): Bury this model. Unbury it in base contact with any friendly model at the start of the next Turn. If there are no friendly models in play when this model would be unburied, sacrifice it.

30mm

HAYREDDIN

As Hayreddin cradled the last of his followers in his arms, he was helpless as the flesh fell from its bones, the black blood sizzling and smoking on the rocky ground beneath him. But Oruc had been more than a follower; he was a brother. A friend. Hayreddin hung his head as he lowered the lifeless body to the ground. In that instant a whirlwind of darkness enveloped him, and Hayreddin knew he was no longer alone. “Mother,” he whispered, “why? Why not just kill me?”

Lilith stepped from the shadows with a lithe grace. “You have broken our most ancient laws. Ours is the magic of blood, of life. To taint our people with the powers of death and corruption is unspeakable. No,” Lilith whispered, cradling Hayreddin’s face in her hands, “death is too good for you. I name thee traitor, and I curse thee with my power. The power of life. Live, Hayreddin. Live and see what you have wrought.” She kissed him tenderly on the forehead, and then was gone with a storm of shadow and thunder.

Hayreddin screamed.



HAYREDDIN — COST 7

Enforcer, Living, Rare 1

NEPHILIM

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
7	6	6	6	8	2

ABILITIES

Black Blood: All models without **Black Blood** within (1) suffer 1 damage when this model suffers damage.

Flight: This model is immune to falling damage and may ignore any terrain or models while moving.

Curse of the First Traitor: Damage flips against other models within 4 gain .

Essence Drain: Once per Turn, when another model within 4 suffers damage, this model gains the following Condition until the end of the game: "**Vitality +1:** When this model is killed or sacrificed, draw +1 cards and then discard that many cards."

HAYREDDIN

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) The Traitor's Staff (**MI** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 2): Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.
- ***Infect***: After succeeding, target gains the **Poison +1** Condition a number of times equal to the number of in the final duel total.
- ***"Away, Fools!"***: After damaging, push all friendly models within (1)4 of this model 4" away from this model.
- ***A New Soul***: After killing the target, gain the **Vitality +1** Condition.

(1) Sawed-Off Shotgun (**Sh** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 6): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.
- ***Slug:*** This Attack places no Blast Markers. After damaging, perform a 2/3/4 damage flip against the target which may not be cheated. This model may not take the **Sawed-Off Shotgun** Action again this Turn.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) The Ritual Begins: Choose one of the following:
- ***True Strike:*** Reduce this model's **Vitality** Condition by 1 to ignore **Armor** and **Incorporeal** while making **MI** Attacks during this Activation.
- ***Path of the Dead:*** Reduce this model's **Vitality** Condition by 2 to place this model within 6", not in terrain or in base contact with a Marker.
- ***Desperation:*** Reduce this model's **Vitality** Condition by 3 to heal 4 damage on this model.
- ***My Return Cometh:*** Reduce this model's **Vitality** Condition by 4 to gain the **Reactivate** Condition.

30mm

Among the well-heeled of Malifaux society a social custom has sprung up known as the "All-Hours," an attempt at a dignified way to maintain convivial nightlife in a city whose streets carry many dangers after dark. The premise is simple: the hosts usher in their guests and then make a show of locking the doors and shuttering the windows, entertaining their guests until dawn. A certain order to the night has become customary, a sequence of light meals, music, games and eventually short sleeps. The lights are dimmed in the small hours, a certain informality of dress is allowed and the conversation becomes softer and muted. Breakfast is served at sunrise and the gathering then disperses after the hosts once again make a show of unlocking and opening the door.

The All-Hours is still regarded as a custom of the upper crust and those wanting to emulate them – most of the city's less well-off have no space to host them, and instead assemble for much more boisterous overnight lock-ins at pubs and taverns. And while the practice arose specifically to spare gentle-born townsfolk the need to be out of doors in Malifaux's night, some daring hosts turn this on its head and conduct loud festivities before wide-open windows as though daring anything to come in after them.

Mr. Algernon &
Mrs. Emily Harringworth

Wish to cordially inform their friends that they will be at home to visitors at "All Hours" after 6pm on the night of

THURSDAY 27TH APRIL

At No. 47 "The Stones" at Down Town. R.S.V.P. SEE OPPOSITE

RESURRECTIONIST UPGRADES

CONFLUX OF INFAMY

COST: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Seamus is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Banquet of Fear: Whenever an enemy model within ❶4 of this model fails a **Wp** duel, this model heals 1 damage.

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (0) Fling (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target an enemy model with a lower **Ht** value than this model. Push the target up to 6" in any direction. If it ends the push in base contact with impassable terrain or other models, it suffers 2 damage. Any models the target ends in base contact with must pass a TN 12 **Df** duel or suffer 2 damage and be pushed 3" away from the target.

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

CONFLUX OF DEATH

COST: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Nicodem is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Grave Peril: Friendly Mindless Zombies in play gain +1 **MI** for each other friendly Undead model within 3" of them, up to a maximum of +3 **MI**.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Strength of the Grave: This model may discard a card to give target Undead model within 6" the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Strength of the Grave:** This model gains ✚ to **MI** Actions."

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

CONFLUX OF FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

COST: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if McMourning is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Smell Corruption: This model gains ✚ to Attack flips against models with the **Poison** Condition.

- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (0) Toxic Fog (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: ⌐10): Target suffers 1/1❶❶/1❶❶❶ damage. All models damaged by this Attack gain the **Poison +1** Condition.

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

CONFLUX OF SPIRIT

COST: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Kirai is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the Spirit Characteristic.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Eternal Spirit: Friendly Spirit models within ❶4 treat **Ca** Actions as **MI** Actions for the purposes of the **Incorporeal** Ability while being targeted with an Attack Action.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Pull of Aether (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12 / Rg: 6) Push target other friendly Spirit up to 4" in any direction.

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

Conflux of Horror

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Molly is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Tearing At the Seams of the World: Friendly Undead within 10 gain the Horror Characteristic.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Von Schtook's Blessing (**Ca** 6 / TN: 10 / Rg: 6): Target friendly non-Leader Horror gains **Fast**.

Restrictions

Emissary of Fate

Carrion Conflux

Cost: 0 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  The Power Rages: Friendly Minions within 4 gain to all Attack duels.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) On the Tides of Fate: Discard a Soulstone to draw two cards and then discard two cards.

Restrictions

Emissary of Fate



This chapter contains a story as well as new models and Upgrades for **THE ARCANIST** Faction.
These models and Upgrades are not a part of the Campaign and may be hired normally during any game.

HIGH NOONE

BY: GRAEME STEVENSON

The night air carried many scents. The familiar dry bunchgrass and the dust lifted by mountain winds were the scents of home, as was the rangy warm odor of the beast lying at his side, panting in the slow rhythm of sleep. The presence of ozone from the storm far to the west was fainter but just as familiar.

Not every scent brought him comfort, though. The sharp tang of sweating men invaded his yurt and the acrid stink of lime cement and gunpowder clung to his body like a taint.

Marcus turned his head and spat to try and clear the taste of Guild from his mouth, but it was useless. He understood that they could not be dislodged so easily, but as the leech will relinquish its hold to escape the naked flame, so he had set in motion a plan to break the Guild's hold on this land and drive them back to their nest in Malifaux.

The wind brought him a new scent and Marcus recognized an agent of that plan approaching. The heavy shape pushed through the yurt's entrance and crouched on the far side of the fire, which had burned down to a circle of glowing ash. The visitor brought with it the smell of deep places, of earth and stone.

They regarded one another for a time, the newcomer's tiny eyes squinting and uncertain even in this soft orange light. It moved as close as it dared, its posture one of abject servitude, and deposited a small chunk of bedrock on the blanket before Marcus' crossed legs.

The Arcanist lifted the stone. It was cold to the touch, a deep chill that only came from countless ages beyond the reach of the sun.

"Good," he said.

The creature retreated as abruptly as it had arrived, leaving behind crumbs of earth and imprints of its broad, spade-like feet.

Marcus squeezed the stone in his fist and stepped out of his yurt, looking down on the flickering amber pin-pricks of torch light on the plain, far below his mountain. The Guild leeches were running out of time, whether they knew it or not.

"Good," he said again.

"Colonel," the guardsman said, throwing a salute as he opened the carriage door.

Colonel Noone climbed down slowly, not anxious to have the shine of his boots dulled by the reddish-brown film that coated the guardsman sentry and everything else in these sun-blasted Northern Hills. He far preferred the cobbles of Malifaux, especially just after a hard rain-storm when the stones were dark and lustrous and clean.

His steam carriage had been turned into an oven by the long journey north and his dress shirt and cap were sodden. Any hope of a refreshing breeze vanished as soon as he emerged from the baking interior—the winds that scoured the hills were as hot as the metal skin of his carriage and the only thing that brushed his sweating skin was dust.

His mood soured further when he saw the fort.

After three months, it still looked far from completed—the construction was nowhere near as advanced as it should have been, considering the resources and manpower that had been shipped north. The perimeter wall was mostly finished as was the first floor of the main building but the upper floor, buttresses and watch towers were still timber skeletons surrounded by untidy piles of masonry.

The laborer camp stretched for a quarter-mile to the south, a warren of grubby tents, latrine trenches and cook fires, ringed by the larger Guild garrison tents. The guardsmen on sentry duty around the build site had shed their overcoats and instead walked their patrol routes in shirts and breeches, goggles and bandanas protecting their eyes and mouths from the swirling dust.

Colonel Noone had seen his share of sloppy guardsmen, but he had perception enough to look beyond the uniform violation and see that these men were alert and frightened. They patrolled in groups of three or more and though they were covered in dust, their rifle breeches glinted with freshly cleaned and oiled steel. Nor did a single guardsman have his weapon slung over his shoulder; each man carried his rifle at port arms and his head rotated constantly.

They were expecting trouble.

The laborers were just as edgy. In Noone's experience, construction workers were traditionally noisy procrastinators who spent their day maintaining the illusion of industry. These men were silent and hurried about their business with an air of desperation. They had obviously reached the conclusion that the sooner the job was finished, the sooner they could leave this place.

"Where is Captain Bridger?" he asked.

"In the command tent, sir," the guardsman replied, indicating the largest tent on the far side of the construction site where a Guild flag rippled in the hot wind. "He's expecting you."

Noone worked his way around the camp, ignoring salutes thrown from passing patrols, surveying the construction up close. The interior of the fort was an empty shell of unplastered stone and the floor was still dirt. Teams of men with shovels were burrowing down into the dry ground while others brought barrows loaded with slabs.

When he reached the command tent, he threw the flap aside and stepped into a heat not unlike his steam carriage. He had to take a moment for his eyes to adjust.

"Colonel," a voice said and a shadow rose from behind a folding desk, which resolved itself into a short paunchy man in a Captain's uniform as his vision recovered from the sun's glare.

"Captain Bridger," he said, returning his subordinate's salute. "For once, the reports were not wrong. You are even further behind than I realized."

The Captain looked unapologetic, instead gesturing to a leather case propped on his bunk. "A drink, Colonel?"

"Water."

The tin mug was dented and the water was room temperature, but Noone swallowed it with relish. He accepted a refill and drank it with equal gusto, while Captain Bridger waited patiently.

"So, tell me," Noone said, wiping his mouth. "The reports advised of animal attacks."

"We are under siege," Bridger said simply. "My men are on sentry duty for up to 18 hours at a time, and any sleep they might get between duties is interrupted. Mountain lions and maulers attack the labor camp most nights, sometimes two or three times over the course of a single evening. We risk losing laborers every night. The men are exhausted."

"Why not change the shift patterns to let the guards sleep during the day?" the Colonel asked.

"Oh, they attack us during the day, too,' Bridger said with a smile, "but they're more frequent at night."

"You've posted sentries?"

"Around the perimeter wall, yes, but somehow they keep getting into the compound."

"What about sharp-shooters? You have an elevated position to command the surrounding terrain."

"Raptors," Bridger said. "Birds of prey. They blind anyone that climbs as high as the scaffold on the watch tower. I lost four snipers and five times that in laborers before I ordered a halt on the upper story's construction. The raptors haven't been back since."

"Unacceptable," Noone said. "The watch tower would grant us a huge tactical advantage. It must be completed. Where do the raptors nest?"

"The mountain,' Bridger said, nodding to the north-west.

"Then send a patrol and destroy their nests."

"I've sent two," Bridger responded flatly. "Neither came back."

Noone toyed with the empty tin mug, thinking. "It seems we are at war with more than just the local wildlife."

His musing was interrupted by shrieking. He pushed open the tent flap and saw two laborers staggering from the fort's interior, swinging lengths of brown rope while the others scattered.

They weren't ropes, they were snakes. Rattlesnakes. Dozens of them, clinging to the arms and throats of the two laborers while more swarmed from the fort's interior. To his surprise, the closest patrol raised their rifles and shot the two men dead, then pitched smoking clay jugs into the fort. There was a *whumph* and fire jetted from the open stone doorway.

"Rattlesnakes keep nesting in the earth under the fort," Bridger said. "Young ones. They curl just beneath the surface and when the laborers try to clear the ground to lay floor slabs, they attack. The men call them Rattle Bombs. The only sure way to clean them out is to burn them."

"And these two?" Noone indicated the dead laborers.

"Death by their venom is excruciating. Trust me, this way is better."

The fire was dying, being replaced with clouds of choking black smoke, and the faint popping and crackling of roasted meat. Terrified laborers brandishing shovels began to creep back towards the fort.

"We find Rattle Bombs every few days. I've never seen snakes in such profusion before, nor so aggressive," the Captain said. "It's almost as though the land is conspiring against us."

"This fort must be finished," Noone replied. That much was obvious, and not just to justify the expense and loss of life in getting this far. These northern regions had long been a breeding ground for Arcanists and Guild intelligence placed a safe house somewhere in the area, from which a number of raids had been launched as well as providing shelter and support to Arcanist fugitives.

"It'll be finished," Bridger agreed, "but I need more men. I've lost a third of my strength through a combination of the animal attacks and sickness from the water."

"The water?" Noone glanced at his empty cup.

"We started digging a well the first day we camped. This entire region is riddled with narrow fissures through the bedrock that filter water from the mountains. There are underground water deposits cleaner than anything you'll find in the city. At first the water was fine. Then it began to come up from the well yellow and sulfurous smelling. It had become contaminated, somehow. We had nothing else to drink until scouts found a river fifteen miles to the west and a number of the men got sick. Now we have to send a wagon on a thirty mile round trip for fresh water."

"And it gets ambushed?"

"Every day."

Colonel Noone put down his cup, beginning to realize that Bridger had been doing a better job of commanding the outpost than he had first thought.

"The animal meat is the same," the Captain continued. "At first, I gave orders for the lions and maulers we killed to be slaughtered and cooked. I thought it would be a morale boost for the men, and a change from canned rations. But the meat was bad—a few even died before we realized what was poisoning them."

"What do you do with the carcasses, now?"

"I had a pit dug about a half-mile from the camp and lined it with lime from the construction site. We drag the corpses there." He smiled absently. "It's down-wind so most days you can't smell it."

"There's that many?"

"We shoot perhaps five lions a week, and maybe two maulers. I have no idea where they're coming from, but the entire mountain range must be emptied by now. The lime pit is piled twenty feet high in places."

Arcanist interference had been lurking behind the reports from the outpost, and now that Noone could see it with his own eyes, their presence here was irrefutable. Such unnatural animal behavior could only point to one thing—Marcus.

"You'll get what you need," he said to the Captain. "I requisitioned another hundred guardsmen, along with a dozen Hunters and two Peacekeepers, before I left Malifaux. They'll be here within the week and then we'll see how Marcus's claws fare against Guild steel."

"You're certain it's him?"

"It's him," Noone said. "And if I can shake him loose, this trip might prove to be profitable after all. That's one pelt I'd like to mount above my fireplace."

The Colonel straightened his collar and stepped back out into the sun's embrace, saying over his shoulder, "I'll need twenty men."

The Captain followed him outside. In daylight, the deep lines of his fatigue were evident. "Twenty men?"

"The Miners & Steamfitters Union have an iron smelting works to the east of here, at the base of the mountain."

"That's right, sir—Rust Creek. We've done a little trading with them for tools and brazier coal."

"Have the men assembled by my steam coach in ten minutes. I want to get there before I lose the light. Also send a messenger to meet the reinforcements and tell them what we're dealing with."

"I don't understand, sir."

"You've been on the back foot for too long, Captain. It's time to take the initiative. The Union is up to its hips in Arcanist treason, providing them with support and safe refuge right under our noses. Marcus is here and someone at that facility will know how to find him. Once I have that information, I'll take the reinforcements up the mountain

and bring back his head. I trust your construction will be smooth enough after that."

Wilberforce had his reservations about antagonizing the Guild before the bestial terrorism of the new fort began, and certainly long before the bulky steam carriage creaked and hissed its way uphill to the Rust Creek Iron Works.

He watched with growing consternation as armed guardsmen spread out on both sides of the carriage while it rumbled its way into the yard, clunking over the sunken cart rails.

Wilberforce had been managing Rust Creek for six years, and in that time had been approached by Arcanist agents on many occasions. Beneath his office were the refinery and blast furnaces, and a short way up the slope from them was the mine head, where they dug out the iron sulfide. At the entrance to that mine was a small steel door that was kept locked at all times. It was marked with an explosives warning, but Wilberforce knew that what was kept behind that door was potentially far more damaging, at least with respect to the reputation of the Miners & Steamfitters Union.

A persistent investigator wouldn't find a store of explosives, but rather a narrow staircase cut into the rock that led almost a hundred feet down into the mountain's flank. The staircase gave way to a low lantern-lit tunnel that snaked and branched a dozen times. Assuming the investigator's persistence held past the dozen dead-ends and double-backs, they might eventually find the Arcanist safe house where some of the Guild's most wanted awaited either the easing of their persecution or instructions.

Wilberforce had done his best to ignore this particular aspect of working for the Miners & Steamfitters Union—he'd never been a revolutionary and while he had no love for the Guild nor was he especially offended by their policies. He was a pragmatic man with good logistical and metallurgical skills, and tried not to get involved in the politics of Malifaux if they could be avoided.

There was no avoiding the Guild vehicle that was rolling to a stop beneath his office window, however.

A Colonel dismounted from the smoking vehicle, mopped his brow with a stained kerchief and glanced around, his expression carefully controlled. The men he had with him looked on the ragged edge, red-eyed and unkempt, unusual for Guild guardsmen. They had to be from the fort, where the siege was grinding into its third month.

He hurried downstairs, snapping at the men around the furnaces to continue working and hoping that their resentful glares would not be noticed by the Colonel.

"Welcome, sir," he said as he approached, fastening his waistcoat and smoothing his starched collar. The corrugated walls of the refinery building were effective at deflecting the worst of the heat from the sun, but the furnaces saw to it that only a heavy application of starch kept his shirts in a serviceable condition for more than a few hours at a time.

"And you are?" the Colonel asked, ignoring Wilberforce's outstretched gesture of friendship.

"Facility Manager Thomas Wilberforce," he replied. "I'm in charge, here."

"Of the smelting works?"

"Of the refinery and the mine," Wilberforce elaborated. "This facility is part of the—"

"—Miners & Steamfitters Union, yes I know," cut in the Colonel. "How many employees do you have here?"

"About a dozen refinery workers," said Wilberforce, "and perhaps two dozen or so miners. We are a small outfit, but self-sufficient."

"Gather your staff, Mr. Wilberforce," the Colonel said. "I'm closing you down."

"Closing...?" Wilberforce thought he must have heard the Guild officer wrong. "I don't understand."

"Until such times as it can be proved this facility is not offering any support to the outlawed Arcanist movement, all activity will be stopped immediately. Please arrange to have your employees confined to their living quarters, whereupon I will post guards to keep them there."

"Just a second, Colonel. This is a civilian facility, privately owned and run by M&SU. I don't recognize that you have any authority to give me orders. Furthermore, does your jurisdiction even qualify this far from Malifaux?"

"I have twenty armed men here, Mr. Wilberforce," the Colonel said pleasantly. "I have another hundred and fifty back at the fort. How much more authority do you think I need?"

"I need to inform M&SU headquarters about this immediately," Wilberforce said. "This is a violation of—"

"That won't be necessary," the Colonel said and waved a finger. One of the guardsmen grabbed Wilberforce's starched collar and hauled him to his tip-toes. "Why don't we go back to your office for a little chat while I round up your staff?"

Wilberforce found himself being dragged back the way he had come while the guardsmen began brandishing their rifles and shouting at the staring workforce.

Wilberforce regarding the smashed, sparking vox unit miserably. Even though he would never have been able to get a transmission out under the scrutiny of this Guild Colonel, there were enough employees that were loyal to the Arcanists for someone to have sneaked in here to alert the others.

As it was, there had been several outbreaks of violence when the Guildsmen corralled his employees. Several had been shot and many more clubbed with rifle butts before they had relinquished.

The remainder were locked in their bunk houses with guardsmen watching every entrance, while Wilberforce sat on a stool on the wrong side of his desk, wrists tied, watching the Colonel relax in his chair.

"That's better," the Colonel said. "Now we can talk."

Behind him, guardsmen were pulling open drawers of files and tipping everything onto the floor.

"What are you looking for?"

"They'll know when they see it," the Colonel said evasively. "What can you tell me about Marcus?"

Wilberforce's throat dried up. He had heard from various agents that Marcus was in charge of the operation in the region, but they had neglected to furnish him with any further information, such as where to find him or exactly what his plan was. In retrospect, that was the way Wilberforce preferred it—maintaining a distance from Arcanist activity allowed him to sleep at night, and turning a blind eye to anything that came into his proximity (such as the steel door) kept his involvement to a tolerable minimum.

"I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

"Of course not," nodded the Colonel. "Where can we find him?"

"I don't know what you're talking about," Wilberforce repeated.

"I understand. Is he on the mountain?"

Wilberforce shook his head. "Colonel..." he began.

"How would you prefer me to proceed, Mr. Wilberforce?" asked the Colonel. "I am of the opinion that you know both who Marcus is and where I can find him. Unfortunately for you, whether you actually possess this information is a moot point. I intend to extract everything you know about



Marcus and the Arcanist movement. Are you with me so far?"

He clearly took Wilberforce's confusion as an assent, because he continued.

"I would prefer you give me the information I want now. If you insist on being stubborn, I will cut a piece off you for each guardsman we have lost during the course of Marcus's siege until you tell me what I want. Fingers, toes, ears, lips—I'm sure you get the idea."

Wilberforce's heart was accelerating rapidly as his anxiety rose. "Colonel, you must understand—"

"This is what is going to happen, Mr. Wilberforce," the Colonel cut in. "Just or unjust, the die has been cast. You can, of course, continue this pretense but it will soon become extremely painful to maintain, I assure you."

Wilberforce was not a hardened Arcanist fanatic—he had deliberately kept the movement at arm's length all his working life and any loyalty he felt he owed them fled at the sight of the Colonel drawing a long and keen-edged bayonet from his boot and resting it on Wilberforce's desk.

"So, do you have anything you would like to tell me before we begin?" the Colonel asked.

Wilberforce began to babble as fast as his tongue would allow.

Marcus stood on the rock promontory, looking down at the refinery.

The screaming had long since stopped, but the sharp odor of blood took much longer to fade.

He had never met the Rust Creek facility manager and felt no particular sorrow at his passing. Ramos had spoken of him several times and had left the impression he was good at his job but did little to support their true cause in the war against the Guild. He would be easily replaced.

His sharp eyes picked out a small knot of guardsmen emerging from the shadow of the mine head. They held a struggling captive.

The facility manager knew nothing about Marcus's plan, but he did know the location of the safe house, which he had evidently spilled to the Guild commander who had arrived this morning.

A bolt of blinding blue energy arced across the refinery yard and one of the guardsmen spun away in flames. A rifle butt swung and the remaining guardsmen dragged the unconscious Arcanist out of sight.

Marcus knew who they had—one of Ramos's lieutenants, a fiery young talent called Bixby Gaul. He had burned a Guild munitions warehouse to the ground and assassinated two high ranking officials in a single anarchic evening. Ramos had smuggled him out of Malifaux and hid him here in the hope of shaping the young man's aggression to further their cause. They had held several councils since his arrival and it was very likely that Ramos had told him about Marcus's presence here.

The boy's hatred of the Guild would be a formidable obstacle, but eventually he would break and the Guild commander would come for Marcus.

Well, let him. Marcus could see everything from the top of the mountain, even the inching shadow of Guild reinforcements moving north. His plan was nearly ready and when it was sprung, he would wipe all trace of the enemy from his land.

If the Guild commander hurried up, he might arrive in time to watch it before his throat was ripped out.

Noone was cleaning his bayonet with a scrap of cloth when the Sergeant came into the office, snapped a salute and tried to keep his eyes off the bloodied meat scattered about the floor.

"You wanted me, sir?"

"Send two men back to the fort with a message for Captain Bridger. I need another twenty men. Tell him to send them immediately. I'm going up the mountain after the Arcanist renegade Marcus at first light tomorrow."

The Sergeant hesitated. "That's a good portion of our remaining strength, sir."

"The reinforcements will be arriving any time now. I'm sure Bridger can hang on a little longer until they reach us."

"Very good, sir."

When the Sergeant had gone, Noone contemplated the jumbled parts on the floorboards.

Wilberforce had crumbled instantly, as he had known he would. He had fallen over himself in his eagerness to cooperate. Noone had cut him to pieces afterward to

ensure that nothing had been held back, and was confident he had extracted everything of use.

The young Arcanist had been a much tougher proposition. There had been a fire of youthful zealotry in his eyes that had taken a long time to douse and Noone had been forced to call for hot irons from the furnaces to finish the job. He was not a sadist by nature and took no pleasure from the methods used to extract information, but instead viewed his actions as a means to an end. Why throw these two in chains to languish indefinitely at the Guild's expense while lawyers tried to cajole and bargain the information out of them? Noone's way was quicker.

The boy had known enough. Marcus's camp was high on the mountain, on a promontory the miners called El Dedo. He had been there since construction on the fort had begun, directing his beasts down the mountain to attack the guardsmen. The boy had also said his only companion was a huge sabertooth cerebus—otherwise he was completely alone up there.

Noone wasn't so stupid as to accept this at face value, but from what he knew of Marcus, the idea of such a proud individual maintaining a relatively solitary existence felt right. Twenty men would be more than enough to deal with one Arcanist and his three-headed cat.

By this time tomorrow Marcus would be dead, the plain animals would go back to being animals and he could get the fort's construction back on schedule. Once their resupply base was complete, the Guild would systematically root out every trace of Arcanist activity and destroy it, and he could return home to adulation and a promotion.

He sheathed his bayonet, lifted his coat and went in search of someone to clean the blood off his boots.

The wings in the air told him they had set out. He saw it through loyal eyes, sharper than any human's—twenty men in two columns of ten armed with rifles. Each man carried bedrolls, rations, water; everything they needed for a lengthy expedition. The Guild commander intended to spend as long as necessary on the mountain to find him.

Marcus grinned, baring his teeth. They wouldn't have to look hard.

In his palm was a chunk of stone. Not chilled bedrock like before, but smooth and shaped granite that was foreign to this region; transported over great distance, shaped by hand and still holding traces of the sun's heat. Lime mortar encrusted one edge.

His agent had brought it to him just before dawn. It was a message.

They were ready.

The going was not easy, but Noone had never expected it to be. The ground was uneven and treacherous with loose scree and there were no paths here.

He had split the men into two columns with scouts at the front to find the easiest route; those behind would follow their guide's footsteps, like two Guild centipedes winding their way into the mountain.

There had been some jocularity among the men at first when the sun had barely appeared over the horizon, but the rising heat and constant climb had soon knocked it out of them. Now their heads were down, trudging and sweating as they worked slowly higher and higher.

Five scouts ranged ahead of the guardsmen, watching for mountain lions and other unpleasant surprises that Marcus might have laid in store for them. By now he was sure to know they were coming.



The scream was long overdue. Noone looked up to see a scout pitch backwards off a ridge and fall seventy feet onto rocks.

The body was twisted and lifeless when they reached it, the back of his head broken in from the fall.

"He must have slipped," one of the guardsmen said.

Noone saw the deep talon marks across his cheeks and scalp, the wet empty eye sockets.

"You finally showed your hand, eh, Marcus?" he murmured. "Sergeant!"

The NCO appeared at his shoulder.

"Spread the word, Sergeant. From now on, I want every animal we see shot. Every bird in the sky, every snake, jackrabbit, mouse, insect—everything. We will assume they are all agents of the Arcanist renegade and kill them on sight."

"Yes, sir."

Noone took a swallow from his canteen and resumed the climb. *Let's see how well you do when I remove* your *eyes,* he thought.

Captain Bridger waited for a figure to emerge from the haze.

The clanking and hissing of the Peacekeepers was now very loud, but the movement of such heavy machinery plus the tramping of hundreds of boots had swallowed the entire reinforcement column in a dust cloud from the moment they reached the edge of the plain. For the past ten hours Bridger had been marking their progress by the slowly approaching vortex.

A greatcoat and goggled visor swam out of the dust, followed by a second, then a third, then a dozen more. The men were all the color of sand, their woolen clothing coated from traveling through such arid country.

As they drew closer, he identified a Captain among the troopers and straightened into a salute. The other officer drew up and returned it, then pulled an olive colored bandana from around his mouth.

"Captain Bridger?" he asked. "I'm Captain Ermine. We're your reinforcements, as requested by Colonel Noone."

"Very pleased to see you, Captain Ermine," Bridger said, squeezing the other man's hand and grinning despite the swirling dust. Columns of men were marching past on both sides.

"Where is the Colonel?"

"He's on the mountain," Bridger had to shout as an enormous construct clanked and stomped past, dangling chains and blowing super-heated steam. "He's gone after the renegade."

Captain Ermine nodded. "I wanted to speak to him about our deployment orders."

"I have everything you need back at my command tent," Bridger said. "If you'll come with me."

The two men fell into step.

Steam carriages were rolling past, pulling trailers filled with rifles and cannons. Bridger saw crates of ammunition, barrels of water, rations jutting out from under tarpaulins as more and more wagons rattled past them.

Something low and sleek and dangerous-looking loped by, its feral head swinging briefly in their direction before it vanished into the haze with a swirl of its metal tail.

"A Hunter?" Bridger asked.

It was Captain Ermine's turn to grin. "We've got twelve of them. They'll make short work of Marcus's little pets, believe me."

"That's assuming they can find them," Bridger said.

"What's that?"

"We haven't had a single attack in over twenty-four hours," Bridger explained. "Right after the Colonel requisitioned twenty of my men to go up the mountain, the animals disappeared. It's like the whole plain is suddenly deserted. Even the rattlers have gone."

"Good," Ermine said. "The Colonel's got them on the run."

"I hope you're right," Captain Bridger said, but the uneasy feeling in the pit of his stomach told him that things had somehow taken a turn for the worse.

They lost another five men before they reached El Dedo. Three were bitten by rattlesnakes, a fourth was found after a latrine visit with his head all but chewed off by an unknown carnivore and the fifth was just a careless fool who lost his footing and fell.

Other than the three rattlesnakes which were hacked to pieces by guardsman machetes, they hadn't seen another animal since Noone had issued his orders to shoot them on sight. At least, they hadn't seen any they could reach.

A handful of black specks circled way up high in the deep blue of the sky, much higher than the mountain, far beyond any rifle shot. Most of the men hadn't noticed, but Noone felt their gaze on him and knew they were being watched.

Noone had expected to be assaulted a dozen times during their day-long trek but it had never come. They had passed through more than a few choke points, ideal spots for ambushes, and each time they had come through unscathed.

At first, it had puzzled him, until Noone remembered what kind of a man they were after. Marcus was proud, arrogant even. He wanted to show Noone that he wasn't afraid. He was waiting for them.

That suited Noone just fine—pride would prove to be a weak ally when faced with twenty breach-loading carbines. As for the sabretooth, Noone had worked out exactly where he was going to put the skin when he transported it home.

"Colonel!" one of the scouts shouted from up ahead.

Noone followed his pointing finger. There was a thin reed of campfire smoke unspooling from the ridge up ahead, starkly visible against the late afternoon sky.

"Sergeant," he said to the man at his elbow. "Our renegade would have to be an idiot to think he could defeat this many men single-handed, which means he has something up his sleeve. I won't have us walking into an ambush after travelling all this distance."

"As you say, sir," the Sergeant nodded.

"The men will take ten minutes to rest and eat, but post rotating sentries—one man in five. Send the scouts over the ridge to take a look at Marcus's camp, but we don't make a move until they return. All of them."

The Colonel settled down on a broad rock and began to lever open a can of bully beef with his bayonet. They were so close now; there was nothing to be gained from rushing in.

Marcus had shown he could wait. It seemed only fair for Noone to return the compliment.

He could smell them. The stink was almost choking, they were so close. And they had stopped, just shy of the ridge.

Marcus sat cross-legged, his shillelagh resting on his thighs, watching the fire. It wasn't yet early evening and still too hot to need a fire but Marcus enjoyed the implied insult that the Guild wouldn't be able to find him without an obvious smoke trail.

The Guild commander was drawing the encounter out; wanted to show him that he could be cautious. This meant nothing to Marcus—the outcome was predestined. It was inevitable.

Four men had crept to the ridgeline above and behind him, and were watching him quietly. He didn't need the soaring eyes to detect them. He could hear their breathing, could hear the crackle of gravel and creak of dried vegetation under their clumsy feet.

This was his mountain, and they did not belong here. They may as well have had bells tied around their necks.

The dust was slowly settling down on the hills and the camp to the south of the fort had grown exponentially. The reinforcements had arrived and were even now busy with arranging patrols. Glints of dusty steel moved here and there in the scrubland as clockwork predators hunted for enemies.

They would find nothing.

The jaws of the trap were set. All Marcus needed now was an audience.

The men cleared the ridgeline in an expanding fan, rifle muzzles pointed in all directions. The scouts had reported there was no sign of anything living on the ridge other than Marcus himself, but Noone knew there was an ambush somewhere and kept the men on edge.

However, as they spread around the yurt and the campfire, Noone saw for himself how barren the ground was up here. A promontory of rock jutted out like a finger directly ahead, commanding an impressive view of the plain below. He could see a dark smudge on the ground that must have been the fort. It looked tiny and insignificant from up here.

Around the yurt was plain stone and boulders, and a hundred yards or so further back was low stunted scrub and a few sprigs of hardy vegetation, then blue sky. There was nothing else up here.

The wind picked up and twined the camp-fire smoke around its invisible fingers, and ruffled the heavy dreadlocks that streamed down Marcus's back. He still hadn't turned, although there could be no doubt he knew they were here.

Noone took a good look at his enemy, this being the first time he had seen him in the flesh.

He was obviously a big man; even sitting cross-legged he had a sizeable physical presence. Naked to the waist, his dreadlocks spread across slab-like trapezius muscles. Despite his apparent strength, he only seemed to be armed with a few utilitarian knives and a thick shillelagh placed across his knees. That wouldn't aid him much against a hail of bullets.

Without turning, or even taking his eyes off the crackling fire, Marcus spoke first.

"Intruders," he said. "Your presence here offends me."

There were a couple of snickers from the guardsmen spread out behind him, but the Sergeant quieted them with a look. They tore open the yurt, kicking over pots and rattan mats.

"Why didn't you run?" Noone asked, standing a short distance away from the motionless Arcanist, his hand resting on his holstered pistol. "You knew we would come for you."

"Run?" Marcus snarled, and Noone saw how pronounced his canines were, like a beast's. "This is my mountain. My land."

"Well, not any more. It belongs to the Guild, now."

Marcus's eyes moved to regard the Colonel. His pupils were black, but the surrounding irises were a fiery orange. His gaze was unsettling.

"You think men with guns can take my land from me?"

"I think we already have," Noone replied. "You just don't seem to have noticed yet." He pointed over the ridge. "There are hundreds of men down there with rifles and cannons. How many guns do your mountain lions have?"

Marcus got to his feet in a languid feline motion, his shillelagh in one big fist. The guardsmen shuffled back a few paces and rifles were brandished but he ignored them, walking to the edge of the promontory and frowning down at the fort.

"Guns won't save you," he said.

"Is that so?" Noone queried. "Your guerrilla war is over. I now have more firepower than when you began this action. With the supply wagons, my men now have food and water for six months, so poisoning the wells won't help. I have cannon for your maulers, Gatling guns for your raptors. I have steel fighting machines that are worth ten of your biggest monstrosities. Come to mention it, just how much of your freakish menagerie do you have left? I seem to recall we've been shooting them all."

The Colonel sighed and wiped dust from his face. It was hot up here, the day had been a long one and he was growing tired of the renegade's refusal to see sense.

"Before I have you shot, you should know that you have barely slowed us down. The fort will be completed on schedule, and once it is finished, my men and I shall overturn every rock in this valley until we have rooted out and executed every last Arcanist between here and Malifaux. Your resistance will have been for absolutely nothing."

Marcus seemed to be ignoring him and was instead fingering a small piece of stone in his free hand.

"He's mad," Noone said to his Sergeant. "All this way for a bloody madman. Shoot him, Sergeant, and let's be on our way. The light is fading."

As the Sergeant aimed his pistol, Marcus looked up from his contemplation and fixed the Colonel with a glare of astonishing hatred. "My mountain," he growled. "My land. You think that guns give you power here? Witness *my* power."

He brought down the butt of his hooked shillelagh on the stone at his feet, sending a piercing *crack* echoing across the ridge and into the valley. It distorted and reverberated and seemed to gather strength and volume as it rumbled across the plain.

Noone's eyes narrowed. Dust was jetting into the air all around the Guild compound far below them, yellow geysers that blasted a hundred feet into the air. The rumbling continued to increase in volume and he felt the rock under his feet starting to shiver perceptibly.

Marcus stood with his amber eyes fixed on the valley floor, which had begun to distort and bulge.

Noone couldn't believe what he was seeing. Huge sections of ground around and *under* the Guild compound were breaking apart, cracking like a taut

red-brown eggshell and falling away. Massive chunks of earth and rock, entire expanses of the land were caving in and toppling downwards.

Dust exploded into the air, a vast swirling dome like a sandstorm bulged into the sky while the rumbling and shuddering continued. Loose stones went clattering down the rocky promontory and Noone's vision blurred while the tectonic carnage reached its zenith.

Jagged black fingers spread to the northeast and southwest as the center of the valley floor fell into a widening gorge, easily a mile across. The fort, the camp, even the perimeter wall split apart and fell with it, tumbling hundreds of men and tons of equipment into the yawning blackness, their screams dwarfed by the heaving, protesting ground.

It went on and on, a hundred million tons of stone thundering into the depths of the earth, pulverizing his men, until finally the cataclysm was obscured by the ever-expanding dust storm.

Noone couldn't speak. Couldn't move. Impossible. Impossible.

"*My mountain!*" Marcus was roaring, both arms raised to embrace the hot rush of dust that blasted over the precipice and engulfed them all. "*My land!*"

An explosion of noise hit him from behind. He spun, numb and traumatized, to see his men being dragged beneath the ground as it erupted around them. Spade-like hands rose from beneath the earth to drag men down into it.

Gunshots were fired, but they were out-numbered, ambushed, surrounded. He couldn't even find the will to draw his weapon. In seconds, the screaming ended.

They were all dead. His men on the mountain, the entire force at the fort. The *fort* was gone. The *land* was gone. Impossible. It was impossible.

A shadow fell over him and he turned to find burning amber eyes inches from his own.

"My mountain," Marcus rumbled. "My land."

"Impossible," Noone croaked.

The renegade gripped his jaw in one big hand and twisted his head to the side.

"Three months to build a little pile of stones," he said contemptuously as Noone's eyes found a hulking shape coming out of the ground. "These ones dug your Guild grave in half that time."

The thing approaching him through the dust was broader than a man, but shorter. It moved clumsily as though not used to walking on two legs, and held one huge spade claw over its face as if the sun pained it, even through the thick barrier of dust. He saw a broad, wet snout and tiny bead-sized eyes. Some sort of digging animal. It looked almost like a mole.

"Tunnels," Noone whispered. He heard a ghost of a conversation, an echo of Captain Bridger's voice.

You've posted sentries?

Around the perimeter wall, yes, but somehow they keep getting into the compound.

Something else was emerging from the hidden tunnel, much larger than the mole thing. Six eyes the color of emeralds glinted hungrily as they approached.

Colonel Noone giggled absurdly. "There you are," he said abstractly. "I have the perfect place for you. Right in front of my fireplace."

Three sets of jaws opened, six saber teeth gleamed.

"My mountain," Marcus said, as hot breath washed over the Colonel's throat.



ARCANE EMISSARY

What a joy it is to engineer, to create! What exhilaration to master and channel the dazzling forces of the arcane! And how fulfilling to use the power to take charge of your own fate, leaping over the lines that your would-be masters lay down to corral the herd!

These are the ideas that unite Malifaux's scattered and eclectic Arcanist movement, and the Arcane Emissary is their immaculate embodiment. It is housed in a beautiful mechanical body but yet that body is self-created, owing its exquisite crafting to no one but itself. Inside that elegant machine is a form of coherent and primal force, shifting from fire to ice to light to steel, haloed in smoke or steam. Behind its bestial faceplate burns an intellect and occult skill as undeniable and frightening as the momentum of its roaring charge.

It is brilliant, it is powerful, and finally it is free.



ARCANE EMISSARY — COST 10

Enforcer, Rare 1

EMISSARY OF FATE

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	6	10	4	10	3

ABILITIES

Power Sink: When this Crew scores 1 or more **VP** from the Strategy, this model gains the following Condition for the rest of the game: "**Destined +1:** At the end of this model's Activation it heals +1 damage. This Condition may not be removed by other models' Actions."

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Flesh and Metal: At the start of this model's Activation it may discard a card. If it does, at the end of this model's Activation, target other friendly non-Leader in 6" may take a (1) Action.

Elemental Burst: When this model completes the move portion of a Charge Action targeting an enemy, it may discard all Corpse and Scheme Markers within (↑)3.

ARCANE EMISSARY

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Relentless Charge (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 4/4/5 damage and may be pushed up to 6" in any direction. This Action may only be taken once per Turn and only as part of a Charge Action.

(1) Elemental Rage (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 6 or ⫻ 2): Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.

- ***Blaze:*** After damaging, the target gains the **Burning +1** Condition.
- ***Windburst:*** After damaging, push the target up to 3" in any direction.
- ***Earthen Shield:*** After damaging, this model heals 2 damage.
- ***Drown:*** After damaging, the target gains the **Slow** Condition.

(0) The Negation (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 6): Target suffers 2 damage. This damage may not be reduced or prevented and ignores **Hard to Kill**.

- ***Negation:*** After damaging an enemy, the target gains the following Condition for the rest of the game: "**Negated:** This model loses all non-Station Characteristics."

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Prophecies In Flesh and Metal: This Action may only be taken while this model has the **Destined +2** Condition or greater. Remove the **Destined** Condition from this model to draw three cards.

50mm

WIND GAMIN

Wind Gamin are mischievous entities, inhabiting many of the badlands outside of the city. They often appear as dust devils or small whirlwinds, and cause trouble to anyone who crosses their path. Their strange affinity for bright or shining objects can sometimes be used to lure them out of their swirl of motion long enough for them to inspect or carry off the offering.

Some Arcanists have been able to use their elemental powers to capture and tame the gamin. Chief among these Arcanists is The Captain. He lovingly refers to the beasts as rascals, and they seem to respond to his control over the element of air as if they were nothing but air themselves.

In combat, their flurry of attacks can put an enemy off balance long enough for the gamin's master to land a fatal blow, and they often make themselves useful by lending a burst of speed to an ally.



WIND GAMIN

Minion, Living
GAMIN

COST 4

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
4	4	4	5	5	1

ABILITIES

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Flight: This model is immune to falling damage and may ignore any terrain or models while moving.

To The Sky: When this model would be killed, instead remove all Conditions and heal all damage on it, then bury it. This model may not be unburied by friendly models.

Follow The Wind: If this model is buried when a friendly model begins its Activation, this model may be sacrificed to push the model up to 5" in any direction.

WIND GAMIN

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Maelstrom of Claws (**Ml** 4🗡 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 1): Target suffers 1/3/4 damage.
🗡 ***Cyclone:*** After resolving, take this Action again. This Action may not declare Triggers.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Leap (**Ca** 4 / TN: 10🗡): This model immediately moves up to its **Cg**, ignoring intervening terrain and models during the move.

30mm

THE SCORPIUS

Field Report, to reach the desk of Victor Ramos immediately,

Project Scorpius has been a failure. Our attempts to capture and alter one of the Steelclaw Stingers, the giant scorpions found north of the city, has ended in disaster. Our lead engineer is dead, he went gruesomely to the poison, and our workshop is in ruins.

As you know, the plan was to alter the beast with weapons and armor, and implant a basic logic engine within its brain which would better allow it to be controlled. It was thought that its insectoid nature would make it a better candidate than more strong-willed, warm-blooded beasts. Obviously, we were wrong. Once awakened, the creature went berserk, attacking anyone in its path and ignoring our commands.

Marcus was able to get it under control, of course, but that had nothing to do with our alterations. He looks at it curiously, like some strange, new, broken pet. I advise that we let him have the blasted thing, and scrap the project.



THE SCORPIUS — COST 6

Minion, Living, Construct, Rare 1

BEAST

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	5	6	4	7	3

ABILITIES

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Neurotoxins: Enemy models within ❶3 which suffer damage from the **Poison** Condition gain the **Slow** Condition.

Regeneration +1: When this model Activates it heals +1 damage.

THE SCORPIUS

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Venomous Stinger (**Ml** 6⚔ / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.
⚔ ***Infect***: After succeeding, target gains the **Poison +1** Condition a number of times equal to the number of ⚔ in the final duel total.
Hemotoxin: After damaging, the target gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Organ Failure:** This model may not use Soulstones and may not declare (0) Actions."
Toxic Spray: While dealing Moderate or Severe damage, this Attack gains +💀 to damage.

(0) The Feeding (**Ml** 6⚔ / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 1): Target suffers an amount of damage equal to its **Poison** Condition Value, up to a maximum of 2 damage, then reduces its **Poison** Condition Value by 2. This model heals the same amount of damage.
⚔ ***System Shock:*** After damaging, if the target had the **Slow** Condition, it must suffer 4 damage or gain the **Paralyzed** Condition.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Creep Along (**Ca** 4🂠 / TN: 11🂠): Immediately move this model up to its **Wk** towards target friendly model in LoS.

50mm

ICE DANCER

Rasputina has made many changes since taking over the Cult of December. The power of the old priesthood was crushed, and many of her followers enjoy a greater degree of freedom. While they still hold to the old practices and sacrifices, some have begun flourishing in other ways. Foremost among these individuals are the Ice Dancers; they use the elemental force of ice and storm granted them by December to create icy paths beneath their feet, gliding along effortlessly.

Many of the Ice Dancers use their newfound art to create elaborate dances in December's honor, performed during His rituals. However, others have perfected their methods for combat, gliding in and out of the fray with grace and speed, cutting throats with shards of ice.

Many of the older members of the Cult look down on the practice as a petty insult to December's power. One such Ice Dancer even displayed her talents at the Star Theater, which they considered an affront to the religion. But the dancers have Rasputina's blessing.



ICE DANCER

Minion, Living
SHOWGIRL

COST 6

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	5	6	6	8	2

ABILITIES

Frozen Heart: This model is immune to Horror Duels and **Paralyzed**.

Forward Momentum: At the end of this model's Activation, push this model up to 2" for each Walk Action it took and up to 4" for each Charge Action it took during the Activation.

Butterfly Jump: After this model is successfully targeted with a non ⫻ enemy Attack Action, it may discard a card to push up to 3" in any direction. Range, LoS, and cover are drawn from its new position and, if it is no longer a legal target, the Action immediately fails.

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Hydroblade (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 1): Target suffers 2/3/6 damage.
↛ ***Slide Chasse:*** After damaging, push this model up to 2" in any direction.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) Ice Path (**Ca** 6 / TN: 15 / Rg: 8): Place two 50mm Ice Path Markers touching each other within range and LoS, not in base contact with a model or other Markers. The Markers are **Ht** 0, severe terrain. Any model which is in base contact with an Ice Path Marker placed by this model after it completes any Action is pushed up to 3" in any direction by the opposing player. Remove all Ice Path Markers placed by this model at the start of its next Activation or before it leaves play. This Action may only be taken once per Turn.

(0) Work the Crowd (**Ca** 6 / TN: 9⌨): At the end of this model's Activation, place a Scheme Marker in base contact with it.

ICE DANCER

30mm

ENVY

He doesn't really remember the last night at the Crossroads Hotel, but he remembers how it ended, remembers crouching, shivering, in an empty doorway in the light of the burning hotel, cradling a single piano key in his hands.

He doesn't really remember pulling the key free in all the craziness, but he remembers discovering what else his quick, clever pianist's hands could do, the machine he could build with them, and how he could use it.

He doesn't really remember whether scarlet and black was the color of their clothes or of their eyes, but he remembers the promise they made him. No more days stuck behind a tinny, rickety piano in a husk of a Badlands town, watching while others got the lovers, the baubles, the life he wanted, *deserved* for himself.

He cut a deal, and received a promise. Now it's time to get even.



ENVY

Enforcer, Living, Mercenary, Rare 1

CROSSROADS SEVEN, TORMENTED

COST 8

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	5	8	5	7	2

ABILITIES

Manipulative 12: If this model has not yet Activated this Turn, when an enemy model targets this model with an Attack Action, the enemy model must pass a TN 12 **Wp** duel or the Action immediately fails.

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1.

If I Can't Have It...: When targeting an enemy model which is within 3" of one or more Scheme Markers with an **Sh** Attack, this model gains +1 to its **Sh**.

ENVY

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Stomp (**Ml** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

Trample: After damaging, take this Action again. This Action may not declare Triggers.

(1) Mounted Gatling Guns (**Sh** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 12): Target suffers 2/5/6 damage. This Action's Attack flip gains .

Burst Damage: While dealing Moderate or Severe damage, this Attack gains + to damage.

"Imagine If It Were Yours...": After damaging, the target gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Obsessed:** Friendly models which end their Activation within 3 must discard a card or suffer 2 damage unless they took the Focus Action during their Activation."

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Sinister Organ Music: Discard a card to make target friendly model within 6" take the Focus Action.

50mm

Woke up this morning, dawn was seven minutes gone
Walked the trail to the crossroads, just seven miles on
Seven lovely dreams I was cradlin' in my head
And seven ugly fears was what I came upon instead

At the crossroads, walking to the crossroads

There was a man who walked out of a burning hotel
And that man's heart, well it's burning still
There was a lady whose eyes made those flames turn cold
And by that lady's hand she'll rob your silver and your gold

At the crossroads, standing at the crossroads

There's a man who went and crowned himself a prince among men
And that man won't ever care for his brother's souls again
There's a lady who'll lead you in a dance so sweet
You'll cry and you'll pray to curl and die at her feet

At the crossroads, dancing at the crossroads

There's a man who lay down to sleep the sleep of the dead
But the day won't ever come when he can rest his cold head
There's a man whose belly's hungry like the furnaces of hell
But the day won't ever come when he can eat his fill

At the crossroads, lonesome at the crossroads

There's a man who sits and studies you, never speaks a word
Hatin' you like poison, wants to own what you have earned
When you're dancin' to his music you won't know that you been seen
But his gaze is just as cold as the steel of his machine

At the crossroads, judgement at the crossroads

There's seven notes and seven chords, fallin' high to low
Walkin' seven lonely roads from the Bayou to the snow
And there's seven wicked hearts waitin' to teach you how to sin
So say your seven goodbyes and get ready to begin

At the crossroads, the end is at the crossroads
At the crossroads, bury me at the crossroads

ARCANIST UPGRADES

Elemental Conflux

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Rasputina is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Frozen Heart: This model is immune to Horror Duels and **Paralyzed**.

  Node: Friendly Masters never consider this model to be engaged for the purposes of their Abilities.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Ice Bridge: Target a model with the **Frozen Heart** Ability within 8". Push this model 3" towards the target, then push the target up to 3" towards this model.

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

Raging Conflux

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Marcus is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  The Wilderness Surges: Enemy models within ❶4 may not declare **Df** Triggers during Attack Actions generated by Beasts or this model.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Rage Forth: This model pushes 4" towards target friendly Beast within LoS.

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

Illusive Conflux

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Colette is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Power Leech: Friendly Showgirls may treat this model as if it were a friendly Scheme Marker for the purposes of Actions and Abilities. If the Scheme Marker would be discarded, this model suffers 2 damage which may not be reduced.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Minor Teleport: Place this model into base contact with target friendly Scheme Marker within 6".

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

Ironclad Conflux

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Ironsides is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Tragic Memories: Friendly Leaders which begin their Activation within ❶6 of this model gain the following Condition until the end of the game: "**Adrenaline +1:** At the end of the Turn, this model heals exactly 1 damage and then lowers this Condition's value by 1."
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Raging Challenge: Target a friendly Leader within 6". All enemy models within ❶6 of the target must pass a TN 15 **Wp** duel or be pushed into base contact with the target.

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate



MECHANICAL CONFLUX

COST: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Ramos is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the Construct Characteristic.
- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (0) Magnetism (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 16): Push this model 6" directly towards target Construct, then the target suffers 2 damage which ignores **Armor**.

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

FLAMING CONFLUX

COST: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Kaeris is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Retribution in Flames: Friendly Minion models within 6 which deal damage to an enemy with an Attack Action may suffer 1 damage to give the enemy the **Burning +1** Condition.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Flame-o-taur! (**Ca** 6 / TN: 11 / Rg: 10): Target friendly Master model gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Instinctual:** This model may take two (0) Actions during its Activation, so long as they are both different."

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

ARCANE CONFLUX

COST: 0 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  The Power Rages: Friendly Minions within 4 gain to all Attack duels.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) On the Tides of Fate: Discard a Soulstone to draw two cards and then discard two cards.

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate



This chapter contains a story as well as new models and Upgrades for **THE NEVERBORN** Faction.
These models and Upgrades are not a part of the Campaign and may be hired normally during any game.

MASTER OF FATE

BY: DAVID MCGUIRE

If a person wanted to lose everything they had—first their way, then their mind and lastly their life—there was no better place to do it in Malifaux than the Bayou.

Maddened by stinging insects, ripped at by thorns that oozed a sickly-sweet poison, and drained pale by leeches for days on end, the Bayou might snap their ankle on a drowned root and leave them to the swarming things, or deliver them to a more sudden end in the bellies of the patient 'gators.

Or, if their Fate was truly wretched, it might lead them by the end of their tether to the hut on stilts that squatted at the heart of the bayou, and the woman who lived there.

Zoraida sat across from one such person now. He had come crawling out of the Bayou just when Fate had told her he would, too weak to call for help or even knock at her door. His name was Lewis Carruthers, and his gambling debts were so bad—and the creditors even worse—that he risked the shack of the swamp-witch to change his Fate.

It weren't fair, he had rasped. It weren't his fault.

So many people, she mused, were blind to their mistakes. Not through stupidity, but a willful looking away from the consequences of what they had done. The lucky ones never got to know the full extent of their mistakes. Others tried to live long enough that the consequences no longer mattered. The rest ended up in her hut.

They had played a hand of cards, as was promised to anyone who reached her alive. Win, the stories went, and the Hag would reach into the threads of Fate and alter them in your favor.

He had lost.

She knew he would, but she had tried to keep up the pretense, if only for his sake. Fate had sent him here for another purpose and had been known to load the deck. Fate could be fickle but was never, ever fair.

Wide-eyed fear was taking hold in him as he realized what had happened, his wild gaze taking in the chickens' feet and other fetishes that festooned the ceiling of her hut, slowly swaying above his mud-streaked head. He had been a foolish man, the cards had told her, but not a cruel one.

"You can have one more game, Lewis, m'love," she lied, giving him a gap-toothed smile. It would be better this way. "Shuffle the cards. Have a drink, dearie, for luck. Then we'll play again."

Swallowing his panic, desperate for any crumbs of comfort, Lewis knocked back the cup of moonshine in one gulp. ""Why...play? You...you could..." His croaking voice, already weak, trailed away as he gathered the cards with shaking hands.

"I could alter your fate?"

He stopped, pleading eyes fixing her. "Please."

She met his gaze and softly shook her head. Consequences. Fate did not have threads so much as iron bonds at times like these. She could feel them all around, constricting him like steel snakes. And her. "Not yours. And certainly not today."

The cards fell from fingers she knew were quickly losing all feeling. The soporific was in the moonshine, of course.

He slumped as the effects spread, but desperation roused one last fight in him. "What's...what's the bloody point of you, then?" he said, slurring the words. "Have...pity. They say...you were human...once."

Once. She dropped her eyes to the cards he had spilled on the table. The Midnight Garden. The Soulstone. The Path of Destiny. Those cards were aimed at her, not him! She swept them off the rough-hewn table with one gnarled hand. How dare Fate toy with her? Today of all days! "Would a human have lived as long as I?" she spat. "Would a mere human be entrusted with the paths of Fate of an entire world?"

But he was unconscious now, and her bile ebbed away, leaving a bitter taste. She rose, ancient limbs crooked beneath her, painful joints flaring anew. Bitterness and pain; so common she barely noticed them anymore. "Would any human want that?" she rasped quietly.

She looked him over with patient resignation. His role in this affair was nearly over, she thought, although hers was just beginning. Was that a flash of envy? Surely if she was ever justified some self-pity it was now, but, no, it would not do.

Her half-dead visitor's last act would be to help her test her new magic. She did not relish the prospect, however. He stank like a cesspool. Fate often left out little details like that.

She rubbed her clawed hands together to warm some life back into them, and set to work.



Lilith's path through the Bayou was clear and untroubled, and it lead wherever she wanted to go.

Mud hardened into firm dirt seconds before her bare feet touched. Tangles of briar like matted hair eased out of her way on an invisible breeze, not catching a single thread on the rich wool check cape she had taken as a trophy from the last human she had killed. Trees knotted by the Bayous poisonous, steamy air into angry, painful shapes creaked aside before returning to their soil in her wake. This land was hers. This world was hers. Her greatsword was reassuringly heavy in her hand, its edge hungry for blood, as her black eyes flicked from side to side in a predatory gaze.

Passing a towering bloodtree, the broad leaves flew after her in flowing ribbons and arranged themselves to form a tunic and pants under her cape. The green of the leaves was so dark as to appear black, and it made their bright crimson veins all the more striking. The cool foliage tickled her skin. With a thought she added some strapping in loose bark from a cinder tree the color of charcoal, and a belt of twisted, black moss sprayed with dark red flowers leapt to her waist from atop a sun-warmed rock.

With a spring in her step she passed over the body of a dead thing, and then stopped to look back at it. It was a cotton snake, scorched and blackened, as was the red soil around it. It lay beside a small pond, its surface coated with a thin layer of ice, dead leaves and detritus frozen in place and already thawing in the heat of the swamp.

Ice in the Bayou. She shook her head and carried on. The Hag was doing magic again. Powerful magic to spill this far from the hut, Lilith thought, as roots rose from the bottom of a pool to form a bridge for her.

A clearing opened up where none had been before and there was the hut. It reminded her of the old woman who lived there, in a way, all unnecessary angles and fussy decoration. It was as bent and lopsided as Zoraida was, and no matter what direction she came at it, the hut, with its windows like eyes, was always looking right at her. You never got the drop on Zoraida.

Which was why she was puzzled when the door did not creak open just as she arrived. She had been invited. Actually, she had been summoned, but Lilith had chosen to overlook that insolence so far. Irritation swiftly blackened to anger and she pushed the door wide. She was taken aback to see Zoraida slumped on a stool and a filthy human with dark hair standing over her.

The human, a male, gave Lilith a cursory glance, nodded a greeting—a *greeting*?—and then turned his back on her.

He actually turned his back on her!

Lilith was the terror that kept the humans huddled in their homes and around their fires at night, fearful of the monsters that lurked in the dark. They ran when they saw her. They screamed. Mostly, they died. They did not turn their backs.

She hissed, her infamous fury erupting, and then, as he turned in alarm, skewered him on the point of her sword. Another thrust severed his spine and she casually lifted him off his feet, letting him slide down the blade towards her, sheets of his own red blood lubricating the shining steel. Another interloper from the Otherworld dealt with, although it was just a shame none of his vermin kind were around to bear witness.

"Damnation, Lilith, it's *me*..." he gasped, and then his eyes rolled back and his head lolled.

Zoraida sat up like a puppet whose strings had been jerked. She reached forward, snagged something made of knotted cloth from the dead man's ragged clothes and wagged a bony finger at Lilith. "Always hasty! If you had done that when we first met, we'd be in a pretty pickle now, wouldn't we?"

Lilith frowned, her anger departing as swiftly as it had come. More swamp magic, no doubt. "I was more forgiving in those days."

Zoraida eased herself off the stool and busied herself gathering things from the bundles, bunches, jars and

pots scattered around the hut. “Well, you’re here at least. You came.”

”Yes, I came, even though my sister is agitating again and stirring up the Nephilim from Darkhearth Halls—some of them nobility who still follow the old ways—and now the younger ones are out raiding when I call for them which means I have to...” Lilith put a hand to her temple, rubbing it. “Never mind. You will tell me why you called for me.”

“You can put him down,” Zoraida said, measuring something pungent and dark. “I’m done with him, poor sod, and he’s dripping all over the floor. Let my ’gators have him.”

Lilith took a step and whipped her arm so fast it was a blur. The dead man’s corpse soared through the clearing. It landed with a crunch of breaking ice, and a dead hand flopped onto a frozen reptilian snout.

“I think their appetites have cooled,” Lilith observed, and shut the door.

Pandora really did not care for the Bayou.

It was not the sucking mud, the steamy heat and the poisonous insects; it was the lack of people. There was no-one to play with in the Bayou. Not like the city, with its teeming crowds of people all frothing with emotions and feelings that she could drift through like a bee amid blossoms, alighting here and there to take in the nectar. In the Bayou it was just her and her beloved Box, and although she and the Box could have perfectly interesting conversations for hours on end—she was never bored, thank-you-very-much—there was nobody around to test out some of the things the Box suggested.

But on her way to answer Zoraida’s call she had been lucky enough to come upon two of the swamp-dwelling Gremlins, busy setting traps for their dinner.

Gremlins were not, on the whole, a self-reflective species. The typical Gremlin did not put much store in contemplating its position in life, as it were. On the positive side, though, the typical Gremlin had all the emotional stability of a great aunt on the Christmas sherry. It was not much challenge to open the Box a crack and give them both a nudge towards low-spirits and self-hatred, two emotions Pandora considered herself an expert in. A nudge that soon became a hearty shove into outright despair and self-harm as Pandora circled their camp.

She had wanted to see how the smaller one would manage to kill itself using only a bow and arrow, but the larger one, howling in misery and self-loathing and attempting to shoot itself in the head, had missed and taken the smaller one right in the chest. With no more bullets left the larger one was trying to goad a wild animal into attacking it, but it had chosen a not particularly carnivorous frog for this, and time was marching on. Pandora was not sure how long it would take a Gremlin to be gummed to death and had no real interest in finding out.

She missed the city.

It said a lot about Zoraida that she would live in such complete isolation. Not Neverborn, but no longer human either, she lived apart from everyone and everything. And not in a pleasant wilderness, but somewhere uncomfortable and dangerous. It was like she was trying to punish herself. It would drive Pandora mad.

Madder, whispered the Box, and Pandora suppressed a mischievous little smile.

She used the life-energy stolen from the doomed Gremlins to spirit herself the rest of the way to Zoraida’s hut and went in without knocking.

Lilith, imperiously tall, sharp featured and with the kind of piercing gaze reserved for vengeful angels, was already there. Zoraida, too, of course, crippled and hunched in her patchwork rags, all secret wisdom and side glances as she busied around her home. Lilith’s aura boiled with black magnificence, her anger a halo of darkness that fizzed and spat and was something Pandora always thrilled to see. And to play with, if she could get away with it. Zoraida was, as always, far harder to read. The swamp witch’s mind was unlike any Pandora had ever seen, shielded and barred behind mental gates and locks. Nothing true showed on the outside. It was what had earned Pandora’s respect when they’d first met, so long ago.

A steaming cauldron stood between her and the other two, and Pandora wrinkled her nose. “We have to stop meeting like this,” she said. “Are we cursing someone? Can it be boils? Can I choose where they go?”

Zoraida stirred the contents with a stick. Something grey and woolen broached the surface. “Sock day,” she smirked. “Boils are Tuesdays.”

"Zoraida has explained it to me," Lilith interrupted, planting her sword in the timbers before her. Always straight to business. Pandora cocked her head, unable to decide if Lilith's wilderness ensemble was on the right side of forest hobo or not. "I will save time and put it my own words. A new Breach is opening tonight."

"So?" Pandora added a tiny mental insult-barb, just to watch the sparks on Lilith's aura as it hit home. Such an easy target; she really shouldn't. "There are enough of those."

"Not like this," Lilith scowled. "This one connects one part of Malifaux with another, and both ends can be moved, with the right magic. And the end Zoraida has learned of is opening right in the middle of the Guild's headquarters in the heart of the city. They will seize it, and control it and be able to move around this world at will."

Pandora frowned. This might actually be worth taking seriously. She hated that.

"Guild forces, able to walk right into our strongholds with no warning," Zoraida said. She tapped a finger to her head. "I have seen it."

"They will spread over these lands like the disease they are," Lilith growled. "I will not permit that to happen."

"But what can we do about it?" Pandora asked. "Even the three of us, with every Neverborn and Nephilim we could raise this night, would be cut down. The Guild enclave is a fortress." She glanced at Zoraida, who was smiling again. "But you've already thought of that."

"And tested it on poor Lewis, just before you arrived." Zoraida held up a strange scrap of cloth, a twisted fetish in human shape. "I have placed one of these inside the Guild. A focus for the spell. I can send us there, but—" she held up a drama-queen finger that made Pandora wonder just how long-winded an explanation Lilith had sat through before Pandora arrived, "—not our bodies. Just our souls."

"What use will that be?"

"The spell will put us in the bodies of whichever humans are closest to it. We will walk unseen among them and take control of the Breach at the moment it opens."

The spell was ready.

It had been ready for several minutes now, but Zoraida checked the components again. There were only so many times she could do it and still pretend to herself she was not deliberately delaying. She had lied to Lilith and Pandora about what they were doing, but she should stop lying to herself.

"Brace yourselves," she said, fixing the other two with a steely glare. Behind her, powdered bones ignited and Soulstones flared into life. "We'll be among the enemy the instant we arrive, but we must not strike out."

This won't hurt at all.

She really must stop.



The dim interior of the hut dissolved into a whirlpool of all the colors and Pandora felt a disconcerting tug at her innards, as if they were unspooling after some fast-flying harpoon. For a second, nothing, and then she was hurtling away, carried off at speeds she could not imagine through endless, swirling color.

She blinked once, twice and the third time there was a human looking at her.

"Is that all?" he asked.

She was indoors. A long, dark room. Low timber ceiling, brick walls and lots of cheap-looking furniture she could not work out the uses for. A large steam boiler hissed and rumbled in shadow. One grimy window looked onto a crumbling brick wall. Gas lamps flared and spitted behind stained covers. Voices came through a closed door, muted conversations. She smelled dampness, wax polish, stale steam, old coffee, pipe smoke and the overpowering smell of humans.

The man in front of her stood. He'd been seated with his back to the far wall. "Then I'll thank you for yer time, sir," he said. His aura was funereal greys, laced with despairing yellows and defeated greens. What had just happened? And why had she missed it? The man took a set of keys out of his weskit pocket, walked forward and put them on her desk.

She had a desk. She was sitting at it. Her fingers were stubby, old and rough and the tips were blue with old ink.

The man had reached the door now. He stopped, head bowed. "Want I should send the next one in, sir?"

Zoraida! Lilith!

She stood, her chair clattering to the floor behind her. The height was all wrong and her head spun for a moment. She was too short, her balance was all off and her hips were strangely stiff. Also, her back hurt. There was another human sitting at another desk just behind her. She was young and dark-skinned, with a bony, determined face and a fussy, prim look about her. She had no aura Pandora could see. The woman put a secretive finger to her lips and called over her shoulder to the man at the door, "When we're ready. Off with you, now."

The door closed behind him with a click.

"Zoraida?" Pandora whispered, ready to strike if she were wrong.

"Aye. Pandora, is it?"

There was no-one else in the room. "Where's Lilith?"

The young woman—Zoraida—hunted around her own desk for a moment and snatched up an envelope. From inside she took a figure made of knotted cloth. That must be the focus she had mentioned.

"Lilith!" Pandora called, ignoring Zoraida's attempts to shush her. She rounded on her. "Why wasn't she in that human who just left? There's no-one else in the..."

Her eyes settled on a green, glazed pot on Zoraida's desk. Inside it, a Venus fly trap waved its fronds. She exchanged a slow look with the young woman. "Zoraida," she said, her voice low and serious. "Your spell. It did specify...humans?"

Zoraida stared, her mouth opening and shutting. "It should have...I mean..." She gave Pandora a helpless, pained look. "I don't know."

Pandora prodded the plant, and the fleshy fronds closed over her finger with, she thought, an arrogant and furious haste.

Oh no. "Lilith?"

Hard brick behind her and a throng of noisy, reeking humans in front of her, Lilith's first instinct was to cut them down. Her hand was already raised when she caught herself, and remembered her situation. As she lowered it, she noticed with some relief she was holding a stout wooden club. At least she would not face them unarmed.

The body she was in was a woman by the feel of it, but she was tall and, for a human, powerful. With a start she recognized the uniform. She was wearing the clothing of their Guild militia, a guardsman. She was an authority figure. The thought brought a smile, which felt odd on her unfamiliar face. Her role in this society was to beat humans with impunity. She arched her back and stretched her limbs, testing her new body. When could she start?

Ahead of her, long lines of humans snaked away from desks and countertops staffed by more of the same. The room was long and broad, but hot and humid from the sheer numbers and louder than a Nephilim feasting hall when the young ones were let in.

She walked several paces and grabbed the collar of the man nearest to her. "Zoraida?" she hissed.

The man shrunk away from her. "No, ma'am. Sorry, ma'am. I didn't do it, ma'am."

Useless. She gave him a blow across the shoulders with her club anyway and grabbed the next nearest, but the woman did exactly the same. Pathetic. She would have to pummel a Nephilim near senseless to get cowering like this from it. What kind of war was it when your enemies simply evoked disgust?

She turned to the wall she had been standing against. Pandora and Zoraida must be on the other side of it, no doubt looking for her. She approached a dumpy, ill-kempt human wearing a similar uniform to her own and jabbed at the bricks with her club. "What lies beyond that wall?"

The man frowned at her, an expression of bored uselessness on his bearded face.

"Answer! What lies beyond?"

He blinked and blurted out, "Personnel and Welfare. You know? Hiring and firing?"

"You will show me the way." As he bristled she realized she was probably exceeding her assumed authority. Where authority failed, force prevailed. She snatched his club from his belt and snapped it in two. Interesting, she thought, she still had some of her native strength. She tossed the broken end far off across the crowd. A moment later a cry rose above the hubbub and a man dropped from sight like a stone. Fixing the guard with her gaze, she jammed the handle back in his belt. "Show me the way, or I will holster that somewhere else about your person."

Lilith shouldered her way past the line of men in the hall. The line ended at a door and, as the guard had said, it read, "Personnel and Welfare". She went in.

A short man with ruddy flesh spilling over his white collar and a young woman with hair pulled back into a severe bun nearly walked into her. The room was otherwise empty.

"Lilith!" the man said, in a surprised voice. He turned to his companion. "Her aura. It's her."

"Oh, thank goodness," the woman sighed, then held up a hand. "It's us, Lilith. I'm Zoraida. He's Pandora."

"Where were you?" Pandora asked.

"The other side of that wall. So many humans. Why are you holding a pot plant?" Lilith demanded.

"No reason," Pandora said, handing it to Zoraida who put it on a desk. "Now we are all here, where will the Breach open and where?"

"We don't have long," Zoraida said, "and we need to move fast. Lilith," she removed her scarf and handed it to her, "stuff this into the third pipe from the left on that boiler then turn all the wheels to the right. Then give your gun to the first man in the queue outside along with this note." She handed it over. "Tell him if he does this for you, you'll see he keeps his job."

"Why do I—?"

"No questions! No time!" Zoraida was already holding the door open, her face anxious. "Just do it."

Lilith folded her arms. "And is there anything else you need me to do? Some cleaning, perhaps? Your socks?"

"Dammit, Lilith! I'll be right back. Just stay here and act... human. Pandora, deal with the men outside. Their files are right there. Lilith, either shut up and look menacing or," she tossed her a pencil, "do some paperwork!"

Lilith caught the pencil and flung it right back in one fluid motion, but the door had already closed and the point embedded in the wood. She imagined it buried deep in the Hag's head, and then stalked over to the boiler, muttering curses.

Zoraida found she did not need to hurry. Her new body was long-legged and youthful, straight-backed and head-aloft, and it ate up the halls and stairwells of the Guild.

She may be in another's body, but the threads of Fate were just as visible to her as they had always been. She could see what was going to happen and how she could influence it just enough so that what should happen, did. That, after all, was the point of her.

She walked head down into a bustling kitchen, tucking the cloth focus out of sight under a warm teapot on a service

tray and walking back out. On her way, she tipped a china pepper mill off a countertop in one seemingly-oblivious swipe. It hit the ground and rolled into the throng of chefs. She heard a curse, a thud, a clamor of clattering cutlery and then a large man toppled backwards into a serving girl, who dropped the tray she was carrying. Tea and crockery burst all over the floor.

Amid the recriminations, she smiled as she heard a voice order the girl to take the tray by the door instead.



"Umm, David Waye, sir." The human was young, rake thin and earnest looking.

"Mr. Waye," Pandora said, finding the file with the same name. A note was pinned to the outside, and someone (probably herself) had typed, "Terminate Employment" on it. She read this out to him and told him to go, and send in the next one.

By the Tyrants, but this was dull! Lilith sat hunched with her back to her, wielding a huge rubber stamp like a club and beating form after form into ink-stained submission. She was no fun. And Pandora missed her Box. It was still back in the hut in the Bayou. She had found a wooden box in a drawer labelled, "Expenses: Rejections", and she held it now in her lap, but it wasn't the same.

But the human—oh, my, the human! Huge waves of shocked purples and delicious, agonized reds were crashing around him. She stared at him. What *was* this?

"It's...it's not just me, sir," he was saying amid huge sobs and peals of yellow despair that tasted like sunbeams to Pandora, "there's my family, and me mam's sick..."

This was more like it. Pandora got herself comfortable, and hoped that Zoraida would take her time in coming back. "They will surely suffer greatly, Mr. Waye. They will starve and be thrown out in the street, but this is nothing if not your own fault. I am sure you see that." She was delighted to see that she could influence his emotions nearly as well as she could in her own body, and she reached into his soul and started to play. "Tell me, Mr. Waye, tell me how that makes you...feel."

By the time the man left, he was a shaking, empty wreck. Pandora had been going to suggest he depart by means of the window, but they were on the first floor and it simply wasn't high enough. He'd find one that was.

"Send the next one in!" she called after him gleefully.

Lilith hammered the stamp so fiercely dust fell from the ceiling, and Pandora spun on her chair, clutching the expenses box to her chest and kicking her legs.



"We're closed for lunch," Zoraida said to the man at the head of the much diminished queue, and went in, closing the door behind her.

Pandora was practically glowing with malicious delight and Lilith had a look on her like a storm cloud about to burst. *Time to move on.* "We need to leave," Zoraida said. "This way."

She hurried over to the boiler, which was making some very unusual noises. The ceiling was hazy behind layers of excess steam.

"About time," Lilith said through gritted teeth, close on her heels.

Pandora trotted over sporting a bratty pout, which did not suit the heavy-set male face she was wearing at all. "You did well, little one" she whispered to the wooden expenses box she was carrying, stroking its lid, and not for the first time Zoraida wondered about her hold on reality.

Lilith cast around. There were no doors in this part of the room, of course. "How do we leave?" she demanded, as the boiler rattled and started to whistle.

"Magic boiler," Zoraida said.

"What?" Lilith had to raise her voice. "It's not magic! If I didn't know any better I would say it's about to expl—"

The room dissolved into a vortex of color, and with a taut cable tugging just behind her belly-button Zoraida blinked once, twice and was back in her hut.

All three of them were back in their own bodies again. For some reason, being in another's skin made ignoring the complaints of her own body that much harder when she returned. It was one reason she disliked doing it so much.

"—ode," finished Lilith. She slammed a fist against a ceiling beam, sending the fetishes rattling. "You should have warned me!"

"Did we just...die?" Pandora asked, patting herself all over in alarm.

"Those bodies were too low-level and unimportant to get to the part of the building we need to be in," said Zoraida, prepping another round of the spell, "but the focus I made is on its way there right now. Gird yourselves, ladies, we're about to go back, and we're really going to be in the thick of it."

Aphrodite Crumplehorn sailed down the broad hallway with all the pomp and self-importance of a battleship returning to its home port. The hallway was, like Ms. Crumplehorn, magisterial in its dimensions, and she was able to chart a straight course past the petitioners, applicants and other hopefuls that dirtied up the place.

She paused among a throng of men and women, standing, sitting and pacing in various states of frustration and fatigue, each of them clutching some invention they were hoping would attract the attention of the Office of C. Hoffman. A sign on the wall, proclaiming that random spirit photography was now compulsory for all employees to combat the Resurrectionist menace, was straightened with a diligent eye. She ran a business-like finger along the top to check for dust and moved on with a nod to herself.

Passing through a set of doors, guarded since that boiler explosion an hour ago that had killed at least three people in suspicious circumstances, not to mention the sudden rash of suicides, Ms Crumplehorn stopped outside the darkened glass of the dust-bound offices of the Ortegas. The offices were, as ever, empty, as was the clerk's desk outside, but that had not discouraged a few eternally optimistic souls from sitting in the waiting area.

She unrolled a new workplace safety sign, affixed it to the board and stepped back to admire her efforts. Well, the committee's efforts, but really hers.

"*Has Harold come to Work twice Today?*" it demanded in bold, black letters. "*Did Euphemia not Remember your name? It may Not be the same Harold. It may not Be the same Euphemia. Doppelgangers—Confront and Confirm!!*" Below that she had added, in smaller letters, "*Doppelgangers may be Working in Your area. Only your Vigilance will ensure the Safety of all. Report all Doppelgangers to Office 17. Confronting the Neverborn may result in Abduction or Death. False reporting is an imprisonable Offence.*"

Harold and Euphemia were just names chosen at random. She knew one Harold in this office, actually, and he would probably complain about it. In fact, she considered, if he didn't complain it would be suspicious. She would keep an eye on him.

Passing into the east wing, she paused for a few minutes to have a very pointed discussion with a clerk in the Death Marshall's offices. As ever, voices were hushed beneath the massive portrait of Lady Justice that loomed over the hall. Ms Crumplehorn managed to convey her clear concerns to the Judge's secretary about the ballooning budget of the program to build a dedicated underground railway linking all the morgues in Malifaux's hospitals to the cemeteries in the east. The so-called Death Train would, it was clear, prevent the unacceptable disappearances of corpses between the morgues and the public cemeteries, but she could not fathom why Dr McMourning's request for a branch-line to his office had been approved. Surely the work of the Guild's coroner, while important, was not of such a level as to require a dedicated track? And, in any event, the costings for the concrete were outrageous, a scandal, and would have to go back to committee.

Satisfied she had registered her views she moved on. There was clearly something suspicious about the events of the morning, as dark and brooding sanctioned spellcasters were now guarding key doorways and stairwells in addition to the usual Guild Guards.

She reached her place of work in the Witchhunter's wing, walking to her offices past the rows of clerks logging finds of artifacts, allegations of Arcanist activity and reports from the field. Fortunately, her status meant she was not exposed to the usual crowd of informants, would-be spies and amateur treasure hunters waiting and returning day after day for an appointment with Sonnia Criid or her deputies, but her mouth drew back for a moment when she saw she had a visitor nonetheless. It was a man dressed like an impoverished circus master, with a bald head and a face like a sharpened weasel.

Her two assistants, Meera, a middle-aged Bengali woman with a fountain of thick black hair and impeccable manners, and Preserver Isaac, as grey and grizzled as a retired seaman, his sparse white hair like a frozen gout of steam coming out his liver-spotted pate, were keeping their heads down as she approached. As well they might, she thought icily. What were they doing, letting this mountebank through?

Her mood brightened as she sat at her desk and saw that her morning tea service had been delivered. She paused for a moment, reaching for something unusual beneath the teapot. What was that? It looked like a ragdoll...

...a pressure in her chest, forcing the breath from her body as a kaleidoscope of colors blotted her sight...

...Zoraida blinked once, twice, smiled and picked up her focus from beneath the teapot. She looked quickly around. Exactly where she'd hoped to be.

A wiry, old man sat to her left. He'd already picked up a heavy notarial stamp and was hefting it dangerously. Lilith, of course. A woman sat to her right, smiling secretly to herself. She gave Zoraida a wave. Pandora, then. And in front of her—by the crows!

"By the crows!" she hissed. "Blind Jack! What are you doing here?"

The bald man, wearing a faded black suit and tails, looked up at her in alarm and shuffled awkwardly. There was a large hessian sack at his feet. "Don't know what you mean, ma'am..." His crafty eyes narrowed as he peered at her. "It's...it's not *you*, ma'am, is it?"

"Yes," she snapped, trying to keep her voice down, "it bloody well is me! Take a proper look at my colleagues, Blind Jack."

He did so, squinting and quailing at first Pandora and then Lilith. "Oh, no." He bit his lip and winced. "Sorry?" he whispered.

"What for?" Zoraida asked. She could see his true form easily now she knew to look for it. He looked human, but it was just a glamour. Blind Jack was Neverborn, with an eyeless, noseless face, pale and glowing like the moon under a dark, peaked hood, and a fondness for the souls of greedy and ungrateful children.

Blind Jack paused, thinking hard. "I don't know," he said at last, trying to face all three of them at once. "Whatever you're angry at me for?"

Zoraida shook her head. He had many shadows under the gas lamps, and one fell across her desk. She stabbed a finger into it, making him squirm. "Not that easy, Blind Jack. What are you doing here?"

"Well," he said, shifting uncomfortably in a way that only drew attention to the as-yet unmentioned sack at his feet, "times are hard, you know? A chap needs money to get by, and living in this city isn't cheap. I mean, my rent alone—"

Lilith had approached him, stamp in hand, and she snatched a small, carved stone figure from the bag. She pushed it in his face, furious. "This! This is from the bloodstone circle beneath Lungbarrow! It is a sacred—"

"You're selling them?" exclaimed Zoraida. "To the Guild?"



"...precious relic!" Lilith hissed, ignoring the glances they were starting to attract from the humans in the typing pool outside the office. "Carved by..."

"Just one or two!" protested Jack.

"...heirlooms for all Nephilim! *Ancient* bloodlines ..."

"That's a big sack, Blind Jack," Zoraida said, trying to shush Lilith.

"...stolen their birthright! *Master* sculptors..."

"Five or six? I need the money, Madame Zoraida, and I didn't think anyone would miss them—"

"...*priceless* artefacts..."

"—and the Guild pay well for, err," Blind Jack flinched away from Lilith, whose lips were flecked with foam, "native trinkets."

Lilith drew in a deep breath, her face purpling, the aged knuckles around the heavy stamp turning white. "*Native*?"

"Surroundings," warned Zoraida, releasing Jack's shadow. She noticed with some alarm that Lilith's stamp no longer looked like a stamp and was starting to lengthen, one end turning into bright metal. She had been afraid of this. Their souls were too powerful for the bodies they were inhabiting, and sooner or later their true forms would emerge. Repeated uses of the spell and strong emotions would certainly speed that process along. "Blind Jack, I suggest you take your sack and make yourself scarce. Lilith, it will not overly help us if you were to manifest your greatsword right now. Control your feelings. I am sure you can catch up with Blind Jack later and have a proper exchange of views."

"I'll be exchanging his lungs for burning coals and his bowels for a nest of vipers!" Lilith hissed after him as he hurried away, "and I'll be doing it with my bare hands!"

"Quickly, now," Zoraida said, gathering Lilith and Pandora close. "The Breach will open in storage room B27 in the basement. The Guild use it for keeping items of arcane significance, so it will be heavily guarded. The minute we go inside the alarms will go off, so I need you two to draw attention as far from the basement as possible to give us more time in there, but without getting caught."

Pandora giggled and punched Lilith playfully in the shoulder. "Isn't that cute? She's asking you to be subtle."

"I can be subtle!"

"You'd have had better luck bringing Nytmare along instead of her, Hag." Pandora said, dusting her hands in glee. "Leave this one to me."



A few minutes later, as Ernest Scrippler was cleaning the gas lamps in the stairwell, he found himself thinking of a joke he'd been told that morning. He never laughed at jokes, because he always had a sneaking suspicion people who told them were laughing at him, but now he thought about it, it was possibly the funniest joke he'd ever heard. He started to chuckle. He thought of it again, and laughed out loud. A passing group looked up at him on his ladder, and a woman he hadn't noticed before, with dark skin and black hair, disappeared round the turn in the stair.

He laughed again, and kept laughing. He couldn't stop thinking of the joke. He laughed and laughed, and the ladder swayed, but he kept on, his face turning first red and then blue.

As a Guild Guard was coming to check on him he suddenly stopped and fell. He was dead before he hit the stone steps, a manic grin on his face.



No-one noticed Penelope Scrimpersby loosen the bolts, perhaps because no-one ever really noticed Penelope Scrimpersby. She left one bolt just in and no more, and tied a length of twine to it. She then stood calmly in the middle of the hall and tugged on the twine. The last bolt on that side popped out and the giant portrait of Lady Justice, now detached from the wall on one side, pivoted and swung down on her with lethal force.

The edge of the mahogany frame struck her just above the neck while moving faster than a horse at full gallop. Her head flew off and impaled itself on the return lever of a typewriter, which pinged loudly and advanced to the next line while its operator screamed.



Zoraida tucked the cloth focus inside the hidden compartment of a mechanical puzzle sphere she had found among the shelves of items waiting to be catalogued and went in search of Sonnia Criid.

She found her a few minutes later, right where she was supposed to be, but had to hide a wobble in her step when she saw who the head of the Witchhunters was talking to. *Fate often leaves out little details...*

"Ms. Criid," she said, in as businesslike a voice as she could conjure. "Ms. Ortega. Ms. Justice."

The trio were standing around a trestle table in one of Sonnia Criid's studies. The walls were lined with lead panels, a few reinforced electric lights hung from the ceiling and the table was piled with open books of varying degrees of antiquity. Zoraida noticed a couple that she made a note to try and purloin at a later date.

Zoraida proffered her paperwork and the puzzle sphere to Sonnia Criid when the trio noticed her. "It trips the thaumatograph, ma'am. Nothing significant, but it should be stored in a safe place until you can take a look at it."

Sonnia gave it a cursory once over and nodded her head, the dull metal of the sphere reflecting in her ever-present mask. The sphere itself was entirely ordinary, and not even of quality workmanship, but the focus inside would make it register on any magical detection scale. "That it does, Ms. Crumplehorn." She scribbled her signature and then made a brief correction before handing it back. "That boiler explosion this morning shut down the power to the storage room on C basement. Use B27 until power is back on."

But of course.

Pandora met up with Lilith in a quiet corridor on the fifth floor, the ceiling a brick arch and the walls cold plaster. Shouts came from outside the windows at the far end.

"That you?" Lilith asked with a nod down the hall.

Pandora winked. "Jumpers always draw a crowd, and it'll bring the guards up. Plus, you should hear the sound they make when they hit the cobbles."

Lilith signaled to her and they went into an empty office, full of dust-covered cabinets. And bodies. Several of them, stacked against the far wall, and covered in blood. Letter openers, mail spikes and other impromptu weapons protruded from their heads.

"That you?" asked Pandora.

"I left a trail," said Lilith. "They'll follow it soon enough. Something's wrong, though."

Pandora nodded. "Zoraida, you mean."

"Yes!" Lilith spun away, pacing. "She doesn't need us. This—" she waved her arms, "— all this is helpful, I am sure, but anyone could have done it. She doesn't need *us*."

"I was wondering the same thing."

"There's something she's not telling us!"

"There's always something she's not telling us," Pandora gave a smile that was only a little cruel, and little sad as well. "That's the point of her. Her lies keep us at arm's length, which is just where she wants us. And she'll go on not telling us until she needs to." She wagged a finger at Lilith's surprised expression. "I may act a little crazy now and then, but I'm not stupid. You know none of us can do what she does, protect this world in the way she does. We need her. Fate obviously needs her. Malifaux certainly does. So if she wants to...wait," Pandora raised a finger to her lips, staring at the wall and then the door. "Speak of the devil."

The door creaked open and Zoraida came in, shutting it behind her.

"That's a singular definition of subtle, my dear," she said, eyeing the blood-splattered bodies. "But it will work to our benefit. The place is in almost complete uproar. They're on the trail you left, leading them up here, and the focus should be arriving in the basement any minute now, so it's time we were leaving." She held up a wait-for-it hand. "This departure I am particularly proud of."

There was a knock at the door. Zoraida opened it a crack. A man in workman's clothes stood there, holding a box and a note. He waved the note at them. "Says to deliver this here. And I get to keep my job. So here you go."

Zoraida took the box from him. "Wait there, my son."

She opened the box. A Guild Peacebringer pistol lay inside. She pulled it out, cocked it and swung the door wide open. As the man saw the pile of bodies and took a step back, she put a bullet in Lilith's head, one in Pandora's and then, smiling at the man, one in her own.

Third time is the charm.

"The moment we arrive, my dears, simply draw your pistol and shoot anyone who hasn't drawn theirs. What could be simpler?"

The Catherine wheel of colors...the now-familiar, oddly personal tugging in the guts...blinking once, twice—

—a freezing and dark stone hallway, lit by gas burners. Zoraida saw six Guild guards, including her. A heavy iron door across from her read "B27", embossed on a stained bronze plaque. A delivery trolley beside her carried a metal puzzle sphere.

Zoraida's hand reached for the holstered gun with its former owner's training, and she drew and emptied the chamber into the startled guardswoman standing to the right of the door. Her companion fell at the same time, chest bursting in red stars as Pandora's bullets hammered home. Neither of the humans had any time to react and their hands had been barely halfway to their own pistols when they died.

Their gunfire had masked the sound of Lilith's, and the third and final guard already lay expiring in a pool of her own blood. Lilith finished her with a boot heel to the throat.

"The Breach has already opened," Zoraida said, hunting through her own uniform and the dead guards' until she found the keys. She hesitated a moment before unlocking the door. There was no more to be done. She would be tested, here and now. Was she equal? She had to hope so, and she had done what she could to prepare for the other possibility. "The storeroom has powerful wards, so the energies of the Breach's opening will not have escaped, but the minute I open this door the biggest and loudest alarms in the Guild will go off. We will not have much time."

She unlocked the iron door and the three of them went inside.

The Breach had destroyed most of the large, vault-ceilinged room, and what had once been heavy shelving and stacked crates lay splintered and charred on the rough flagstone floor. Even some of the pillars had cracked and flakes of stone the size of boulders had peeled off the nearest. The only light came from the Breach itself, the edge glowing a softly pulsing green, giving faint highlights to the shattered and twisted remains of the storeroom's artefacts and casting shadows of deepest blackness behind all things.

Through the Breach lay a midnight garden. Stars sparkled in the cold, spring sky and a gentle breeze that swayed the tops of the yew trees brought the scent of lavender and jasmine. *The little details…* The smell alone nearly broke her, and knowing that if she faltered once she was done for, Zoraida stepped through.

The crossing was nowhere near as eventful as her first one had been. She felt a nerve-jangling jolt, as if her whole body was a tongue that had just been dipped in vinegar, and then it faded. As with everything, there was no time like the first time. She paused. Lilith and Pandora had not followed.

"I still need you both. What I have to do is...not easy. I need you with me, to remind me what I'm fighting for."

"That is not Malifaux," Lilith said.

Zoraida shook her head. "That it isn't."

"You lied to us," Pandora said, before adding, "Told you," out the corner of her mouth to Lilith.

"Not about everything. Are you surprised? You really shouldn't be, you know. Not if you've been paying attention, dearie. We're all pawns in someone's game."

"Where is that?"

Zoraida turned and pointed. "A farmhouse, of sorts. In the middle of nowhere, but at the center of all things."

"That's not an answer."

"No. Leave me some secrets. Are you coming? You'll be fine, although the crossing might tickle."

"Is it Earth?" Pandora asked, with a look both fearful and excited. She was in the body of a young woman, quite similar to her own appearance, although Zoraida knew that could simply be her soul re-writing her stolen body to match what it was used to. It would happen to all three of them much quicker this time. She could already feel the woman's body she was in aging, the skin crinkling and the bones tightening like logs drying in a kiln.

"It's okay to be afraid," she said to Lilith, knowing the effect her barb would have, and walked across the goat-cropped grass towards the house, its rough stones and timbers squat and black in the starlight. In the shadow of a rhododendron bush she stopped and waited for the others.

"The truth," she said, looking them both in the eye when they finally joined her. Pandora was almost the spitting

image of herself, now, her hair falling past her waist and, had it been daylight, no doubt as red as the devil herself. Lilith, too, long limbed and powerful, with dark eyes that made the night feel colder. "In a few minutes a woman will come out that house, at a crossroads. She will be stupid and selfish and greedy and ambitious. She will also be in pain, vulnerable and alone in all the world. And right there," Zoraida pointed to a bare patch of dirt, "right there she will find something that changes her Fate and sends her off down a very different path and to a very far off place. Something wonderful and mysterious and beautiful lying there, as if left there just for her."

She stopped. She found she could say no more. She sat on a cold stone, took the cloth focus and tore it open, taking out the Soulstone that lay hidden within. She had been carrying this with her for a long time. "This," she whispered, her throat raw.

"That is no ordinary Breach we came through," Lilith said. "Where are we?"

"No, my dear. The correct question is, 'when?'" Zoraida gathered herself again. She was explaining it to them, but the words were for her. "You must understand, if this does not happen, if this woman does not find this very special Soulstone, then, my dears, we will never meet. Our plans at Kythera will never have been. The Grave Spirit would have been unleashed. So much else that has been done will never have happened. There will have been no-one there to see to it. The threads of Fate wind everywhere, and sometimes they wind backwards into the past. There is nobody else who can do this, my dears, and so it falls to me. What should happen, must."

The sharp camphor bite of the lavender came again on the breeze, the wax-paper rustling of the yew trees overhead. Perhaps it had all been worth it, just for this.

"Then you must," said Pandora.

Lilith nodded. "These matters are too great. Too important. It is a sore thing that is asked of you, but those who lead do what they must, always."

Zoraida stood, her new old knees aching in familiar protest. "The woman was a foolish one. She got what she deserved. Come. I will leave this and we will go."

She found the patch of dirt and placed the Soulstone just where it needed to be.

As she walked away a sudden impulse made her look back at the farmhouse. She froze on the night-black grass. Candlelight flared from an upstairs window.

Emily's window.

Go. Don't think.

Brave, bold Emily.

Just carry on.

But she did not. A young girl moved in black silhouette against the light.

Fate, I am doing what you asked. Do not ask any more, I beg you.

She felt the stars dim to blackness as if a cataract had come over the world. The girl's hands were moving in familiar patterns.

No!

That was a pattern of conjuring. A basic one, but she had the motions just right. The flowing patterns came to a fluid end and there was something small and fluttering in the girl's hands where nothing had been before. So she had the talent, too, and had hid it well all those years.

But it would not stay hidden forever. That is what Fate was showing her. Consequences.

The others in the house, Zoraida knew, could never understand. They had banished one witch already. Indeed, were they not doing so right now, hurling hate at the witch discovered in their midst as the young girl, oblivious, played in her room upstairs? They would doubtless banish Emily, too, when they learned. Cast out, in this of all places, how would one so young survive?

Fate, you have known this all along, and you have brought me here to see it. Truly, I curse you to the darkest depths of hell.

No.

She had always told herself Emily would be better off alone, but it turned out that was just another self-serving lie. A blindness. The truth was she was about to be—had been—abandoned to a terrible fate at the hands of the people in that farmhouse. Zoraida could and would condemn herself to any suffering, but she could not leave the girl to that fate.

"No." She took a step back towards the Soulstone.

"You cannot change this," said Lilith, stopping her with a hand on her shoulder. The woman's touch was light but there was iron in that grip. "It is decided."

"No. Just this once I tell Fate, 'no.'"

"Leave the stone and come away, Zoraida." Pandora was right behind her as well, a forbidding undercurrent in her voice.

They did not understand. Zoraida did not have time to make them.

The starlight cast the faintest of shadows, but it was enough. She pinched the shadow under Lilith's hand and flicked it away. Lilith stumbled back with a cry, her hand bruised and twisted.

Pandora reached for her and Zoraida set her ablaze with witchfire. As Pandora reeled in pain Zoriada unleashed a pulse of raw power and hurled the other two away.

She turned and raced for the stone. Roots burst from the ground and clung to her feet, sending her sprawling in the grass. The roots writhed and Lilith burst from beneath them, a look of utter fury on her face. She tore a long root free and it lengthened in her hand to become her greatsword. Their souls had completely rewritten their borrowed forms now, but they could only last minutes before the forces tore the spell apart and sent them back to the hut.

Zoraida could feel Pandora assailing her mind, but it was a distraction at best. Pandora would be buying time to manifest her damned Box, and that really could hurt her. Time for a distraction of her own.

Lilith swung her sword back in a great arc, but her gaze wavered as Zoraida played with her perceptions. *I am no longer lying before you. I am standing right beside you.*

Lilith's eyes re-focused on Pandora, her stance altered and suddenly the massive sword was sweeping around at her instead.

Alarm flashed across Pandora's face, but the young woman was supernaturally fast. The sword halted inches from her neck, its momentum stolen through sheer force of will. The wave of force crashed over Lilith and drove her back with another cry of pain.

Zoraida could not free herself from the roots, but she had one trick left. Her body shimmered as if seen in a cheap mirror and then she was gone and a raven darted up in a flurry of feathers.

Pandora opened her Box but Zoraida was already flying low over the grass, her claws outstretched. She grabbed the stone and flapped off over the yew trees. Circling she saw Pandora and Lilith racing for the Breach as the back door of the farmhouse opened, and a woman ran out. She stopped at the patch of dirt.

But there was no Soulstone there.

The threads of Fate started to unravel. Invisible to everyone but Zoraida, the heavens glowed and the land twisted, Fate and time tearing at one another, sundering in a silent crack of thunder.

Time broke its banks, flooded out and flowed in new directions. Zoraida felt herself pulled along, her memories, her thoughts, her life itself being re-written.

...Emily rescued...

...the farmhouse burning...

...a new life by a lake...

...years whirring by, fast and slow, blurring into a kaleidoscope of new memory...

She had done it! She had bested Fate!

...vineyards heavy with crop...

...walking the peaks, sketchbook in hand...

...children splashing by the lakeside...

...a cup of wine and a warm peat fire as the snow fell...

...happy...

...deliriously happy...

...delirium...

...Pandora opened her Box...

No!

...Pandora opened her Box...

But now she had thought it, the thought could not be ignored. It clamored at her mind, insistent and ugly.

...Pandora opened her Box...

The illusion shattered around her.

...Pandora opened her Box...

The lake drained, the peaks crumbled, the children silenced, the wine turned to dust...

Pandora opened her Box. Zoraida was already flying low over the grass, her claws outstretched.

Blades of misery tore at her, shredding feathers and skin, her blood spraying black in the starlight. She crashed into the ground, bouncing and rolling. Her true shape returned

and she sprang to her feet, defying the pain in her bones. The stone was right there. Right in front of her. The woman would be coming out in seconds. Pandora had nearly beaten her, but she still had just enough time.

Her hand stopped inches from the Soulstone as Lilith's sword pierced her from behind. She could only gaze in anguish at the bloodied blade protruding from her belly.

Then strong hands were on her. The blade was pulled out and agony flooded in, and she was being dragged or carried back to the Breach. Her vision was growing dark, and she did not know if it was the pain or the death of this body or the end of the world itself. She tried to cry out, but only blood rose up.

She saw the candle in the window, the girl lost in her conjuring. She saw the back door of the farmhouse open, and a woman run out from light into dark. She saw the glittering glow of the mysterious and beautiful Soulstone lying in the patch of dirt, beckoning promises of a life to be.

"No," Zoraida's whisper was as cracked and dry as her lips, and no louder than a breath.

The woman paused and looked around.

Had she heard? Zoraida tried again with everything she had, but the pain was like a hole in the world and there was no more breath left in her. Her lips moved, but no sound came.

The woman picked up the Soulstone as Zoraida was carried back through the Breach.

Her dying body lay on unfeeling stone as the Breach collapsed. Its collapse unleashed a pulse of energy that annihilated everything in the storage room. The green glow turned to braided light of every color, and the searing pain in her belly turned to a familiar tugging.

Zoraida sat up, blinking in the shadows of her hut. Lilith and Pandora stood, faces grim and heads bowed. None of them looked at the others for a long time.

"That was a foolish thing you did," Lilith said, breaking the silence. "But I can understand why. Yours is a difficult road. Know that I bear you no ill will."

"You understand nothing," Zoraida rasped. "Get out!"

No-one moved.

"Get out!"

"What did you see?" Pandora whispered. "The Box had you, just for a moment. What did you see?"

Zoraida clutched a hand to her breast. "Is that all it was? Just a moment?"

"A heartbeat. A wingbeat," sang Pandora. "Your heart, with wings, beat. What did you see?"

Zoraida shook her head. "Nothing. Nothing of any consequence. It was just a moment, after all."

"You have to hand it to her," said Pandora to Lilith. "She did it."

"Are you mad?" Lilith answered. "We stopped her. We won. We saved this world from a disaster."

"Don't flatter yourself, Lilith. It's why she needed us along on this one. She knew what was at stake. If she couldn't go through with it, we were the only ones who could stop her. That's it, isn't it? We were your backup plan, in case something went wrong. In case you weren't strong enough to do what had to be done. Your schemes have gotten so good you can even beat yourself."

Zoraida walked slowly over to the door, what little strength she had barely enough, and spat on the floor. "Go," she said.

"Fate chose well when it picked you," Pandora said, and left, Lilith following behind. In a few moments they were gone from the clearing, leaving just a hut on stilts, squatting at the heart of the Bayou.



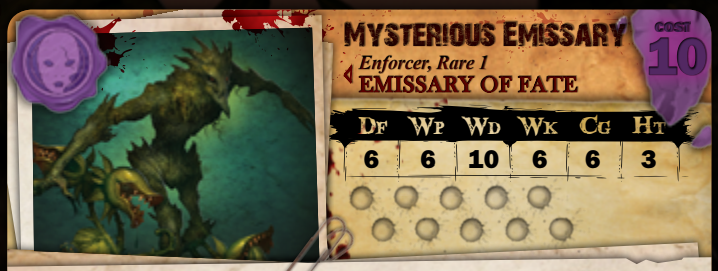
MYSTERIOUS EMISSARY

The Mysterious Effigy sometimes wore a laughing mask, but beneath the smile its face was twisted in pain. It was made as an idol for the Neverborn, a magical doll whose twin was Malifaux's native life in all its strange, vicious glory, and it felt the Neverborn's division and rage as their dominion was eaten away from under them.

And sometimes it wore a weeping mask, but underneath its face was split in a grin, for who could be sad watching the creatures in whose image it was made kill and die, give out suffering and receive it, moving Fate along whether they realized it or not?

The Mysterious Emissary needs no shadow to hide in. It needs no hinting or manipulation. It needs no subtle direction of Malifaux's energies. At long last the slumbering spite of the land has found its incarnation and pure expression.

Masks off.



MYSTERIOUS EMISSARY COST 10

Enforcer, Rare 1

EMISSARY OF FATE

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	6	10	6	6	3

ABILITIES

Power Sink: When this Crew scores 1 or more **VP** from the Strategy, this model gains the following Condition for the rest of the game: "**Destined +1:** At the end of this model's Activation it heals +1 damage. This Condition may not be removed by other models' Actions."

Hard to Kill: While this model has 2 or more **Wd** remaining when it suffers damage, it may not be reduced to below 1 **Wd**.

One With The Land: Once per Turn, when this model would suffer damage from hazardous terrain, it heals 2 damage instead and then becomes immune to damage from hazardous terrain for the rest of the Turn.

Unimpeded: This model ignores penalties for severe terrain when moving.

MYSTERIOUS EMISSARY

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Nature Reclaims All (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 6 or 1): Target suffers 2/4/4 damage.

Purge: After damaging an enemy, discard all Scheme, Corpse, and Scrap Markers within 4 of the target.

Rage of the Emissary: After damaging, take this Action again. This Action may not declare Triggers.

Reclamation: After damaging, remove all Conditions from the target.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) Land's Child (**Ca** 6 / TN: 13 / Rg: 6): Summon a Changeling into base contact with target friendly Scheme Marker, then discard the Marker. This model suffers 2 damage.

(0) The Land's Hunger (**Ca** 6 / TN: 10 / Rg: 6): Place a 50mm Hungry Land Marker within range and LoS, not touching a model or Marker. If there are more than two friendly Hungry Land Markers in play, remove one of them. Hungry Land Markers are **Ht** 0, Severe, Hazardous Terrain which deal 1/4/5 damage. Any model which ends a move or push within 3" of a Hungry Land Marker must pass a TN 14 **Wk** duel or suffer damage as if entering it. Remove the Hungry Land Marker if a Blast Marker is placed over it.

(0) Prophecies In Lightning: This Action may only be taken while this model has the **Destined +2** Condition or greater. Remove the **Destined** Condition from this model to give all friendly Minions and Enforcers within 4 the **Fast** Condition.

50mm

WRATH

In front of a ruin in a deserted Badlands town, the sign for the Crossroads Hotel lies split in two. Wasn't the fire's work. It was a man's hands that tore the hitching-rail off its posts and hurled it right through the signboard. The destruction didn't soothe his rage. It couldn't come close.

He still hears their voices, like ghosts in his ears, like blood thudding in his veins. They called to him from the mob on the dance floor, pouring words and rhymes into him like poison that came spilling through his lips, that man and woman in their scarlet and black, laughing, applauding their handiwork as the seven on the stage turned the dance into cavorting nightmare.

He shuns the towns and people now. He's found a place among the monsters. And waits with bared teeth and shaking fists for the day when he finds those two again.



WRATH

Henchman, Living, Mercenary, Rare 1

CROSSROADS SEVEN, TORMENTED

COST 8 CACHE 5

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	5	8	6	8	2

ABILITIES

Hellhound On My Trail: Enemy models which end their Activation within ❶3 must discard a card or suffer 2 damage, unless they dealt damage to this model during their Activation (damage which was prevented does not count).

Terrifying (All) 12: Enemy models must pass a TN 12 Horror Duel if they end a Walk Action within this model's engagement range or target this model with an Action.

Frenzied Charge: This model gains ✋ to the Attack flips of any Attacks it generates due to the Charge Action.

Lead Singer: Crews led by this model may hire other Crossroads Seven models regardless of Faction. This model may be a Crew's Leader in 50+ Soulstone size games, regardless of declared Faction, so long as the Crew contains at least seven Crossroads Seven models.

WRATH

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Ethereal Claws (**MI** 6🗡 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫽ 2): Target suffers 2/4/5 damage.
- ***To a Pulp:*** The damage flip gains ✋.
- ***Life Drain***: After damaging, heal 1 damage.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) From A Whisper To A Scream: Until the end of the Turn, this model heals 2 damage from the ***Life Drain*** Trigger instead of 1.

(0) Empty Rage: This model may discard a card. If it does, until the end of the Turn, all models within ❶3 which suffer damage from **MI** Attack Actions suffer +1 damage.

40mm

ANGEL EYES

Angel Eyes loaded a round into the chamber of her rifle as she watched the Guild convoy crawl along the floor of the canyon like ants. She smiled at that. They really were like little insects invading her land. Sometimes it still sickened her that she used to be like them. Not Guild, of course, but human. Filthy, greedy, desperately human. Her new brothers and sisters had fixed that. They had rewarded her for facing them fearlessly when the rest of her companions had run, or died screaming.

She still remembered that glorious day; her arcane shield had protected her from the blackened claws of her new family for a time. But it failed, and she stood proud, staring defiantly at what she thought would be her death. And for her bravery, they gave her glory.

Angel Eyes let out a breath, and pulled her trigger. The first ant in the line dropped silently, and her brothers and sisters fell on them like wolves to the slaughter.



ABILITIES

Black Blood: All models without **Black Blood** within 1 suffer 1 damage when this model suffers damage.

On the Prowl: After killing an enemy model, this model may heal up to 2 damage.

These Eyes Miss Nothin': This model does not randomize its target when shooting into an engagement.

ANGEL EYES

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Teeth and Blackened Claws (**MI** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Target suffers 2/3/3 damage.
Hide In Shadow: After succeeding, move this model up to 3".

(1) Snapshot Rifle (**Sh** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 14): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.
Hide In Shadow: After succeeding, move this model up to 3".
Critical Strike: When damaging the target, this Attack deals +1 damage for each in the final duel total.

(0) Sidearm (**Sh** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 6): Target suffers 2/2/3 damage.

30mm

SCION OF BLACK BLOOD

Some of the human insects whom we have given our blessings even show promise in the ways of our blood magic. These are always the strongest among them, the most devoted to their new family. And while I abhor the cowardice of human weapons, it is sometimes useful to have those who are adept with them.

The shamans allow them their simple tricks and spells, keeping the true blessings of the blood for themselves. Although we tolerate these outsiders among our ranks, they will never truly be family. They were not born under the twin moons with a thirst for the hunt; we had to make them and so we shall always have dominion over them. They are our loyal servants, but not our trusted blood.

Even so, every soul that sees me as its mother rather than my sister is a welcome one.



SCION OF BLACK BLOOD COST 8

Enforcer, Living, Mercenary, Rare 1

NEPHILIM

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
4	5	10	5	7	2

ABILITIES

Black Blood: All models without **Black Blood** within (1) suffer 1 damage when this model suffers damage.

Blood Fury: If this model has 6 or fewer Wounds remaining, it gains to all flips it makes except damage flips.

Blessings of the Blood: Friendly models which begin their Activation within 6 of this model may discard two cards at the start of their Activation to end all Conditions on them.

SCION OF BLACK BLOOD

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Sacrificial Blade (**Ml** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Target suffers 3/4/6 damage.
- ***Blood's Favor:*** After succeeding, heal up to 2 damage on this model or another model within 3".
- ***Hide In Shadow:*** After succeeding, move this model up to 3".

(1) Custom Shotgun (**Sh** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 8): Target suffers 2/4/5 damage.
- ***Spreadshot:*** After succeeding, all models within (1)2 of the target must pass a TN 13 **Df** duel or suffer 2 damage.
- ***Hide In Shadow:*** After succeeding, move this model up to 3".

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Forbidden Ritual (**Ca** 6 / TN: 14 / Rg: 10): Target other friendly model immediately takes a (1) Interact Action.

30mm

CORRUPTED HOUND

Deformities and mutation have been common among the animal population of Malifaux for some time, and the hounds are no exception. Breeders have made a thorough habit of gathering any pups with the "Mark of the City" and tossing them into the nearest river.

However, here and there a pup escapes. And those that do are the fiercest, toughest of the lot. They scrape out a meager existence, hiding in the shadows of the city or striking out into the Badlands. More recently, entire packs of the things have been sighted. Each hound has its own unique markings: venomous fangs, cloven feet, stinging tails, or worse. The Guild has set to exterminating the creatures, but every season brings greater numbers, and more bizarre transformations.

Most disturbingly, there are even reports of Nephilim using the beasts during their raids. Thankfully, the Guild assures us, these reports are nothing but rumors and hearsay.



CORRUPTED HOUND COST 3

Minion, Living, Rare 4

BEAST, HOUND

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	5	4	6	9	1

ABILITIES

Black Blood: All models without **Black Blood** within (0)1 suffer 1 damage when this model suffers damage.

Insignificant: This model may not take Interact Actions.

Pack Mentality: This model may ignore the **Insignificant** Ability while within (1)5 of another friendly Hound model.

A New Master: While performing Actions outside of its Activation, this model receives 1 to all flips.

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Snapping Jaws (**MI** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Target suffers 1/3/4 damage.
Critical Strike: When damaging the target, this Attack deals +1 damage for each in the final duel total.

CORRUPTED HOUND

30mm

CHANGELING

Orphans are so easy to ignore in Malifaux. The city grows them like weeds. So who is there to notice when one goes missing here or there? And who is there to notice when the pathetic, dirty faces darting from alley to alley start to look more and more alike?

Oh, but they notice when they wander alone in the dark, or stumble drunk down the wrong street. They notice when they are surrounded by children wearing the same face. Oh yes, then they notice. And they die, staring into a face that looks just like their own, mirroring even their screams.

So go about your business. Ignore the dirty, ragged children watching from the shadows.

They are not ignoring you.



CHANGELING

COST 4

Minion, Living, Rare 3

MIMIC

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	5	4	5	-	1

ABILITIES

Manipulative 13: If this model has not yet Activated this Turn, when an enemy model targets this model with an Attack Action, the enemy model must pass a TN 13 **Wp** duel or the Action immediately fails.

Copycat: This model may take (1) Attack Actions printed on any model or Upgrade within ❶3 which does not list a model by name. These Actions may not declare Triggers and the stat (**Ml**, **Sh**, **Ca**, etc.) is considered to be 4 (no suits).

Surprise!: Once per Turn, when an enemy model ends a push or move that is not part of a Walk or Charge Action within the range of an Attack Action this model may take, this model may immediately take the Action targeting the model which pushed or moved.

Regeneration +1: When this model Activates, it heals +1 damage.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) In the Blink of an Eye (**Ca** 6🂠 / TN: 13🂠): Immediately move this model up to its **Wk**, ignoring intervening models and terrain during the move. This model must end the move in base contact with another model.

CHANGELING

30mm



BLOODWRETCH

The transition from human to Nephilim is not an easy one, and most do not survive it. First is the sickness, then the delirium. The pleading, "Please stop, just kill me! I would rather die than be like you!" Pathetic.

I often wonder if it is worth gracing them with our gifts, but the shamans do love to play. And I have to remind myself I need to keep them happy, for the day when I take my rightful place from my sister.

Finally, they become Bloodwretches. At last free of any of the human taint, but not yet acquainted with the ways or blessings of our people. Often at this stage it amuses me to set them loose and see which ones can make it back. They tear haphazardly through anything in their way, not yet fully aware of themselves and not yet with our blood in their veins to protect them. If they make it back, then they deserve a place among us.



BLOODWRETCH COST 5

Minion, Living, Mercenary, Rare 2

NEPHILIM

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	5	5	6	7	2

ABILITIES

Frenzied Charge: This model gains ◪ to the Attack flips of any Attacks it generates due to the Charge Action.

On the Prowl: After killing an enemy model, this model may heal up to 2 damage.

Thick Skin: This model may ignore damage from (ɤ) effects.

BLOODWRETCH

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Inhuman Claws (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 1): Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

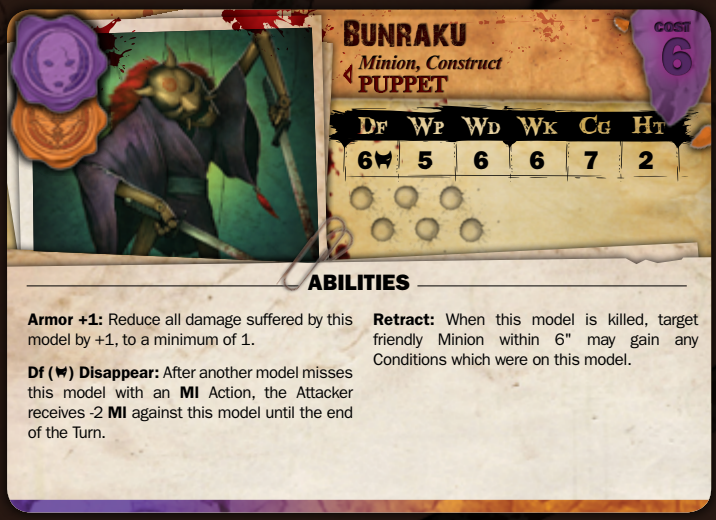
(1) The Rage Builds: For the rest of this Activation, this model's Attacks deal +1 damage, and when this model deals damage with an Attack it may draw 2 cards and then discard 1.

30mm

BUNRAKU

The Bunraku are traditional puppets which have made their way to Malifaux from the Three Kingdoms. They put on dazzling performances, reenacting great battles from the history of the Three Kingdoms with whirling blades and wooden claws. Such a performance always draws a crowd, and legend says that it is bad luck to watch a Bunraku show without throwing it a coin.

In Malifaux, these legends seem to have come to life. There is more than one report of a person going missing in the night after attending a Bunraku show. The Guild guards dismiss these as nonsense, of course. But more than one puppeteer has packed up their belongings and put their puppets into storage after finding a Bunraku with blood on its blade in the morning. It is even whispered that certain, nefarious individuals are able to use the creatures for their own agendas.



ABILITIES

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Df (↤) Disappear: After another model misses this model with an **MI** Action, the Attacker receives -2 **MI** against this model until the end of the Turn.

Retract: When this model is killed, target friendly Minion within 6" may gain any Conditions which were on this model.

BUNRAKU

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Wicked Knives (**MI** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 1): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.
↤ ***Infect***: After succeeding, target gains the **Poison +1** Condition a number of times equal to the number of ↤ in the final duel total.

(1) Snatch (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 6): Push target enemy model into base contact with this model.
↤ ***Stab, Stab, Stab!***: After succeeding, take a (1) **MI** Attack Action against the target.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Obscene Preparations (**Ca** 6 / TN: 14): This model gains the **Focused +1** Condition until the end of the Turn.
▭ ***Sharpened To A Point***: After succeeding, this model adds +↤ to all **Ca** duels for the remainder of this Activation.

30mm

NEVERBORN UPGRADES

Strange Alliances

Cost: 1 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  Arcane Shield: If this model has not Activated during this Turn, reduce all damage it suffers by 1, to a minimum of 0.



Restrictions

Angel Eyes

Deal At the Crossroads

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Wrath is this Crew's Leader and this Crew contains at least seven Crossroads Seven models. This Upgrade does not count towards the maximum number of Upgrades allowed on this model and may be attached regardless of declared Faction.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Swift: When this model Activates it generates 1 additional General AP.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (1) King of the Delta (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12 / Rg: 12): Push target other friendly Crossroads Seven model up to 6" in any direction.

  Made A Deal: After succeeding, heal up to 2 damage on this model.



Restrictions

Wrath

Conflux of Sorrow

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Pandora is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Perfect Copy: At the start of this model's Activation, it may choose an Ability printed on the stat card of target other friendly non-Leader Neverborn model within 6" which does not list a model by name. This model gains the chosen Ability until the end of the Turn.
- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (0) The Voice In Your Head (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 10): This Attack does not require LoS. Target gains the following Condition until the start of its next Activation: "**Mood Swing:** When this model's controller has the opportunity to Activate a model, the opponent may choose for this model to Activate instead if it is available to Activate."



Restrictions

Emissary of Fate

Conflux of Blood

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Lilith is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Black Blood: All models without **Black Blood** within (↑)1 suffer 1 damage when this model suffers damage.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) The Burning Blood: This model may discard a card to gain the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**The Burning Blood:** Enemy models within ❶4 which suffer damage from the **Black Blood** Ability suffer +1 damage from the **Black Blood** Ability."



Restrictions

Emissary of Fate

Conflux of Fate

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Zoraida is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Your Will Is Our Will: After resolving a successful Attack Action with this model, if the target was damaged it gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Our Will:** Enemy models which target this model with the **Obey** Action do not require range or LoS and gain ✚ to the Attack flip."
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Written In Stone: This model may discard a card to look at the top four cards of its Fate Deck, draw one, and then choose to place all of the remaining cards on either the top or the bottom of the deck, in any order.

Restrictions

Emissary of Fate

Conflux of Music

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Collodi is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the Puppet Characteristic.
- This model gains the following Abilities:

  The Song Flows: If this model did not already have the **Focused** or **Defensive** Condition, when it gains the **Focused** or **Defensive** Condition it immediately adds +1 to the Condition's value.

  My Kin: When a friendly Effigy model is summoned anywhere in play, this model gains the **Fast** Condition.

Restrictions

Emissary of Fate

Conflux of Nightmare

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if The Dreamer is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  All Consuming Nightmare: When a friendly Lord Chompy Bits model is summoned, all enemy models within (↑)6 of the summoned model must pass a TN 13 **Wp** duel or be pushed into base contact with it.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Beckon the Night: This model may discard a card to place target friendly Nightmare Henchman model within 6" into base contact with this model.

Restrictions

Emissary of Fate

Mysterious Conflux

Cost: 0 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  The Power Rages: Friendly Minions within ↑4 gain ✚ to all Attack duels.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) On the Tides of Fate: Discard a Soulstone to draw two cards and then discard two cards.

Restrictions

Emissary of Fate



This chapter contains a story as well as new models and Upgrades for **THE OUTCAST** Faction.
These models and Upgrades are not a part of the Campaign and may be hired normally during any game.

WELCOME TO MALIFAUX

BY: JUSTIN GIBBS

McCreedy's bar sat just barely on the wrong side of the thin line between downtown and the slums. It wasn't the sort of place you would find Guild officials or any of the wealthier inhabitants of Malifaux, but you probably wouldn't meet the dregs of society either.

Like most Friday nights, it was packed full. Glasses clinked and conversation filled the air. Most of the patrons were miners, steamfitters, carpenters, or other hard-working folk who just wanted a cold drink after long hours of toiling for slim wages.

At the bar sat a young woman in a simple gray shirt and pants. Her black hair was tied behind her in a practical pony tail. Despite her youth, laugh lines were starting to form around her eyes and mouth. On her back was slung an over-sized hammer, and her right arm had been replaced with a hydraulic appendage.

"Another drink!" She shouted over the noise.

A young man with a stubby beard and dark, hungry eyes slid up next to her. "You should be more careful," he said.

She raised an eyebrow. "Oh?"

"Your arm," he glanced down. "Lost it in a mine, did you? A steam press? If you had had someone like me around, it probably wouldn't have happened."

Old McCreedy gave the boy a hard stare. "Ethan, do you know who this is?"

"A pretty girl?" He shrugged.

McCreedy snorted. "This is Taelor. She's a mercenary. Probably had her arm chopped off by bandits."

"Eaten by gremlins is what she said last week!" A man shouted from a table.

A grizzled old miner down the bar shook his head. "Don't think so, Zacharia. The way I heard it yesterday, it was a Slate Ridge Mauler that done it."

Taelor just shook her head, smiled and sipped her drink.

McCreedy held up his hands for silence. The bar went about as quiet as it was going to get on a Friday night. "All right, out with it, girl. What's the story today?"

"Take a shot every time you spot a lie!" Someone shouted from the back. There was a roar of laughter at this, and McCreedy started filling glasses in preparation.

"Today," Taelor began, "I'm in a rather truthsome mood. Every story I tell you tonight will be exactly as it happened. And the honest truth is; I lost this arm in a bet."

Everyone around her took a shot.

I wasn't always a mercenary. There were days when I tried my hands—both my flesh and blood hands—at honest work. Or dishonest work. Or whatever came along. I suppose it was a mercenary life in its own right, just with a tad less killin' and brawlin'. What can I say? A girl can change her profession but not her nature.

Anyway, at this particular time I had taken a job as a miner, if you can believe it. Got my Union card and all; fresh-faced and ready for an honest day's work. Don't remember how I ever got the notion in my damn fool head the Union was the place for an honest day's work, but there I was.

I was stationed in the old Demon's Mouth mine, way up in the hills to the north. Some of you probably remember it. It has been shut down for years now, o' course. Too many strange happenings. But at the time it was in full swing, the height of its power. The mine itself had one main entrance: a gaping wound in the hard rock which opened up into a series of twisting tunnels that the Union had been painstakingly carving into the land. Right above the entrance were two old knotwood trees, both dead and black as night. They were terrible, twisted things that looked like horns atop a head with a screaming mouth. I suppose that's how the mine got its name.

It was a nice day, at least as nice as it gets in Malifaux. Not a cloud in the sky; even so, the sulfurous fumes of that old mine hung low in the air like a shroud over the valley. After

the usual paper work and handshakes, I was introduced to an old miner by the name of Mahoney. I was told I was his recruit. He was to show me the ropes, so to speak. He had a thick, black beard which was just starting to gray at the edges. His arms were all muscle and he stood a head taller than me, but his face was soft and kind.

"Put this on, girl." He said, tossing me an old, dusty bandana.

I started wrapping it around my neck.

"Ha, no, like this," he tied his own around his mouth and nose.

"I thought we were mining, not robbing a train." I sneered.

"Know what Soulstone dust does in your lungs, girl?"

I shook my head.

"Well, neither do I. At least, not exactly," he shrugged. "Some say it saps the life out of you, same as it would a dead man. I'm more inclined to think it just scratches around in there until you're coughing up bloody bits of yerself. Either way..." He tugged on his bandana, making sure it was tight.

As I tied the bandana around my face, I began rethinking some aspects of my new profession. Even so, I had already worked more than one job that had a pretty rough first day.

"Now, some would keep you up here chewin' yer ear off, but I think it's best to just get down in it and look for yerself." Mahoney cocked his head towards the opening of the mine.

I nodded and we were off. As we passed into the mine itself, I couldn't help but imagine I was being swallowed by some long-dead giant carved into the very land. A chill rattled my body. Lamps were mounted on the walls every few feet, fighting a losing battle against the encroaching gloom. But it wasn't fear, or despair, or even dread that I felt as we descended deeper into that slumbering monstrosity. It was an intense anxiousness, like a trigger ready to be pulled or an animal about to pounce. Something was waiting.

Mahoney must have seen my eyes darting from side to side and laughed. "Don't worry, that feeling goes away. Everyone gets it the first few times down here, some worse than others. We call 'em the Demon's Mouth Shakes." He paused as other miners shuffled by us on their way up. "Some say it's the way the dark and the closed spaces work on the human mind. But I don't fall into that way o' thinkin' much, otherwise other mines would have it just as bad. Others, they say the place is cursed." He smirked. "Me, I think it's some form of foul air, noxious gas from under the ground. Something particular to this mine. All the more reason for these," he tugged on his bandana again.

"Sorry," I said, shaking my head. "The place just feels...wrong."

"That it does," he nodded. "But now that you got the feel for the place, albeit unpleasant, it's time to go over the basics. This here," he said, gesturing to the tunnel we were in, "is a drift. That means it's a tunnel that follows the direction of a vein."

"Vein?" I raised an eyebrow.

Mahoney sighed. "Vein of Soulstone, what we're looking for. This tunnel goes in the same direction. You see this?" He pointed to a deep-black streak of rock along the wall. "This is nightrock. Useless stuff. But in some rare deposits, this one included, we find the Soulstone right alongside it. Have a look, girl. That's an arrow pointing straight to payday."

I got down on my knees and inspected the nightrock. It was a cool, obsidian black. The kind of black you only see on a moonless night. It ran through the stone walls of the shaft, branching in seemingly random directions like a spider web, or blood seeping from a wound.

"Now the tunnel up-ahead that branches," Mahoney continued, "that's a cross-cut. It goes against the vein. We use it for ventilation and transportation and the like."

We continued deeper and deeper into the tunnel, taking turns that seemed random to me. The whole time Mahoney continued my education. He went on about dynamite and blasting caps. Where to drill and what was stable. I don't care to remember most of what he said, and I don't know how long we descended into that waiting blackness.

Before long we were so turned around I didn't know which way was up. It seemed like hours since we had last seen another human being.

"How far down do we have to go?" I asked as we took another turn.

"Hmm, oh." Mahoney stopped in his tracks. "I always get carried away when I get started on how to brace a tunnel.

This is a bit deeper than I had intended to take you. Let's see, ah, it's this—"

He was cut off as the ground beneath us jumped. There was one loud bang, like a blast going off, and we were both thrown to the ground.

"Are they blasting above us?" I shouted as we got up.

Mahoney had gone white as a sheet. "No... no. Worse. That was an earthquake."

Now, when most people think of earthquakes, they think of the ground shaking from side to side for a good few minutes with huge gashes opening up in the earth and everything in sight falling. Some of them are like that, sure. But most are just one giant thump, like someone kicking a table that you happen to be standing on. By the time you know what happened, it's over. Then you just have to hope everything around you is still stable.

It wasn't.

There was a tremendous crack as the wooden bracers above us gave out. Mahoney grabbed my shoulders and shoved me to the ground, getting us both as far as he could.

Once the dust cleared I stood up and brushed myself off. It seemed like everything was still more or less attached, even if I was considerably scratched and bruised.

"Mahoney?" I peered through the dusty air as the lights flickered around me. "Mahoney?"

I gasped at what I saw. His lower legs were crushed under a ton of rock and debris, his arms at awkward, twisted angles. There was blood seeping from his ears and pooling on the ground. I bent down and felt his neck, searching for a pulse. There was none.

"Thank you, you poor bastard," I muttered as I closed his eyes.

I spent a few minutes letting the dust clear and trying to get my bearings. The tunnel branched in two directions, with a third behind me that had been cut off by the rock which crushed Mahoney.

Eventually I sighed and shrugged my shoulders. Standing around wasn't doing me any good, so I picked a direction and started walking. All of the tunnels looked the same to me, so I trudged on into the waiting beast, the lights flickering around me.

I don't know how long I spent in those cursed tunnels, but eventually I saw a light up ahead. My heart leapt into my throat and I quickened my pace as I approached what I thought was my salvation. But soon I realized that although the light wasn't the artificial, flickering lamplight, it wasn't sweet daylight either. It was too dim, too...unnatural. In fact, there weren't even any lamps here. Just the steady, twilight glow from ahead.

The tunnel opened out into a large cavern. On the walls were tapestries and decorations. Animal heads hung as trophies. Some were familiar: lions, bears, wolves. Others were twisted abominations, even for Malifaux. Vases, weapons, and other artifacts were littered about.

As odd as all of that was, it paled in comparison to the woman who was waiting for me there in the cavern, in the heart of the great beast. She was stark naked. Her skin was white as silk, stretched tight over her ribs, and her hair was midnight black. Two twisted, black branches sprouted from her head like horns. And her eyes...her eyes were gleaming Soulstones, sparkling in the light. Two dark slits of nightrock split them in the center, giving them the appearance of cat's eyes. Deep black veins spider-webbed their way in every direction from each eye-socket.

She looked at me. And grinned.

The hair stood up on the back of my neck and my breath caught in my throat. For a long moment we stared at each other; the grin never left her face. My first instinct was to run, but I know what the cat does when the mouse starts darting about.

"We have caught such a clever girl, haven't we? Haven't we?" Her voice rippled throughout the cavern. It wasn't harsh or grating. It was a soft, feminine voice. But it wasn't right, either. It was just a tad too high-pitched; the syllables were drawn out in all the wrong places. Like something imitating human speech. "Don't gawk, clever girl, don't gawk. Come, sit. Sit. We have prepared a game for you." The thing hissed, gesturing to a table off to the side with two chairs.

That didn't sound like a good idea to me. That didn't sound like a good idea at all. "Sorry to bother you," I said as I slowly backed away, "I was just looking for the way out."

The thing snapped her fingers and a row of steel bars instantly shot out of the ground, cutting off the only escape.

"You will win your way out. Or you will lose. And lose your way." The thing said, tilting her head. "Now, it is time to play."

I looked around in shock. I put my hand on one of the bars and pulled as hard as I could, then the next one. They were solid. "What...uh...what sort of game is it? Will you let me out if I win?" I asked, turning back towards her.

"If that is your price, if that is your price. Sit with us. Sit." The thing gestured to the table again.

Slowly, hands trembling, I made my way to the table and sat down. It was covered in bones and had a deck of cards. The bones were long and slender, blanched white. Finger bones, if I had to guess. I shuddered. The cards, at least, were familiar enough. It was just a deck of playing cards, same as you can find in any bar. All the usual suits: crows, masks, rams, and tomes.



The thing sat across from me. Now, just a few feet away, I couldn't help but stare into her eyes. Those shining, uncaring, soulless mockeries of eyes.

"Oh, tut, tut. The little bird shouldn't look into the snake's eyes. She will still with fear, and then what fun is the game?" The thing grinned larger than before, showing fangs.

Yes, fangs. It was a hell of a first day on the job.

"What...uh...what's your name?" I ventured, hoping to put the idea of snakes and fangs as far from the thing's mind as possible.

"We are nameless as we serve the Nameless. The Thirteenth. The Forgotten. We are Her champions. Her..." she cocked her head as if trying to remember the word, "...children."

"Oh, yeah, should have known." This didn't really make me feel any better, but I wanted to stall for time. Maybe they had sent out a search party for me. "Why do you keep saying 'we'?"

"Silly question! Silly question. There are two of us, of course." She pointed a finger at one eye. "One," and another finger at the other eye. "Two. The silly bird is confused. She is used to a body like this only having one soul. This one used to. It did, it did. How...lonely. We fixed her."

A chill went down my spine. I really needed to stop asking the thing about itself. "Why do we have to play a game? And how do I know you'll hold up your end if I win?"

The thing cocked her head. "Everything in this life is a game, oh yes. The only question is, what are you playing for?" She grinned. "And what choice does the little bird have? What choice?"

I sighed. "So, what's the game?"

"Bones of the Bayou," the thing hissed as she struck out with her arm faster than I could see, placing a single, black-nailed finger on my forehead.

Instantly my head exploded with pain as if I had been kicked by a mule. I reeled back in my chair, letting out a long, low moan. But more than pain had entered

my mind. In that instant, I knew how to play. The cards were used similarly to Bayou Two-Card; both players had a hand of two cards with five cards face up on the table. Each player placed bets, or folded, before revealing their cards; best hand took all. The only difference was the bones. Before placing a bet a player could arrange their bones, increasing the value of certain cards on the table, or changing the priority of certain hands.

I coughed and spat. "You could have just explained it to me."

"Oh, we did explain. We did explain. Shall we explain again?"

"No, no," I said, holding up a hand. "Once was enough. Got it. Bones, cards, betting. Sounds like great fun."

She shuffled and dealt. My first hand was promising, two high crows and two more on the table. If a crow showed up in the next two cards, I'd have a flush. I adjusted my bones, increasing the value of the lone, useless mask on the table to throw the thing off, and went to place my bet. "Raise, two scrip." I said, slapping them down on the table.

The thing cocked her head one way and then another. "The clever little bird wants to gamble with nothing. With nothing. No, no, something of value."

"But that's all I have of value..." my voice trailed off.

The thing gave me another grin. The one with fangs. "The clever little bird values her life, doesn't she? Her arms. Her legs. Her mind. Her soul. Oh yes, oh yes. We think she does, she does."

Well, shit.

"Isn't there anything else—"

"No! No! She is not as clever as she thinks! She can gamble away what she cares for, or we can tear it off piece by piece. Yes we can, yes we can. We are trying to give her a fair chance! We are fair as the Nameless is fair. A fight would not be a contest. But we will if we have to, we are hungry enough, aren't we? Yes we are." The thing stood from her chair as she said this, her eyes glowing a faint green. She licked her lips.

"Ok, my...my right pinky." I said, voice shaking.

The thing nodded and sat down. "We raise. We offer to lower the gate."

"I call," I said, trembling slightly, "with...with my right pinky and right ring finger."

The thing cocked her head. "That is not equal value. The hand. The hand."

My stomach lurched, but I didn't see much choice. She seemed determined to tear pieces off of me. Not that I had any intention of letting her, but if I won maybe I wouldn't have to fight her off. "Fine...the hand."

The next card came, it was a ram. I needed one more crow. "Check," I said.

The thing licked its lips. "Raise. We lower the gate and tell the clever little bird the way out."

My heart jumped at this. "What would be equal value?"

The thing put a finger up to her mouth. "The arm, up to the elbow," she said with a nod.

This gave me pause, but it wouldn't be much good without the hand, anyway. "Call." I said, letting out a long, slow breath.

The next card was a crow. I had a flush; it was all I could do not to jump out of my seat. But there was no need to be greedy; I had my way out, so I checked.

"Raise," the thing hissed. "The arm up to the shoulder for the lowering of the gate, the way out, and we let the little bird keep her own eyes."

"You were going to...yeah, never mind. I call." I said, slapping my cards down on the table.

The thing let out a throaty laugh that filled the room and made my stomach churn. She flipped her cards over and by the time I realized she had a full house, she had her claw-like fingers on my arm.

"No! Wait—"

"Time to clip the little bird's wings! Oh yes. Oh yes." She laughed. And pulled.

Well, I can spare you the gory details, but needless to say this was starting to become one of the worst first days on a job I had ever had. A few minutes later I was back in my chair, hunched over a hand of cards and trying desperately to fight off unconsciousness due to blood loss. My vision was blurring and I had lost the contents of my stomach

onto the floor. I could hardly even read my cards. I needed to win this hand, and win big. So I bet big.

With my left hand I removed a broken, coin-silver pocketwatch from my coat. "Raise."

"Oh, oh. This thing has much value to the little bird. More than her wing. Maybe more than her life." The thing searched the relics strewn about her room. "This one, yes," she said, picking up a large hammer. "She sings your name, yes, yes she does. Her name is The Good Lady; we call."

"I don't think that's equal value." I stuttered.

"Oh, yes, but yes it is. It is one of thirteen. Thirteen hammers for thirteen Tyrants. They hammered the last nails into the red cage. And she is The Good Lady, she sings your name." The thing placed the hammer delicately by her chair.

"The hammer is...female?"

"Of course, of course. The Good Lady must bring life. Only for a woman to do. Yes."

I was losing too much blood. I shouldn't be asking about the damn hammer. "Whatever, I'm all in."

"All...in?" The thing cocked her head.

"Yeah, all in!" I screamed. "My watch, my arm, my legs, my life, my clothes, my damn pocket lint! All. In." If this went on any longer I would pass out, I had to end it now.

"Ah, ah!" The thing clapped her hands. "Then we call, we call! You get the hammer, keep your eyes, learn the way out, and we stop the bleeding. Yes, we stop the bleeding. If...you win."

We flipped our cards over and through blurred vision I could barely make out that I had a pair of fives and she had a pair of...eights. My heart sank, and I slumped in my chair. I had no more strength left to fight. The walls of my vision were closing. The blackness was becoming a part of my world.

The thing rose from her chair, fingers growing into claws, smile creeping unnaturally across her face and splitting skin from ear to ear. Those soulless, uncaring eyes boring into me as the black veins around them seemed to grow and spread down her neck.

And then a bone fell straight out of nowhere. It clattered onto my end of the table.

I had no idea what was going on, but one thing was certain, it changed my values. Fives were beating eights. "Wait..." I could barely hear my own voice. "I win. Fives beat eights! Fives beat eights..."

The thing stopped in mid stride and stared at the table. She cocked her head one way, and then another. She picked up the bone and examined it, before putting it back exactly as it had been. "Very well, very well," she sneered. "It seems the servants of another of the Thirteen favor you. Or they will, in the future. In the future. The bone plays." She folded her arms and gritted her teeth, but didn't remove any more of my body parts, so I counted it as a win.

My bleeding was stopped and with another painful poke to the forehead I was granted knowledge of the way out, The Good Lady over my shoulder.

Zacharia had a line of shots in front of him and was quickly knocking them back.

"The hell are you doing?" asked Ethan. "She's not even talking anymore."

Zacharia paused his drinking briefly. "Not my fault she can move her lips faster than I can drink. I'm catching up."

"I believe you," Ethan said, wrapping an arm around Taelor's waist.

Taelor grabbed Ethan's hand with her hydraulic fist and bent it back. "Oh! I'm so sorry! I can't control it! It's acting out on its own again!"

"Let go of me you crazy bitch!" Ethan shouted. "I know how those things work! You're the one doing this!"

Taelor smiled and dropped his hand. "And all of a sudden he's learned how to spot a lie."

"What did she want with the arm, anyway?" asked the grizzled miner down the bar.

"I told you I was leaving out the gory details," Taelor said, sipping her drink.

McCreedy chuckled. "Also doesn't explain how you got that hydraulic piece."

"Ah," Taelor replied. "Union put that on me, told them I lost the real thing in the quake. I figured they wouldn't pay me any overtime for time spent gambling with forgotten gods. They told me I had to work ten full years for 'em, too, to pay off the attachment." Taelor snorted. "Left the next day. Turns out, once you give someone a Soulstone-powered, steel arm, it's hard to stop 'em doing what they want." Taelor sipped her drink. "Think they changed their policy after that."

Zacharia had finally finished drinking. "Not that anything else you said makes any sense, but what about the randomly appearing bone?"

Taelor smirked. "Well, that's a story unto itself. But, it turns out, if I had been in a position to pay more attention to it, I probably would have noticed bits of fried chicken still stuck to it."

To explain how the bone got there, I first have to tell you about Tara. Well, no, I have to tell you about Karina. But to tell you about Karina, I have to tell you about Tara.

I first met Tara on a nothing sort of job. A milk run. Tara had hired Viktoria to help grab some sort of ancient and forbidden relic that was going to doom the world of men or some other such nonsense. I don't know; I generally stop paying attention once I know what to grab and where to put it. Pay me enough I won't remember what you look like, either. Anyway, Viktoria brought me along as backup; there were obscenities from other planes of existence, tentacles, lots of smashing things with a hammer. The usual, but I don't want to bore you with the details.

Tara and I hit it off pretty well, despite her...disability. Some of you may know I hold a bit of a grudge against the less-than-living, but it's really more towards those who would look to make 'em that way. Besides, Tara can be charming, and she pays well. So when Tara offered me a solo job, I took it.

The job was to hit some Guild cargo on a train heading west from Malifaux City to Fortune Falls. I smash my way into the cargo hold and grab the goods while Tara stops the train. We make our escape into the woods. No problem, right? Except I hadn't met Karina yet...

The train had a passenger section, so I met Tara and her associate in a private booth where we could do some planning.

Tara, despite being dead, is rather practical. Long, dark hair. A little pale, as to be expected, but generally respectable. Usually wears a long duster to cover the gaping hole in her chest. The woman next to her was another story. She had a rat's nest of hair. Long white dress, still splattered with blood. And she had this twitchy look in her eyes.

As soon as I laid eyes on her, I could feel The Good Lady calling to me. She was a Resurrectionist without a doubt. Even so, I remained civil.

"You didn't tell me you were bringing a damn, filthy necromancer along with us."

Tara glared at me. "Is that an issue, Taelor?"

"Just didn't know, is all." I replied, taking a seat with them. "I would think you'd hold a bit of a grudge, too, considering...your condition."

Tara smiled. "Oh, hun. Karina is the one who made me this way."

I raised an eyebrow.

Tara sighed. "She didn't put the hole through my chest. Some Guild bastard did that. But Karina fixed me, best she could. We've been through a lot together, seen a lot together..."

Karina leaned in close to me and whispered. "Tea parties," tapping the side of her nose.

"Tea parties...?" I glanced towards Tara.

"Karina is a tad...broken. But she's the only one who has seen the things I've seen. The endless oceans, the twilight inferno of dying stars. Our own little private eternity through endless sands and dark waters." Tara gazed out the window. "Some people claim they can glimpse the void. But that's impossible. After all, the void is nothing. It can only be felt, experienced. I could only know the void once I had witnessed eternity, and then had it all ripped away from me as I was brought back to this world. Everything this dry, gray world lacks, that is the void..."

I shifted awkwardly in my seat. "I think tea parties sounded more pleasant."

Tara let out a deep, joyful laugh. "Sorry! You have no idea what I'm talking about. Well, let's just say Karina and I have been through a lot, and I feel a tad protective of her."

I nodded. “Fair enough. Resurrectionists just generally aren’t my sort of people.”

“Well, you best get over that, hun.” Tara smiled.

“And if I don’t?”

Tara pursed her fingers. “Well, depending on her mood, Karina will either call a thousand screaming damned from the great nowhere place to tear you to shreds, or,” Tara glanced at her friend, “tie bows in your hair.”

“Ribbons,” Karina corrected, “they’re much prettier.”

“Oh, sorry.” Tara nodded. “She would tie ribbons in your hair.”

“No, no.” Karina shook her head. “*Tear* you to *ribbons*.”

That seemed to be a decent place to drop the subject. “So, the job?” I asked.

“Of course,” Tara replied, “the job is simple. The Guild cargo is in the last car on this train. But it’s behind a runed door designed especially to keep...entities like ourselves out. But your hammer is perfectly made to get through it. You’ll know the item when you see it. Karina and I will stop the train. This all goes down a few minutes after we enter the woods. You hide in the woods, and we’ll find you. Don’t worry about how.”

“Sounds easy enough.” I frowned. “There’s just...one thing. Are we saving any lives?”

Tara narrowed her eyes. “Yes, in fact. Why does it matter?”

“Well, The Good Lady, my hammer, she only really works as long as I’m saving a life; even my own. She will take life, certainly; but only when preserving it as well.” I paused. “Don’t get me wrong, I can pound on people all day with her, but there’s nothing special about her unless she’s...awake. And it sounds like this door requires something special.”

“Well ain’t that a neat trick.” Tara smiled. “The item we’re taking is very dangerous. A great many will die if the Guild use it properly. Or...if they don’t. It’s called Blight. So you should be good, sugar.”

At the name Blight I could feel The Good Lady calling. That name was familiar.

“What a quirky little thing.” Tara mused. “Do all the Relic Hammers work like that?”

“In a way yes and in a way no. They each have their own individual rules. I know Johan’s—”

“Looks like we’re entering the woods.” Tara cut me off. “Time to get this show on the road!”



We made our way out of the private booth together and into the adjoining dining car. We were about to part ways and do our separate jobs, when Karina decided to stop and sample the buffet that was laid out for the richer guests. The only other person in the car was an older Guild officer, stuffing himself until his buttons were about to burst.

"This isn't happening..." I mumbled.

Tara sighed. "It's...best to just let her finish. Trust me. And we'll be in the woods for quite a while."

"What?" Karina said around a mouthful of chicken. "No need to rob the train on an empty stomach."

The Guild officer's eyes went wide and he reached for his Peacebringer, but I caught him with a hydraulic-backed punch to the jaw before he could. He dropped to the floor with a loud thud, unconscious.

Tara closed her eyes, pinched the bridge of her nose, and shook her head.

Karina sucked the last of the meat off of her drumstick. "I do believe that man wanted to shoot me. Much obliged, Miss Taelor," she said with a curtsy. "A gift for you." With a wave of her hand there was a great screeching sound, as if the air was being sucked from the room and a swirling blackness appeared in the center of the little car. Karina casually tossed the chicken bone over her shoulder into it and then, with a snap of her fingers, closed it up.

Tara took off her hat and ran a hand through her hair. "Karina," she took a deep breath, "bless your heart, did you just tear a hole in this reality and open the great, screaming nothing... so you could throw away a chicken bone?"

Karina glanced quickly from side to side. "No?"

Tara grabbed her friend by the elbow and started dragging her out of the car. "You got your job, hun," she said to me over her shoulder. "I'll keep an eye on this one."

Karina smiled and waved to me as she was dragged into the next car. "You're welcome!"

I headed towards the back of the train, where I knew the cargo hold would be. There were two Guild guards in front of the door to the last car, but I gave them each the cold-steel kiss and they went down just like their commander.

If this item was really so important, there should have been more guards. But I suppose they were putting their trust in their enchanted iron which, I have to admit, was impressive. The door in front of me was one giant plate of metal. There wasn't hinge, latch, or handle on the thing. And it was covered top to bottom in runes of every shape and size. I had no idea how it opened. Well, I had no idea how it was *supposed* to open.

I pulled The Good Lady free from my back. She was glowing with a faint, white light and I could even see the beginnings of the symbols down her shaft that signified she was awake. I don't see those often; something behind that door had her good and riled.

I leaned back and swung, putting my shoulders into it. I don't think I needed to, The Good Lady cut through that door like a hot knife through butter. The metal peeled away with a screeching hiss and an acrid smell filled the air.

Inside were all sorts of boxes and crates. There were weapons, supplies, and all manner of useful things the Guild sees fit to keep locked away from us common folk.

But the most interesting thing was the sword in the center of the car. It had been simply placed on the floor. It wasn't a model of blade you'd ever see Earthside. The blade was chipped and ragged, it looked almost dull. There were spots of rust and dried blood up and down its length and it was covered in what looked like a greasy sheen. I have to admit, I was expecting something a bit more impressive. The floor beneath it was beginning to decay and blacken, with thick ropes of rot spreading out from it in every direction. There had been a chalk circle drawn around the sword, with more runes on every edge. The rot seemed to have stopped when it reached the edges of the circle.

I hesitated; I had no real inclination to pick something up which rotted away a wooden floor. But the train was screeching to a halt and I had to make my choice, so I grabbed it with my mechanical arm, hoping that would give me some protection. Even so, as soon as I touched it, I felt an icy bolt of pain creeping through my bones.

The Good Lady was burning like a beacon, symbols blazing all over her. I had never seen her so pissed off. All the better to tear through the side of the car, which was made of the same metal as the door.

We were coming to a stop; Tara was keeping up on her end of the job on the other side of the train. Once it had

slowed enough, I leapt to the ground and ran for the trees. I kept going deeper into the woods until I was sure the train tracks were a good distance behind me. The whole time the pain in my bones grew stronger and stronger. I was glad to throw the wretched blade to the ground once I reached a clearing where I could stop and wait for Tara.

I didn't have to wait long. Tara and Karina came sprinting out of the underbrush. Tara immediately scooped up Blight and examined it while Karina bent over with her hands on her knees, panting.

"I suppose that's the disadvantage of *needing* to breathe," Tara mused. "Well, this is the meal ticket. Good work." She said, pulling out a money clip full of scrip and tossing it to me. "Unfortunately, not much time for pleasantries. Seems that train was transporting a unit of Guild guard with a few hounds, and they took our train hijacking rather personal-like, so it's time to git."

With that, Tara flexed her right hand and her fingers extended into long, obsidian claws. She raked them at the air, and the world tore open. I heard the screeching again, same as back in the dining car. And four great claw marks stood in the air before me, swirling with darkness.

"This is our ride, hop on in." Tara nodded.

Now, I've had a lot of crazy things happen to me, and most of them were even my own doing. I've gambled with demons and faced down a Slate Ridge Mauler. Hell, I've even filled out all of the appropriate Guild tax forms...once. But there was no way I was jumping into that unknown abyss without knowing how deep it was. "Not a chance." I said, shaking my head.

Tara let out an annoyed sigh. "It's perfectly safe, hun. This wasn't the original plan, but it's where we are now. I know exactly where we'll end up."

"It's not happening." I said, as I heard the barking in the distance.

Tara rolled her eyes. "Karina, give the lady some backup."

"I already saved her life once today!" Karina pouted.

"Of course ya did, hun." Tara replied. "Just do it. Pretty please?"

With a frown, Karina waved her hand and mumbled some words I couldn't make out. Another tear in reality appeared and out of it poured a wave of gibbering monstrosities. Some were simple undead, others had extra limbs sewn in all the wrong places, hooks for hands, or any other number of obscene...modifications.

"That should hold 'em off till ya escape." Tara nodded. "Nice doin' business with ya," she said, tipping her hat and stepping into the void with Blight.

"Wait!" I cried.

"Nice meeting you!" Karina grinned, diving through the hole.

"I don't need the backup!" I shouted. "Send them back!" But it was too late, the abyss was already closing behind them, and the undead were lurching, shambling, and otherwise propelling themselves towards the sounds of the encroaching Guild unit.

Of course, I don't have much love for the Guild, myself. But not every recruit can be blamed for the sins of the whole damned organization. Besides, I rarely miss an opportunity to put something into a grave that belongs in a grave.

So I took off after them, The Good Lady in my bad arm. She was giving off her faint glow, and she was light as a feather. She always gets that way when she gets the chance to pummel undead. I think she has as many issues with them as I do.

As I caught up to the pack of horrors they were just crashing into the Guild unit. Guardsman were shouting and turning to run. Rifles were being aimed at rotting flesh and letting fire. Men were screaming as they were torn limb from limb.

I leapt into the fray, raising The Good Lady above my head with both arms and slamming her down onto a bloated corpse with spikes where its eyes should be. There was an explosion of white light and all of the undead around me were blown backwards. "Welcome to Malifaux," I murmured.

I whirled on the stunned creatures, pulverizing them as the Guild unloaded their rifles into the corpulent horde.

When the smoke cleared there wasn't a scratch on me. I guess Karina's spell didn't point any of the monsters in my direction, even if I was caving their skulls in.

The Guild guards stood staring at me, eyes wide. There were about twenty of the poor bastards left. Most still had their rifles trained on me; I suppose it's not every day you get attacked by a pack of zombies, only to be saved by an unspeakably gorgeous woman with a giant hammer.

A man with sergeant's stripes on his sleeve held out his hand and the men and women around him slowly lowered their weapons. "Thanks...thanks for the help. Do you have any idea what the hell just happened? Where did these things come from?"

"No idea," I said, wiping my forehead with my sleeve. "Just doing my civic duty, saw trouble and jumped in, so to speak."

A pudgy officer who had been standing behind his comrades pushed his way to the front and pointed a finger at me. "She's one of them! She helped rob the train!" It was the officer from the dining car.

In an instant there were twenty-odd rifles pointed at me. I still held The Good Lady, but she had gone heavy and dark again. In a way it was a good sign, they did not intend to kill me...at that moment.

So there I stood, splattered with blood, surrounded by the stilled corpses of the living dead abominations I had helped put down, staring down the guns of the very people I had been trying to save. Well, I looked each and every one of those men and women in the eye, and I did what came natural.

"I give up!" I shouted, dropping my weapon.

It's not like I hadn't ever been arrested before.



"I too—" Zacharia's speech was interrupted by a loud hiccup. "Tooch. Tok." He shook his head. "I took two drinks for 'unspikably gorgeous.'" He said, holding up three fingers.

"So why didn't the Guild hang you? Robbin' a train and all." McCreedy asked as he polished a mug.

Taelor shrugged. "It's all about who you know. An old friend of mine is a Captain with the guard. And it seems I mysteriously escaped during the night."

"Friends with a Guild officer?" The old miner shot a glare at Taelor.

"Oh, it gets worse than that," Taelor smirked. "I worked for him."

Believe it or not, I was a Guild guard myself when I first came Breachside. Of course, back then being a guard didn't mean the same things it does now. We didn't have too many civilians to push around. Back then being a guard meant standing behind a battered barricade all night with a shotgun, praying the Nephilim wouldn't come back.

And you got to pay two dollars for the privilege.

Good ol' Captain Gideon pinned a badge on me almost as soon as I stepped off the train. He was a good man, tough but fair. Can't say that about many Guild; especially nowadays. And there were few of us back then that he knew all of our names. Me and him were close. We watched each other's backs. So he came with me when I went to meet my brother at the train station; he wanted to meet this amazing Thomas I was always babbling about.

Thomas was my kid brother, but because I'd been taking care of him since our parents ran out on us, he was more like my kid. He always had a good head on his shoulders. Got himself a scholarship to Oxford when he was only sixteen. So when the Breach reopened, coming to Malifaux was all he could talk about. He was the only family I had in the world, so I finally gave in and agreed to let him on the condition that I would go on first and get us a place to stay; make sure food would be on the table, that sort of thing.

"Damn, Taelor. Calm yourself. It's not like we're getting paid today," Gideon said with a smile. "You're practically dancing up and down."

"Boss," I glanced in his direction, "you have never seen me dance. And if you ever do, I will be far, far too drunk to remember it."

We were standing at the station, waiting for the train that would deliver Thomas into Malifaux.

Gideon chuckled. "That would be a sight."

It wasn't long before the train pulled in; that gleaming metal monster that brought us all here through the eerie, flickering glow of the Breach. I instantly spotted Thomas among the throngs of people pouring from the train. His black hair was disheveled as always, a pair of broad spectacles resting above his round nose. His face was a little wider than when I had last seen him. He had been eating well at Oxford the past few months. Malifaux would cure that.

Being his older sister, I gave him the official greeting. I put him in a headlock and dug my knuckle into his scalp until he pounded on my arm.

"Thanks, Taelor," he huffed. "Nice to see you, too."

I gave him a squeezing hug. "Missed you, kid."

Gideon chuckled. "Not two minutes in and your sister embarrasses you. Seems like her. I'm Captain Gideon," he said, extending his hand. "Welcome to Malifaux."

"Thomas," Thomas said, grabbing Gideon's hand. "I'm used to it, at least. And I can always embarrass her right back."

"Oh?" Gideon said, raising an eyebrow.

"Thomas..." I growled.

"She's afraid of water!" Thomas exclaimed before I could stop him.

Gideon just nodded. "That would explain all the liquor."

"When we were kids," I sighed, "I jumped into the lake near our house. It was a portion we hadn't been swimming in before, and the water was dark and deep. Jumping in went well enough. But when I tried to come back up, my arm was caught on something. I pulled and pulled, my lungs started to fill with water..."

Thomas hung his head. "Sorry to bring that up. My mouth moves before I think..."

"It always has," I said with a smile. "Anyway, I'm fine with water. I just make sure I know how deep it is before I jump, and that I can see the bottom."

Thomas perked up a bit. "Well, aren't you going to welcome me to the city?"

I snorted. "What do you think I was doing when I had you in that headlock?"

"So," Gideon clapped his hands, "I hear the Guild has brought you over to study about Soulstone under our good Doctor Lesterborn."

"Indeed!" Thomas exclaimed.

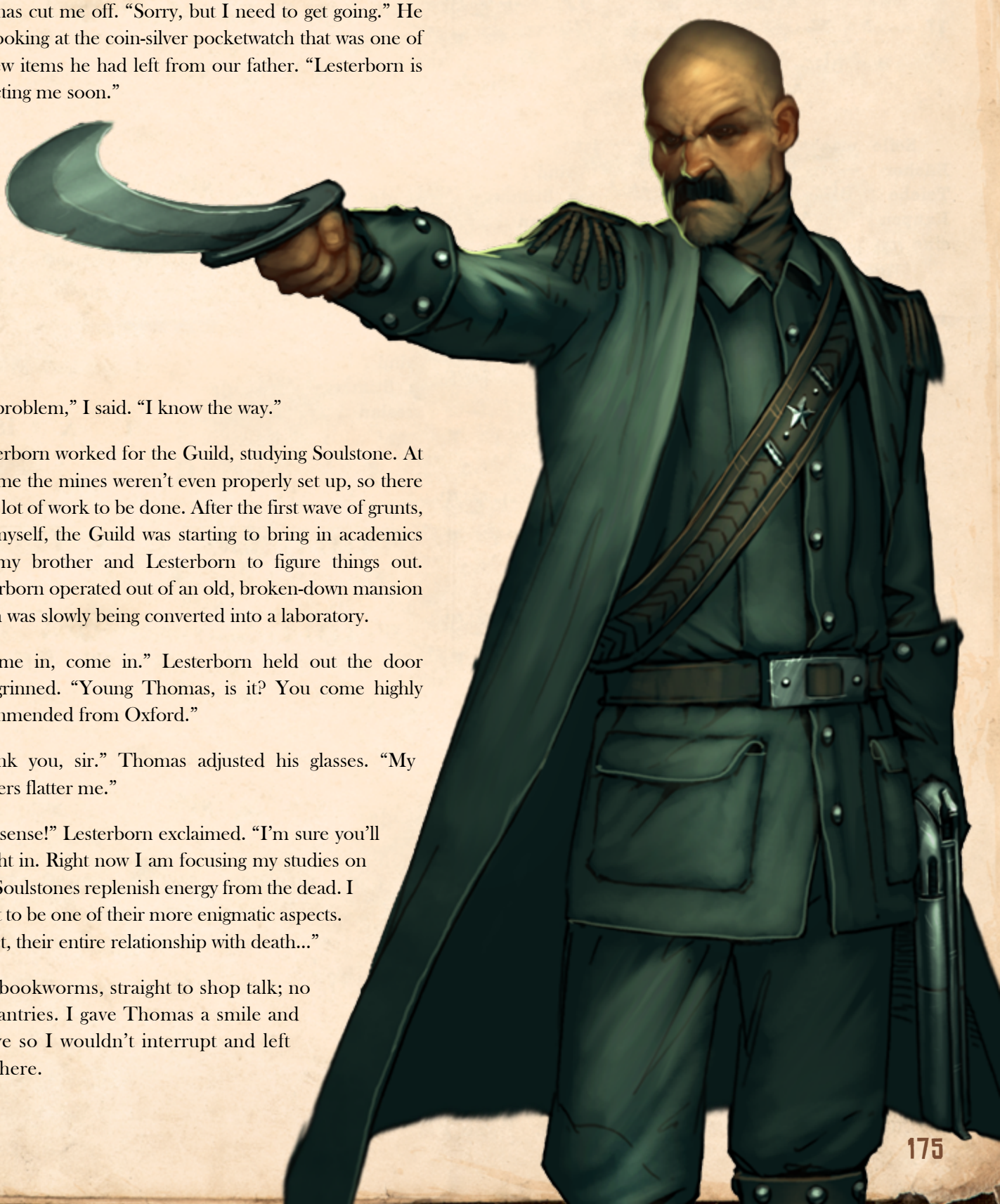
"Oh, now you've done it..." I moaned.

"It's all very exciting," Thomas continued, ignoring me, "they have become so rare on Earth these past hundred years, obtaining one simply for the purposes of study is nearly impossible! But there are so many questions! How do they store magical energy? Why only magical energy? How does a person, through a sheer act of will, tap into this energy? What, exactly, happens during the recharging process? You see, there are so many differing theories to answer all of these questions..."

And Thomas explained all of the differing theories to us as we made our way through the city.

I took Thomas to my cheap little apartment. It wasn't much, but it was home. "We just have the cot," I said, "we can take turns between it and the floor. And for your things—"

Thomas cut me off. "Sorry, but I need to get going." He was looking at the coin-silver pocketwatch that was one of the few items he had left from our father. "Lesterborn is expecting me soon."



"No problem," I said. "I know the way."

Lesterborn worked for the Guild, studying Soulstone. At the time the mines weren't even properly set up, so there was a lot of work to be done. After the first wave of grunts, like myself, the Guild was starting to bring in academics like my brother and Lesterborn to figure things out. Lesterborn operated out of an old, broken-down mansion which was slowly being converted into a laboratory.

"Come in, come in." Lesterborn held out the door and grinned. "Young Thomas, is it? You come highly recommended from Oxford."

"Thank you, sir." Thomas adjusted his glasses. "My teachers flatter me."

"Nonsense!" Lesterborn exclaimed. "I'm sure you'll fit right in. Right now I am focusing my studies on how Soulstones replenish energy from the dead. I find it to be one of their more enigmatic aspects. In fact, their entire relationship with death..."

Two bookworms, straight to shop talk; no pleasantries. I gave Thomas a smile and a wave so I wouldn't interrupt and left him there.

The next few days went well enough. I hardly saw Thomas, between his long hours in the lab and my long hours cowering behind a barricade hiding from monsters. Even so, it was nice to have him around again. Loneliness can become a long, gnawing, hollow ache that buries itself so deep inside of you that you forget it's there until it leaves.

Unfortunately, things at work were getting...strange. Stranger than usual, at least. There had been a string of murders and disappearances in the city. Dying in Malifaux was common enough, but we were still trying to hold everything together against the Neverborn; policing the human population was an added strain we didn't need. And the killer was becoming more brazen with every attack. Internal organs were taken. The word "Kythera" was scrawled on the walls of the crime scenes in blood on more than one occasion. They seemed to have gone from precision attacks to a mad spree almost overnight.

"If the man is a lunatic," Gideon commented as we patrolled the streets one evening, "at least it will be easier to catch him."

"If?" I raised an eyebrow.

Gideon grunted. "You know what I mean. There is a difference between stealing people away in the night for some kidnapping scheme and running through the streets naked, covered in blood. The latter tends to stand out a lot more; and it seems to be where our new friend is headed. A sharp change these past few days."

As we rounded a corner, we came upon a sight I will never forget. There was a woman with sunken, watery eyes shambling towards us. Her flesh was bone-white, and there was a deep gash across her throat. She let out a long, low gurgle as she staggered forward.

"Dear God," Gideon stopped in his tracks. "Nobody could survive that wound."

"I'm...I'm not sure she did." I stuttered.

"Ma'am," Gideon called. "Ma'am, are you alright?" She lunged at him in answer, her jaws snapping at his face.

Gideon was an officer, but he was no slouch in a fight. You wouldn't survive to rise in the ranks back then if you were. He flipped that abomination over and had it pinned on the cobbles before I could blink. "Taelor!" He called. "Check her pulse."

I got my hand to her throat, careful to avoid the snapping teeth. "Nothing, sir."

"I'll be damned," he sighed. "The reports from the Quarantine Zone are true." He leapt off the thing and backed away.

At that moment I noticed something, and the blood drained from my face. "Sir, I didn't recognize her like this at first, but...that's Lesterborn's maid."

Gideon unloaded his shotgun into the thing's skull. "Let's go," he said. And without another word we were racing through the streets towards Lesterborn's old mansion.

It was too late, of course.

The doors were hanging wide open, and we burst into the main room, sweeping the corners with our shotguns.

"Til gran Kythera dow!" A voice shouted from upstairs, followed by a cackling laugh. There was no humor in that laugh; it was the triumphant shout of insanity as it corrupted a sound that should herald joy.

We ran up the stairs, guns raised.

In the master bedroom (which had been converted into a lab with all sorts of glassware, books, and containers lining racks on the wall) we found Lesterborn. He wore a black rubber apron, covered in blood, and he was waving around a leather-bound book. "I've done it, don't you see!" He giggled. "I wanted to study the transition, but death was just the starting point! There's so much more past that. The first few were such failures. But triumph is at hand! Kythera is the key! The secrets this book holds, they whisper sweetly in my mind. Til gran Kythera dow! Til gran Kythera dow!"

"Whatever you say." Gideon replied, before giving the doctor one, very final, lesson in death with his shotgun.

"Thomas!" I shouted. "Thomas!"

We searched room to room and finally found him chained in the basement.

His throat was cut, but he was still moving. Clawing and snapping his jaws at us when we got too close.

For some reason, I was reminded of drowning. I remember panicking under those deep, black waters. I struggled and I fought. I knew that this couldn't be happening to *me*. This happened to other people. But then the reality hit, and panic turned to mania. Thrashing, clutching, convulsing. Eventually I couldn't hold my breath any longer and my throat spasmed as my body tried to keep the water from entering my lungs. Pain. The pain of dying, the pain of leaving this world. But, finally, the water was in my lungs,

and everything was clear. Everything made sense. My vision was going black, but this was my world now. The blackness was just a part of it. Only then was I calm enough to free myself.

At some point I had thrown up on the floor.

Gideon put a hand on my shoulder. "You don't have to, I can..."

I shook myself and stood up. "No. No, he is mine to put down." Avoiding the snapping jaws, I took my father's pocketwatch from Thomas's coat. It was smashed and useless. "Welcome to Malifaux," I whispered. Then I emptied both barrels of my shotgun into my baby brother's head.

The bar was silent for once.

Taelor took a shot.

"Burned that hell-hole down the next day. Didn't last much longer in the guard after that," she said, slamming her glass down on the table.

Quietly, the patrons started to empty out of the bar. They all knew better than to cross Taelor when she was in a mood. Besides, sometime during the story McCreedy had announced last call. Within a few minutes the bar was empty except for Taelor, McCreedy, and Zacharia who was now passed out on the floor.

Taelor grinned. "Easier than kicking them all out, eh?"

McCreedy gave a throaty laugh. "I knew you were spinnin' more tales. You know how I know?" He leaned forward conspiratorially. "All your other stories are so detailed, so exaggerated. These you just got to the point. Like you just wanted everyone out of here."

"Or like telling them isn't a very fun experience for me." Taelor lifted an eyebrow.

"Naw," McCreedy shook his head. "I know your lies too well, girl. The true one is the one about how you came over here with a circus and lost your arm trying to train a captured Slate Ridge Mauler to be a dancing bear. Nobody else believed it, but I could hear the passion in your voice."

Taelor smiled. "The best lie is the truth nobody believes."

McCreedy grunted and tossed her some scrip. "Your cut of the drinks people poured down their throats while you went on. And a little extra for getting them all the hell out of here." He grinned. "Keep it up and you won't need to be a mercenary anymore."

"Much obliged," Taelor said, knocking her knuckle twice on the bar as she got up. "G'night, old man."

"G'night, kid," McCreedy replied as Taelor opened the door, whistling a tune as she left.

The night wind was cool and refreshing as it ran through Taelor's hair. She kept whistling, a smile on her face as she marched down the street. But soon the smile disappeared, her shoulders hunched, and her tune slowly faded away as she trudged on.

Out in the night, alone with nothing but her thoughts, Taelor couldn't tell any lies. The laughter of strangers and liquor in her belly only ever warmed her for so long. Eventually she always had to face the things that had become a part of her. The blackened edges of her world. She let out a long, weary sigh and leaned against a wall. Reaching into her pocket, she pulled out a broken, coin-silver pocketwatch. She looked at it for a time before putting it back to continue on into the night. And the darkness swallowed her.

HODGEPODGE EMISSARY

So here was a riddle, a contradiction cobbled out of wood and cloth and hex-charms: how to create a symbol to bind the Outcast, when the very nature and definition of outcasts is to fall outside boundaries and definitions? The Hodgepodge Effigy began the answer, and the Hodgepodge Emissary completes it.

It is to embrace the nondescript and the misfit, making one's own nature as improvised and temporary as the shifting nature of the Outcast. The Effigy constantly remade itself from patchworks of aetheric threads and borrowed physical pieces; the Emissary no longer needs to violate its own physical form but expresses its entropy through its roaming, ever-changing hoard of relics, trinkets, machinery and trash. As ever, its home is in the interstices of Malifaux, salvaging and discarding, bestowing and stealing, paying and demanding, embodying the outcast's restless, thrown-together life and the scrabble and dealing of their survival.



HODGEPODGE EMISSARY

COST 10

Enforcer, Rare 1

EMISSARY OF FATE, CURSED

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	6	10	5	5	3

ABILITIES

Power Sink: When this Crew scores 1 or more **VP** from the Strategy, this model gains the following Condition for the rest of the game: "**Destined +1:** At the end of this model's Activation it heals +1 damage. This Condition may not be removed by other models' Actions."

Hard to Kill: While this model has 2 or more **Wd** remaining when it suffers damage, it may not be reduced to below 1 **Wd**.

Instinctual: This model may take two (0) Actions during its Activation, so long as they are both different.

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Call of the Lost (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 9 or 1): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

Empty Road: After damaging, push target up to 4" towards this model.

Word of the Emissary: After damaging, take this Action again. This Action may not declare Triggers.

The Lonely Road: After succeeding, the target must discard a card or gain the **Slow** Condition.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) Something In My Pack... (**Ca** 6 / TN: 13 / Rg: 6): Target another friendly non-Leader which does not already have a Trinket Upgrade. Select an Upgrade with the restriction Trinket which is not already attached to any models in this Crew and attach it to the target, ignoring the usual restrictions for attaching Upgrades.

(0) A Weary Road: Discard a card to push this model up to 4" in any direction, then place a Scheme Marker in base contact with it.

(0) The Piecing Together: This Action may only be taken while this model has the **Destined +2** Condition or greater. Remove the **Destined** Condition from this model to target up to three friendly non-Peon models within 3" and LoS. Push each target up to 3" in any direction, then place a Scheme Marker in base contact with it.

50mm

HODGEPODGE EMISSARY

SCION OF THE VOID

Tara held the Witchling handler down with the heel of her boot as the woman howled in agony. "What were you thinkin', hun?" she mused. "Did you really think you could waltz in here and steal one of Obliteration's sacred texts without Him noticing? You poor thing. And for what? To bring it back to the Guild? To be studied? Used?" Tara snorted. "We are Obliteration's pawns, not the other way around, and he will even let you keep yer damn book. He will infuse you with his power, and you will yearn for it. You will yearn for the great void. And yet you will never truly be welcome in His presence. You will be the bastard child of the void, always running from your father's eye lest he tan yer hide."

Beneath her, the woman's skin turned a deep gray, her hair sprouted into fleshy tendrils, her eyes grew red and, with a howl of pain, a new set of limbs burst forth from her chest. "Yes, Mistress," she breathed.



SCION OF THE VOID

Henchman, Rare 1

COST 8 CACHE 5

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	6	8	5	7	2

ABILITIES

Followers of the Void: Crews led by Tara may hire this model regardless of Faction. Crews containing this model may hire Void Wretches and the Nothing Beast regardless of Faction.

Returning Home: When this model is targeted with an enemy Action, it may discard a card to become buried and make the Action fail. If this model is buried at the end of the Turn, sacrifice it.

Whispers From the Nothing: While this model is buried, friendly non-Peon models may declare this model's Actions (including Triggers) during their Activations. Each time one of this model's Actions is declared using this Ability, this model suffers 2 damage which may not be reduced or prevented.

SCION OF THE VOID

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Empty Lessons (**Ca** 6📖✕ / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 1/4/7 damage.
✕ ***Forgotten to Time:*** After damaging, the target gains the following Condition until the end of the game: "**Forgotten to Time:** After this model becomes buried, it suffers 4 damage."
📖 ***The True Path:*** After damaging an enemy, draw a card.
🐺 ***Stolen Meaning:*** Once per Turn, after damaging an enemy which has the **Fast** Condition during this model's Activation, end the **Fast** Condition on the enemy and this model gains 1 additional general AP.

(1) Hungry Emptiness (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 10): Target model suffers an amount of damage equal to the amount of damage already on it, to a maximum of 3 damage.
📖 ***The True Path:*** After damaging an enemy, draw a card.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) In the Blink of an Eye (**Ca** 5📖 / TN: 13📖): Immediately move this model up to its **Wk**, ignoring intervening models and terrain during the move. This model must end the move in base contact with another model.

(0) The Hollowing: Select a buried friendly Henchman or Minion and unbury it in base contact. If the selected model is a Minion, it suffers 3 damage which may not be reduced after unburying. This Action may not be taken while this model is engaged.

30mm

PRIDE

They don't speak much, those times they see each other, about the night the Crossroads' walls came down. But when they do talk about that pair in the black and scarlet who were the start of it all, there's a funny old thing: each of them is convinced that she'n'he spoke to them, and them only.

Well, he doesn't even get angry at that stupidity any more. Just laughs it off. But it's obvious they were there for him. Everyone in the Badlands knew his playing. Best that'd ever been.

They'd see to it he was better'n the best, they said, so long as he kept on *being* the best. Hell, that was a deal he'd already delivered on before he ever met them! Playing like an angel, drinking like the devil, moves like smoke, voice like molasses. Let 'em all watch. He'll show the whole world who's the best.



PRIDE — COST 8

Enforcer, Living, Mercenary, Rare 1

CROSSROADS SEVEN, TORMENTED

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	5	8	6	7	2

ABILITIES

Bad Role Model: Enemy models which end their Activation within ❶3 must discard a card or suffer 2 damage if they Cheated Fate during their Activation.

Manipulative 12: If this model has not yet Activated this Turn, when an enemy model targets this model with an Attack Action, the enemy model must pass a TN 12 **Wp** duel or the Action immediately fails.

Df (◉) Wounded Ego: After resolving, the Attacker must discard a card or suffer 2 damage.

PRIDE

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Condescending Flattery (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 1): Target suffers 2/2/4 damage.

✕ "***Hey...":*** After damaging, the target gains the **Slow** Condition.

(1) This Song Is All About You (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 8): Target suffers 4 damage. The target may immediately discard any number of cards to reduce this damage by 2 for each card discarded. This Action may be taken once per Turn.

◉ ***You Don't Need Them:*** After damaging, the target gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**You Don't Need Them:** This model suffers ⍈ to **Df** duels while within 3" of a friendly model."

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Solo (**Ca** 6 / TN: 14): Until the end of the Turn, other models within ❶3 may not Cheat Fate unless they discard a card or suffer 2 damage first.

30mm

BIG JAKE

Big Jake held the Nephilim's claws back with his tomahawk and snorted. "I know how you feel, friend. I am not here to take your land from you."

Dodging another attack, Jake continued. "I was an outcast from my tribe myself. I wandered the Earth, and I saw how the Guild had ravaged my land. My people were some of the last to kneel before the Guild and in my absence my son stood his ground. So the Guild took my grandson and spirited him off to Malifaux, trying to break my son's will to fight."

Jake leapt as the creature went for his legs. "My son may not wish to speak with me, but I can do this one last thing for him. I will find my blood and bring him back across the Breach, to our home. And I will leave this land to you." Jake finished, raising his weapon. "But if you make me kill you..."



BIG JAKE

Enforcer, Living, Mercenary, Rare 1

COST 5

DF	WP	WD	WK	CG	HT
5	5	6	5	6	2

ABILITIES

I Thought You Were Dead: If this model is killed or sacrificed before Turn 5, summon Big Jake into base contact with any friendly model after flipping for initiative on Turn 5. The summoned Big Jake suffers 4 damage, does not gain **Slow**, and may take Interact Actions as normal.

Don't Mind Me: This model may take Interact Actions while engaged.

I'll Finish This Fight: When determining how many **VP** this model's controller gains from a Strategy, this model counts as two models.

BIG JAKE

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Tomahawk (**MI** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.
Not Hardly: While damaging, if this model was summoned this Turn, deal +1 damage to the target.
You're Comin' With Me: After damaging, push the target up to 3" in any direction, then place this model in base contact with it.

(1) Thrown Tomahawk (**Sh** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 8): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Consult the Ancestors: This model may suffer 2 damage to look at the top two cards of its deck and then place both either on top of the deck in any order or in the discard pile.

30mm

THE WINGED PLAGUE

Hamelin, The Plague, is always on the lookout for new ways to spread his disease across the land. Most recently he was inspired by the filthy birds of the city. Why, what better way to do it than through the air? He used his knowledge of alchemy and came up with a design based on the many gamin common to Malifaux. The result is a wretched thing, covered in sores and puss, that soars through the air on rotting wings.

Hamelin puts his new creations to excellent use. However, nothing in Malifaux can ever truly be controlled for long. Some of his new creations escaped his clutches while he was occupied with more important matters. Now they roam the skies and the streets, spreading sickness and plague at random, which the Tyrant would likely approve of anyway. Some clever individuals have even trapped them and let them loose on their enemies.



THE WINGED PLAGUE

Minion, Living
VERMIN

COST 4

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	4	4	6	6	1

ABILITIES

Flight: This model is immune to falling damage and may ignore any terrain or models while moving.

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Vector: This model gains ↑ to Attack flips when targeting a model which has no Conditions.

The Plague Spreads: At the end of the Turn, if there is an enemy model within 6" which does not have the **Blighted** Condition, this model may be pushed into base contact with it.

THE WINGED PLAGUE

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Clawed Wings (**MI** 4☓ / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 1): Target suffers 1/2/3 damage.
☓ ***Taint:*** After damaging, the target gains the following Condition a number of times equal to the number of ☓ in the final duel total until the end of the game: "**Blighted +1**: At the end of the Turn, increase this Condition's value by 1."

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) The Wounds Fester: This model may discard a card. If it does, until the end of the Turn, enemy models which begin their Activation within ❶4 suffer -2 **Wk** and **Cg** for the remainder of the Activation, to a minimum **Wk** and **Cg** of 2. This Action may only be taken once per Turn.

30mm

Finding him was the hard part. They had his picture, and a good one, but they didn't have his name, nor what he did, nor his friends or associates, nor where he had last been seen. In fact, they knew as little about him as about the woman whose scrip they were taking to hunt him. But they had their reputation for a reason, these two, and they never doubted they'd get their mark.

They set about it, Waring the silent, unnerving scarecrow of a man in his odd-fitting tweeds, Ramirez portly, charming and avuncular. They did their work in muttered saloon-bar conversations, coded messages left at clubs, bribes slipped to Guards and clerks, and it ended when they cornered their man in a dead-end alley in the Howling Slums. A pistol shot, some quick knifework, and the sharp-featured blond man with the twisted lip became their latest payday.

They parted to rest and bank their scrip, as was their habit, but then Waring had the man cross the Arch Road ahead of him the next evening, and next morning Ramirez saw those same sharp features watching him from a carriage window. They met again to compare notes, and realized they had both seen the man at sundown the previous day, looking up at Waring from a river-barge as he crossed a bridge and in a cloud of cigar-smoke at the Courthouse Hotel's front bar. As they spoke, the man at the next table got up and left, flashing a look at them over his shoulder: a familiar twisted lip under a fringe of blond hair. They both left that bar with weapons in hand, not caring who saw them.

He was the third in a four-Guard Guild patrol that passed them on the way to their safe house, and he was in beggar's rags



watching their front door barely a minute later. Ramirez saw a man lean out of the window in the terrace opposite them, those sharp features catching the streetlight, and Waring peered through a spyhole in the back door and saw a blond silhouette lounging against the alley wall. Shadows hid the twist in the figure's lip but he knew it was there.

Waring and Ramirez were buried in the same common pit – they had been moderately wealthy men, but had left no funeral plans nor close relatives. Nicodem the Undertaker conducted the funeral himself – not a common custom of his, but it was the gentlemanly thing to do with so many in attendance to bid farewell to the departed, and the mourners thronged around this funeral six and seven deep.

If he or Mortimer noticed that every mourner, no matter how rich or ragged their clothing, had the same blond hair and sharp-featured, twist-lipped face, neither ever commented on it.

OUTCAST UPGRADES

Conflux of Avarice

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Viktoria of Ashes is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Quick Payment: Friendly models within ❶6 which kill an enemy model may draw a card. Then, if the friendly model was not a Mercenary, discard a card.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Proper Motivation: This model may discard a card to push target friendly model within 6" up to 3" in any direction. If the target is a Mercenary, it gains the **Focused +1** Condition.

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

Conflux of Nothingness

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Tara is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Screaming From the Void: Friendly models which become unburied within ❶6 of this model immediately gain **Fast**.
- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (0) Into the Maw (**Ca** 6 / TN: 10📖 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 9): Bury target non-Master model. Unbury the model in base contact with this model at the start of the next Turn, or before this model leaves play.

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

Conflux of Plague

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Hamelin is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Strength From Suffering: This model gains 🗡 while performing duels against enemy models with the **Blighted** Condition.
- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (0) The Plague Creeps (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 9): Target model gains the following Condition until the end of the game: "**Blighted +1**: At the end of the Turn, increase this Condition's value by 1."

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

Conflux of Conflict

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Von Schill is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Shoot True: Friendly models within ❶4 do not randomize when shooting into an engagement.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Sir, Please Keep It On: Discard a card to attach the **The Shirt Comes Off** Upgrade to target friendly Leader within 6" which does not already have the Upgrade attached, ignoring all other restrictions.

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

Aethereal Conflux

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Leveticus is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Pariah of Blood: This Crew may hire non-Gremlin Faction Horseman models regardless of the Crew's declared Faction.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (1) They Gather: Summon a Horseman model into base contact with this model, then sacrifice this model. This Action may only be taken on the first Turn and only if this Crew hired three or more Horseman models at the start of the game.

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

Hodgepodge Conflux

Cost: 0 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  The Power Rages: Friendly Minions within 4 gain to all Attack duels.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

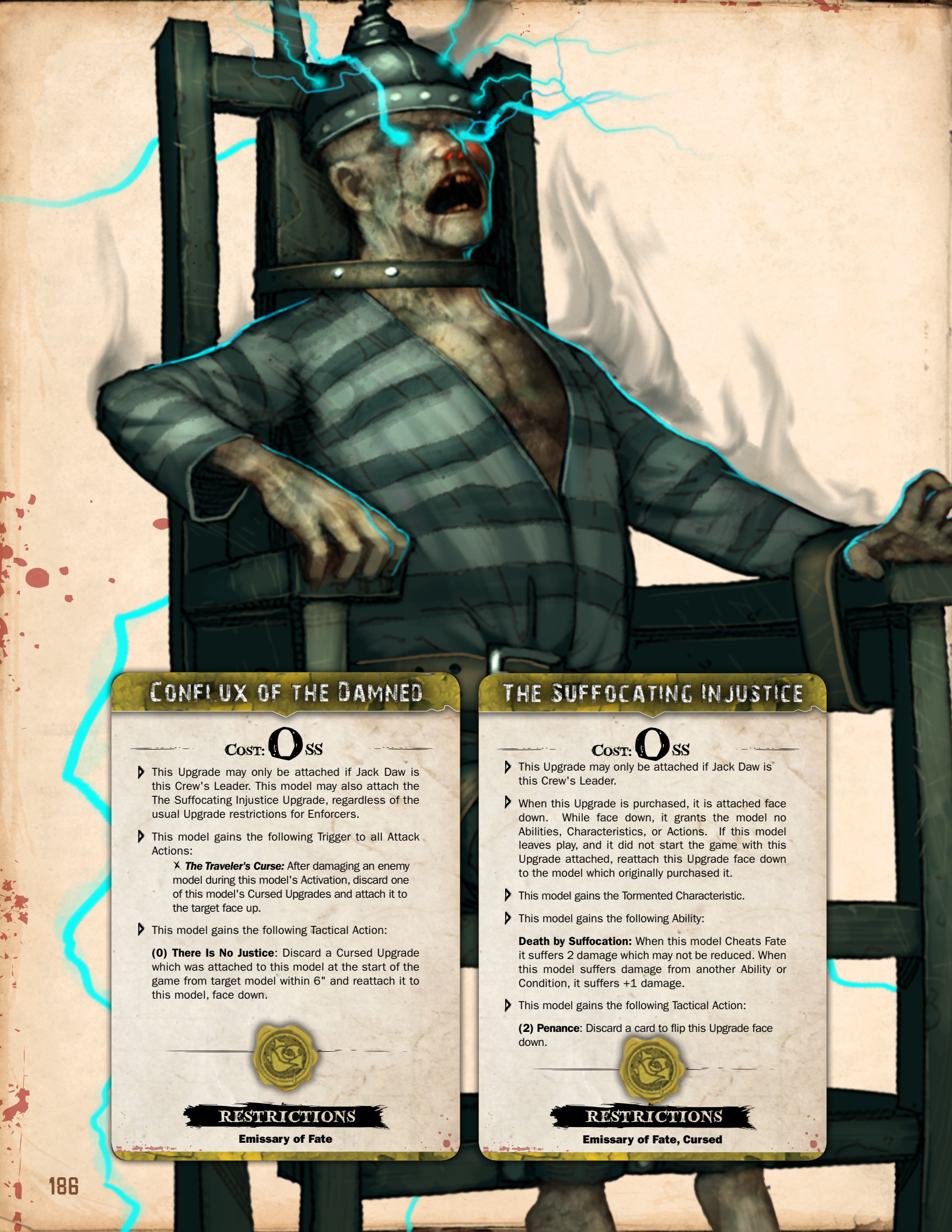
  (0) On the Tides of Fate: Discard a Soulstone to draw two cards and then discard two cards.

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

THE SIGN OF THE ROSE

The Sign of the Rose was the first real mercenary outfit in Malifaux. The Guild brought them over to help secure the city in those early, frantic days as Malifaux was claimed street by street from the Neverborn. Led by Ching Shih, the outfit got its name for identifying themselves with a rose pinned to their clothing. While the official Guild outfits were desperate for food, clothes, and weapons, the mercenaries flaunted the wealth the bloodshed brought them by importing flowers from home. The band was so successful that the Guild began to see them as a threat. But before a coup could take place, Ching Shih retired in wealth to her home in the Three Kingdoms, a feat rare in mercenary life. Without her ironclad leadership, the band fell apart. But to this day the sign of the rose is an infamous symbol in Malifaux which indicates that a sword is for hire.



Conflux of the Damned

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Jack Daw is this Crew's Leader. This model may also attach the The Suffocating Injustice Upgrade, regardless of the usual Upgrade restrictions for Enforcers.
- This model gains the following Trigger to all Attack Actions:
  - ***The Traveler's Curse:*** After damaging an enemy model during this model's Activation, discard one of this model's Cursed Upgrades and attach it to the target face up.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) There Is No Justice: Discard a Cursed Upgrade which was attached to this model at the start of the game from target model within 6" and reattach it to this model, face down.

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

The Suffocating Injustice

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Jack Daw is this Crew's Leader.
- When this Upgrade is purchased, it is attached face down. While face down, it grants the model no Abilities, Characteristics, or Actions. If this model leaves play, and it did not start the game with this Upgrade attached, reattach this Upgrade face down to the model which originally purchased it.
- This model gains the Tormented Characteristic.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Death by Suffocation: When this model Cheats Fate it suffers 2 damage which may not be reduced. When this model suffers damage from another Ability or Condition, it suffers +1 damage.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (2) Penance: Discard a card to flip this Upgrade face down.

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate, Cursed

THE MONKEY'S PAW

COST: 0SS

- This Upgrade may not be purchased at the start of the game.
- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Hateful Wish: At the start of this model's Activation, it may discard two cards to gain the **Reactivate** Condition. If this happens, this model may not summon any other models for the remainder of the Turn and is sacrificed at the end of the Turn.

  Horrible Luck: If this model would be buried, it is sacrificed instead.

RESTRICTIONS

Trinket

VITALITY POTION

COST: 0SS

- This Upgrade may not be purchased at the start of the game.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Regeneration +1: When this model Activates, it heals +1 damage.

RESTRICTIONS

Trinket

MEMENTO

COST: 0SS

- This Upgrade may not be purchased at the start of the game.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Companion: After a friendly model ends its Activation within 6" of this model, this model may Activate immediately as a Chain Activation.

RESTRICTIONS

Trinket

PRETTY FLORAL BONNET

COST: 0SS

- This Upgrade may not be purchased at the start of the game.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Don't Mind Me: This model may take Interact Actions while engaged.

RESTRICTIONS

Trinket



This chapter contains a story as well as new models and Upgrades for **THE GREMLIN** Faction.
These models and Upgrades are not a part of the Campaign and may be hired normally during any game.

BULLET

BY: GRAEME STEVENSON

"Well?" grunted Som'er Teeth Jones. It was late and he had better things to do than attend secret councils in the depths of the Bayou when a LaCroix was involved.

Ophelia LaCroix batted her eyelids and gave him a warm smile.

"Som'er. It's so nice to see you, too." She clapped her hands together with melodrama. "Why, it's just been an *age*."

Som'er shifted his feet and scowled. His green hide was thick enough to ensure that sarcasm tended not to penetrate unless it was wrapped around a brick, but there was always the faintest suspicion he was the butt of some kind of gag beyond his ken. "Ain't been so long," he said. "Saw you a week past, thar."

Ophelia seemed awfully pleased at his response and laughed without apparent cause, most likely some foolish she-gremlin thing.

"Nice to see a friendly face, ain't it?" agreed Zoraida, who was sitting on a stump a short ways off.

Som'er's scowl deepened when both females shared another inscrutable laugh.

"Seems ta me like you both had a knock on the head, laughin' fer no reason like that," he muttered mostly to himself. Had he been in less feminine company he would probably have gone on to offer a free knock on the head fer anyone that wanted one, but his pappy had learned him not to lift a hand to women-folks less'n there was a good reason fer it.

That and the fact that Zoraida made him nervous.

Gathering up his wounded dignity, Som'er rested his blunderbuss on his shoulder and turned about to push his way back through the ring of thorny swamp bramble.

"Seems like ah'm wastin' mah time comin' out here in the middle of the night," he said over his shoulder. "You two gals go ahead and tell each other some more jokes. I'm goin' back ta bed."

"Oh sit yerself down, Som'er, and listen up," Zoraida said with an impatient gesture. "I ain't in the habit of goin' to the trouble of settin' up a secret meetin' for nothin'."

With a final scowl, Som'er slouched back to the center of the clearing and chose himself the stump farthest from the other two. There was some elaborate fussing as he made sure he was comfortable, got his blunderbuss propped up the way he liked, and fished about for quite a time in a top pocket for some chewing tobacco that he knew fine well he kept inside his waistcoat.

Zoraida and Ophelia waited patiently while he went through his pantomime, accepting his petty vengeance with good graces and small smiles.

Finally, when Som'er had fussed himself to a standstill, he looked up, his lower lip jutting like a green cliff-face around a wad of tobacco.

"Well?" he barked.

"Things is movin', Som'er Jones," Zoraida said, leaning forward so that her face all but vanished in the shadow of her cowl. Only her eyes were visible, as bright and keen as razors. "Big wheels is turnin' an if we ain't careful we're gonna be left behind."

Som'er chewed contemplatively and then spat. "That makes about as much sense ta me as a hog fart. When ah said 'Well?' what ah meant was 'Why ain't ah in bed?'."

Zoraida cackled and squeezed her knees with long arthritic fingers. "Plain-talkin'. Always liked that about you, Jones. Lemme spell it out for you a little clearer. Remember that war I told you about? The one I said wuz comin'?"

Som'er nodded once, his huge top hat tilting. "Ah do."

"Well, those high and mighty fools in Malifaux is busy preparing for it. Busy as ants, they is. Guild men an' Guild machines, workin', workin', workin'. Them Three Kingdoms folk, too—the Ten Thunders. You heard of them?"

The hat tilted a second time. "Yup."

"They busy, too. Even the Neverborn—those cold devils

out there in the desert—even *they* busy. Buildin' up to somethin'. These old bones can't feel it. Everybody busy, Jones. Everybody 'cept us."

Som'er chewed and waited. He knew Zoraida had more.

"Some o' these pies I got fingers in," she continued. "I been keepin' my ear to the ground an' I heard some whispers on what's comin'. But it ain't the whispers that worry me, but the silence. I can't be everywhere at once, an' I get the feelin' somethin' slipped past me. That's where you come in."

"That so?"

"You gonna find out what I missed and where they hidin' it."

Som'er tried to rewind the conversation in his head to catch what he had evidently missed, which is no mean feat when you've been awake for two days straight drinking moonshine. "Huh? What y'all talkin' about? Who's hidin' what?"

"The Miners and Steamfitters' Union," said Ophelia.

"Boiler boys?" Som'er curled his lip with distain. "You want *me* ta go talk ta boiler boys?"

"Well, it ain't exactly the talkin' I need you for."

"Scrappin', huh?" Som'er balled his big green fists. "Want me ta knock it out o' 'em?"

"Don't recommend that course," Zoraida said with a shake of her head, grinning. "The feller I got in mind might be more'n even you can't handle."

Som'er jutted out his lower jaw which, enhanced by the wad of tobacco, was an impressive sight. "Ah c'n lick anybody," he said stubbornly. "One hand behind mah back."

"Oh, you'll lick 'em all right," the hag agreed. "But ain't gonna be no fist that puts 'em on their back."

Som'er eyed his blunderbuss and wondered how he was supposed to question a boiler boy once he'd shot him dead.

"Liquor," Zoraida said. "You got a fearsome tolerance for it, so I heard."

Som'er puffed out his chest. "You heard right. Ain't nobody c'n drink me under the table."

"An' that's the plan," Ophelia cut in. "Get a feller drunk an' he's like to start shootin' his mouth off. Why, it'd only take a coupla pointed questions and you'd likely get that feller talkin' about anythin' you wanted."

"You want me ta go drinkin' with some boiler boy?" Som'er wrinked his brow. "Even *ah* know that's gonna git funny looks."

"An' normally you'd be right," said Ophelia. "We don't mix with the big folks. Everybody knows that."

"That's right," agreed Zoraida. "It'd take somethin' kinda special to get Bayou kin an' big folks drinkin' at the same table."

"Y'heard o' Bullet?" asked Ophelia, grinning.

Som'er was acquainted with the game and had played it extensively in his youth. It was just the sort of crazy, half-assed machismo death-wish nonsense for a young and reckless Gremlin to waste his time, money and liver on. He'd last played it about a year ago and still had a couple of scars and the hangover from it.

"Sure, I played Bullet before. Passin' good at it, too."

The seconds passed while Som'er chewed and the other two watched him, grinning. The penny finally dropped with an audible clunk.

"Wait—you want me ta play Bullet with this boiler boy an' get answers once he's good an' wasted?"

"Always says you wuz sharp as a knife, Jones," cackled Zoraida, leaning back on her stump. "I hear there's a game bein' organized in the Quarantine Zone, night after tomorrow. Big game, as it happens. Our feller's gonna be at it."

"The boiler boy?" Som'er enquired.

"This feller ain't no boiler boy, Jones," she corrected. "Even drunk, them Arcanists is a closed-mouth bunch and they wouldn't tell you squat no matter how much you pour down their necks. No, the way to get information is to find someone who ain't so closely affiliated: someone who don't hold the cause in his heart." Zoraida was grinning again. "Someone who got more interest in *material* things, if you know what I mean."

Som'er watched the hag rubbing thumb and forefinger together in the universal sign of loose currency.

"A hired gun?"

"I think he prefers the term 'freelance operative'," she said dryly. "He did some work for the Union a little ways back, chaperoned somethin' big through the Breach for 'em and now they got it tucked away someplace. I need you to find out where."

Zoraida heaved a sizeable bag of coin across the clearing to Som'er's feet. "That'll give you the coin to buy your way into the game, an' what's left can be used to look like you're there to play. If you lose it, though, there ain't no more for a second try."

Som'er poked the bag with his split boot. "If'n this feller's a merc, why don't y'all just buy the information an' save me this skullduggery?"

"Wouldn't work," Zoraida said. "Man in that line of work lives by his reputation. Ain't nobody gonna trust him with a job again if he sells out at the first flash of coin. A little drunken bragging at a private card game, though? Who's gonna know?"

Som'er sniffed. "Seems a lot o' work fer one secret."

"I got a good idea what everybody else's play is gonna be," Zoraida said. "Everybody but the Arcanists. They went to a whole lot of trouble to keep somethin' quiet, an' that makes me nervous."

"Thought you'd be more worried about the Guild."

A horrible smile crawled across Zoraida's wrinkled face. "Oh no," she whispered. "You don't need to worry none about them. I got somethin' *real* special planned for them."

Som'er felt intensely uncomfortable and busied himself with testing the weight of the coin bag to break the moment. Whatever ghastly plan Zoraida had in store for the Guild, he was just glad he wasn't part of it.

A thought suddenly popped into his head.

"Hey, now—ah need a second fer Bullet. Ah need a back-up!"

Firearms and alcohol seldom made good bedfellows and it wasn't uncommon for one or more casualties during the course of a game. As few are ever keen to chance death for low stakes, sizeable fortunes, even entire family estates, were routinely wagered in a game of Bullet and it was considered prudent for each player to provide a back-up man to step in should their associate prove too incapacitated or too dead to secure their winnings.

A second was usually a trustworthy individual, preferably with a steady hand and a stomach like an iron cauldron. Their presence made the game go faster when it came to setting up for another hand. As Som'er recalled, there was always a lot of broken glass and bullets rattling around.

He gazed shrewdly at his companions and seriously doubted that either of them had what it took to be a reliable second.

"Ain't neither o' you got the sand ta last a minute in a game o' Bullet," he declared. "All the good seconds is dead, too. Ain't no way I c'n find somebody I c'n trust ta back me up in time."

"Well, ain't it just plumb lucky I found one for you?" Zoraida said.

The thorny bramble barrier was ripped unceremoniously aside by a huge wooden hand with all the pomp of a servant parting a velvet curtain to admit their master. A bent old figure came into the clearing and made its way slowly to the remaining free stump, moving with a crumbly dignity possessed solely by the extremely old and the extremely powerful.

Som'er lurched to his feet and then dropped reverentially to one knee, removing his hat as he bowed his cannonball head.

"Brewmaster," he whispered reverentially.

Ophelia slid off her stump and performed a lithe curtsey. Zoraida, as befitted her station, stayed where she was, but she nodded in greeting.

"Howdy, Jones m'boy," said the ancient Gremlin as he creaked gradually into a sitting position on the stump while the Whiskey Golem fussed around behind him. "How's the still comin'?"

Som'er had displayed an unhealthy interest in liquor since he was old enough to lift a cup to his mouth, an interest that had soon spread to its manufacture as well as consumption. While he maintained a quiet pride in his creations from that wheezing old still he kept up by his shack, he understood that his alcoholic offerings were tawdry baubles compared to the fiery magnificence of the Brewmaster's own concoctions.

"Pretty good, Yer Excellency," he said, fumbling for the hip flask thrust into his belt. "Ah bin puttin' a coupla bits o' rusty iron in with the vegetable peelin's like ya said."

The Brewmaster accepted the offered flask, sniffed it, took a mouthful. He sloshed it from one cheek to the other for a spell and then swallowed, all with an expression of collected concentration on his face.

"Well, that ain't too bad, youngster," he said at length. "Ain't too bad at all. Ye're startin' ta get what I like ta call 'character.'"

Som'er blushed and fumbled with his hat. That was high praise indeed from the likes of the Brewmaster.

"Powerful kind o' ye ta say so, Brewmaster," he said.

"Now," grinned the old Gremlin, reaching into the folds of his tunic and removing a small clay jug with a cork stopper, "how about you take a snort of my latest?"

Som'er took the jug with solemn occasion and pulled the cork with a soft *punk*. A strong chemical odor drifted past his nose and took a layer of skin with it. He raised it to his lips and swallowed with as much ceremony as he could muster.



Despite the smell, it was the smoothest thing he'd ever tasted.

"I call's it 'Porch Sunday Snort,'" the Brewmaster was saying while Som'er's eyes slitted with bliss. "A nice, mellow flavor with hints o' crack-root an' wyrdwood. Jus' the sorta 'shine ta be enjoyed on yer rocker, watchin' the sun go down on the mountain."

"S'like a mouthful o' *beautiful*," Som'er croaked, quite moved by the experience.

"Maybe the three o' y'all would like to be left alone for a while?" giggled Ophelia.

"Don't be roundin' on me with none o' yer sass," snapped Som'er, jamming the cork home with unnecessary force, the intimate moment ruined. "Ain't nothin' should come between a feller an' his 'shine."

Ophelia rolled her eyes, but held her peace.

"We wuz just discussin' how you's gonna second Jones here in that game of Bullet I was tellin' you about," Zoraida said, clearly trying to getting things back on track.

"That's right," nodded the Brewmaster. "Done played a game or two in my time."

Som'er could barely believe his ears. It was an honor to be in the Brewmaster's presence, never mind to travel with him to Malifaux and have him as a second.

"I ain't worthy o' the honor, Brewmaster," he said, wondering whether he should prostrate himself in the dirt.

"An' ye can stow that hog-wash for a start, Som'er Teeth Jones," the Brewmaster said sharply, pointing a crooked green finger. "Gimmie mah title an' mah propers as is mah due, but I don't want no brown-nosin'. Show me some back-bone, not the top o' yer head."

"Ah will, Brewmaster," Som'er got to his feet and puffed out his chest. "Ah'll do right by ye, Yer Excellency."

"S'all I ask," said the old Gremlin, his momentary annoyance gone. "Besides, it'll be good ta stretch these ol' legs and see the city ag'in. Been an age since I was in Malifaux."

"O'course, ye'll have to travel in disguise," said Zoraida, eyeing the huge Whiskey Golem looming like a wooden shadow against the tree line.

"Won't be no problem," the Brewmaster said. "Ah'll maybe take a handful o' Moon Shinobi, but they won't be seen less'n I wants them to."

"Good enough," Zoraida got to her feet, signaling the end of the council. "The feller in the know is called Von Schill—he runs a pack of mercenaries called the Freikorps.

You mighta heard of them."

Som'er had indeed heard of them. In fact he was quite confident you'd struggle to find anyone on this side of the Breach who hadn't. Von Schill in particular had a reputation as a grizzled, hard-bitten old professional. The only real debate over his character was on which was tighter – his purse strings or his mouth.

Som'er supposed he'd soon find out.



The city was dark and crusted in frost. The weather had changed suddenly only a day or so before with the sudden dispersal of thick winter clouds. The cavernous, starry sky above had swallowed every trace of warmth, leaving the city's stone and brick spidery with ice.

Som'er wasn't used to such blistering cold. In the Bayou, even in the depths of winter, there was a cushion of warm air that seeped from all the layers of rotting matter in the swamp. The temperature rarely dropped below freezing and he couldn't remember the last time he'd seen ice.

He had rapidly come to the conclusion that these sorts of conditions were better traversed by someone with two shoes. His one busted boot was doing its best, but the drooping dog-tongue sole was scant protection against the stinging cold stone. As for his right foot, he had entirely lost sensation in it and was sure that it had frozen solid. He was getting into the habit of glancing down every now and then to make sure it hadn't snapped off a ways back and he'd been walking on a stump.

The Brewmaster, while three times Som'er's age, was faring far better. The pair of thick furry boots that enveloped him from the knee down and the four cloaks were contributing factors, certainly, but there was a hale vitality about the old Gremlin that Som'er found hard to match. His rickety old legs ought not to have been able to carry him so far without complaint, but carry him they did, with his staff working overtime and clinking its dangling collection of bottles.

Perhaps his secret lay in the collection of clay jugs he carried with him. Well, carried *for* him by his apprentice, Wesley, in a massive sack that clunked with every step. Every so often, the Brewmaster would murmur something and Wesley would stop to fish out the requested receptacle. The ancient Gremlin would take a hearty slug, shake his ears and be off again with renewed vigor.

His mind was equally inexhaustible and he spent much of his time firing questions at Wesley on the properties of various ingredients and brewing techniques. Som'er tuned in eagerly, anxious to glean some crumb of brewing knowledge that might improve his own efforts.

"Slopewart," the Brewmaster would bark over his shoulder.

"Uh, y'only find it on the shoulders o' the mountain," Wesley would recite, brow furrowed. "Short brown stem, purple flower. Y'crush the stem an' pulp it 'fore addin' ta the mixture. Gives a strong minty flavor ta complement metallic content."

The Brewmaster grunted in what might have been agreement, then "Red finger barley."

"Only a few farmsteads grow it, way south. Recognize it with distinctive red barley husk. Y'burn it black 'n crush ta powder. Helps ta cut acid 'n' enhances smoky flavors."

This mobile quiz tailed away when they reached the depths of the city. Som'er had a fair idea of where they were headed, but in the dark and the cold one alleyway or moldering hulk of a building looked much like another and they got turned around a couple of times.

Whenever they faltered, a Moon Shinobi reeled out of the darkness to point the way. They were exceptionally good at appearing out of nowhere; one rolled off a nearby balcony in such a boneless manner that Som'er thought he was dead, but the rubbery Gremlin somehow landed on his feet, pointed out the direction they wanted wordlessly and then staggered off in the opposite direction.

Another time, a big, mean-looking figure came out of a black doorway in an unmistakably threatening manner, but was enveloped before he'd taken two strides by a cloud of flailing green fists and feet. Where that half-dozen Moon Shinobi had come from when the alley had been all but deserted a second before, Som'er just couldn't figure out.

Finally, they emerged from the warren of narrow lanes to a wide soot-blackened thoroughfare with what would once have been a magnificent building standing directly opposite. It had the air of theatricality and austerity about it, and might have once been a council chamber or other equally grand municipal building.

Now it was a ruin, but there was enough black marble still standing to give an impression of what it might have looked like when this part of the city had still been inhabited.

Some thoughtful soul had rigged a single orange lantern on a long iron pole over the main doorway, and a cluster of figures had collected in this weak pool of light.

"Evenin'," Som'er offered as they drew close.

The figures turned and Som'er found that he was addressing masked men. About a dozen of them in heavy wool cloaks and hoods and identical white plaster masks, and all of them were armed. Cutlasses, pistols, daggers, cudgels—each man was tooled up for some sort of trouble.

"What've y'all come as," grunted Som'er as he inspected the array of villainy.

"Blow me, it's the Yule Elf," said one.

"The Yule Elf ain't green," said another.

The tallest and slimmest stepped forward, gloved hands resting on a sizeable belt buckle. "What do you want?" Som'er was surprised to hear the voice was female.

"We's here fer the show," he said. "Mah second and me come up from the Bayou. Heard there was a big game o' Bullet goin' down tonight."

"Invite only," said the woman, her tone as expressionless as her masked face.

Som'er grinned, showing his ramshackle teeth, and jingled the heavy bag. "Got it right here."

The eyes behind the mask weighed up the bag and evidently arrived at an acceptable number because she nodded to her associates and they melted away like smoke, opening a passage up a few marble stairs to a bronze door beneath a huge cantilevered balcony.

Up close, the badly dented bronze was patchy with black and green rot, but it was unlocked and they went inside.

Som'er was not really surprised to find a gang of heavies lingering outside the venue of a Bullet game. Due mostly to the illegality of the pastime it could be difficult to find a location where the game could be played without interruption. Tavern and club owners were no use—the last thing they wanted was a gang of wealthy, armed drunkards descending on them, not to mention the dead bodies and bullet holes come the morning.

The game had become the almost-exclusive domain of the criminal fraternity, where one organization or another would "sponsor" a game, i.e. provide a discreet venue and enough muscle to ensure the players were not disturbed, their winnings were protected, and any bodies were cleaned up with no questions asked. All this was provided for a modest percentage of the evening's take. It was an arrangement that suited everybody involved.

There were more lanterns inside, throwing just enough light to hint at the size and grandeur of the interior without showing up its disrepair. The effect was impressive. Som'er did a fair amount of rubber-necking as he climbed another staircase behind the Brewmaster and Wesley, seeing shadowy halls on both sides and towering statues that were only vaguely humanoid occupying recesses at the head of the staircase.

Their shuffling and clanking sounded brittle and harsh in the mausoleum-like interior, at least until they followed the lantern trail deeper into the belly of the structure and arrived in a circular chamber that turned out to be a hollow marble cylinder reaching all the way to the roof. Pillars were spaced around the circumference of the room, a dozen paces apart, and they stretched up close to a hundred feet to the remnants of a stained-glass dome. Less than half a dozen panes were still intact and piercing stars glittered through the gaps.

A circular marble table, half a dozen feet across and over a foot thick, squatted in the middle of the room. More dull lanterns had been hung in here, but in greater profusion so that there was sufficient light to see by. Someone had possessed the foresight to provide a drinks cabinet off to one side that held dozens and dozens of stacked shot glasses as well as a few other niceties like a bar towel. At the far side was a long, low bench.

There were half a dozen other figures in the room, standing or sitting around the table and muttering in low voices. At their entrance, all eyes turned to regard the newcomers.

"How do, boys," Som'er said as he swaggered to the table (which came half-way up his chest). "Mighty fine evenin' fer a game o' Bullet."

"What in the world are you?" enquired a cultured voice from the far end of the table.

Som'er took a long look at the speaker. Aristocracy for certain. Some lord or duchy or something of that ilk with a fine silk waistcoat and billowing lace shirt. The clothes were well-filled and the face atop the ornate pearl-laced collar was bloated and ruddy. It was obvious this fellow enjoyed the finer things of life, fortified wines and rich food, as

the purplish rash across his nose and cheeks testified. His fingers, as plump and uniform as bunches of sausages and probably about as skilled, rested neatly beside one another on the table top.

His second, a spindly hawkish man with a black curly wig and a long overcoat, was standing at his shoulder, cleaning a very fine-looking pearl-handled revolver with silver engraving on the barrel. He too carried that discoloration of excess indulgence but looked nowhere near as far along the road as his colleague. There was also a sense of ruthless efficiency about him, like he wouldn't shy away from a bit of low work with a knife if there was a bag of coins in it for his trouble.

The plump waistcoat fellow was watching Som'er with big watery blue eyes and just the slightest confusion on his face when the Brewmaster and Wesley came up behind him.

"Oh, I say," said Waistcoat. "There's more of them."

"Ah heard there wuz a game happenin' tonight," Som'er said, touching the brim of his hat as other figures around the table began to take note. "Thought ah'd try ma luck."

"He's one of them Bayou Gremlins, sir," said the second, looking down the barrel of the exquisite pistol to check it was clean. "Don't recall ever seeing one in Malifaux before."

"Indeed," said Waistcoat with a giggle. "You're a funny little fellow, aren't you?"

Normally Som'er would have clambered onto the table and given the insolent toff a mouthful of his remaining boot in answer, but he was here on a mission. He could sense that sparking off a brawl probably wasn't the best way to ingratiate himself with his new companions, so instead he drew his revolver and threw it on the table with a clunk.

It was a huge, ugly piece of iron, starkly contrasting the delicate weapon being cleaned, but the implication was clear.

Waistcoat's expression darkened and he was about to speak again when the Brewmaster slid up alongside Som'er and got in first.

"Strange enough, where we come from, Som'er here is regarded as quite the *big* fellow," he said with a papery chuckle. Som'er felt a tug at his belt as the old Gremlin lobbed the huge coin bag onto the table with a very loud *chunk*. "Ah hope you'll forgive my companion here if his manners is a bit rusty. We don't get out in polite society all that much."

Waistcoat's watery eyes fixed on the huge bag and Som'er could almost hear the wheels squeaking around in his head as he estimated the wealth. There was a brief struggle of wills but in the end his greed overpowered his revulsion and an entirely false smile drew his lips apart like sodden curtains.

"Well then, welcome...friends."

"This here's Som'er Jones, and I'm the Brewmaster," the ancient Gremlin said.

"Are you indeed? I am Lord Pieter de Guillermo and this is my second, Barnaby Crumb." He made the vaguest gesture over his shoulder to which his man did not respond, still cleaning fastidiously. "My esteemed colleagues across the table are Doctor Everett Sharp and his second, Arthur Timeswell."

Som'er regarded a reed-thin man with excruciatingly perfect facial hair in the form of a beard and moustaches. He wore an expensive tweed suit and white cotton gloves, and his hair was slicked down in a center parting as exact and symmetrical as the rest of him. Sitting at his elbow was a more robust character in starched shirt and braces with an easy-going smile on his face and an artfully tousled mop of blond hair. Between them on the table sat a slim, rather effeminate-looking pistol that was barely a .25 caliber.

The Gremlin was unimpressed—it looked like a stiff breeze would blow the doctor over and his second had hands as soft as something dead and bloated that had bobbed to the surface of a swamp. He sucked at the tobacco wad in his lip and spat with feeling.

"And you will of course know Mr. Von Schill of the Freikorps," Lord Pieter continued without any acknowledgement of the brown spurt across the floor, "and his second, Mr. Kruger."

Som'er grinned darkly as he looked at the two men sitting across the table from him. Both were leathery from the sun and callouses were evident on the heavy knuckled hands they rested on the table. To Von Schill's right lay a gray metal revolver, unadorned and functional looking, but obviously well-maintained and used regularly, if the worn hand grips were any indication. Everything about them spelled danger.

Von Schill himself was wearing a rumpled shirt with the sleeves rolled up to mid-forearms, chewing on a fat cigar and watching Som'er with sharp eyes from behind a screen of pale smoke. Som'er noted the heavy jaw and muscular arms and shoulders, remembering Zoraida's warning about this one being more than even he could handle. Som'er chewed slowly and wondered if he'd get the chance to find out.

The plan was to get information from this man and Som'er supposed he ought to work on making some kind of in-road into a token friendship. "Evenin'," he said.

Von Schill nodded very slightly. "You're a long way from the Bayou, friend."

"Ain't that the truth," agreed Som'er, casting another disgusted look in the direction of the immaculate, aloof doctor.

"As a matter of fact," continued Von Schill, leaning forward on his elbows and removing his cigar with two fingers, "I don't think I've ever seen one of your kind in the city before. Must be a special occasion to get you all the way out here." Equal parts curiosity and suspicion swirled in the mercenary's gaze.

"We ain't so differn't ta you," Som'er reasoned. "Ah like the taste o' gold as much as the next feller. Take a drink, too, when ah c'n git one. Seem's ah'm in the right place fer both."

"That you are." Von Schill still looked suspicious, but Som'er had an idea that having survived this long without catching a knife between the shoulders probably meant that the mercenary was a cautious man. Som'er didn't view that as an issue—there was going to be serious liquor consumed before this night was over. Liquor made men a lot of things but cautious wasn't one of them.

As Som'er was climbing into a chair to get a better view of the table, he saw the Brewmaster pull Wesley aside and hiss in his ear.

"Ye'd best clear on outta here for now, Wesley. Leave the sack. Wait for us outside, and..." the Brewmaster slipped his apprentice an unmarked jug, "them masked fellers outside might get thirsty with all that waitin'. Why don't you share this around? It'll make the night go faster."

Wesley grinned and vanished.

"Gentlemen," Lord Pieter said, sweeping up a deck of cards and shuffling them with practice ease. "We will be played Six-Card Bullet this evening. Seconds match players on penalties, and stand in on incapacitation. Opening bets are five hundred, pistol bets one hundred, hand bids incremental. Bet limits open to table discretion. Agreed?"

There were nods and mutters from the other players.

"Very good. Seconds, to your stations, please."

While the four players began to pile their wagers into manageable stacks on the table, the seconds collected armfuls of shot glasses and carried them around behind each player. Bandoliers of bullets were produced and coiled nearby for easy reach and a variety of curious bottles and jugs were stacked protectively in corners or under the table.

At the right hand of each of the four players sat a shot glass and an unloaded revolver. To their left was a sizeable stack of silver and gold coins. In the doctor's pile he had several neatly folded wads of scrip and it looked as though Von Schill had a number of Soulstones among his stacks. The largest pile by far was at Lord Pieter's elbow.

Finally, when all seemed ready, Pieter chapped the card deck gently on the marble table.

"Are we ready, gentlemen?"

There was a chorus of nods.

"Then we begin. Opening bets are five hundred."

Coins were thrown into the center of the table from all directions, clattering loudly on the marble surface. Som'er was using old world Sovereigns, big coins of solid gold that he reckoned were worth about a hundred scrip apiece. Certainly, no one seemed to be contradicting him.

"Cards out," Pieter continued and began to deal. He dealt six cards to each player, the first card face-up, the next five face-down.

Som'er swept his gaze around the table. The doctor had Rams 9, Von Schill had Masks 4, Pieter had Crows 8 and he himself had been dealt Crows 13. Not necessarily a great start—another high card and he would bust out before he even got into the swing of things, but that was the nature of Bullet. Having played it for a number of years, the only things he'd really learned about the game in terms of predictability was that you got really drunk on

other people's liquor, which was the primary reason he played. He'd heard some say that there was a science to the game, that professional gamblers could count cards, hedge bets and generally beat the odds, but that had never been Som'er's tactics.

Bet big, drink hard, and sooner or later, things fell into place.

"Hand bets," Pieter said. "I'll bet another five hundred." He threw in another handful of coins.

"Match," Som'er grunted and threw in his own.

"Match," agreed the doctor and dropped a five-hundred scrip note on the growing pile. Som'er didn't care much for paper money; it didn't last long in the damp swampy environs of the Bayou and most Gremlins wouldn't touch it, much preferring the bite of gold between their teeth. There was of course the upside that the use of paper money gave him another excuse to loathe the doctor.

"Match," said Von Schill and threw on a few coins of his own.

"Bets down," Pieter said, flipping over his second card, which was Tomes 6. He didn't hesitate and flipped his third card—Masks 6. He'd scored 21, an unbeatable hand unless someone else could draw him.

With just the tiniest smirk, he turned his attention to Som'er. "Bullet, I believe."

"Bets down," the Gremlin said and flipped his second card – Tomes 12. He'd scored 25 and was blown out of the water already. "Tarnation," he cursed. "Busted."

Doctor Sharp followed with Masks 3, then Masks 10 and busted out with 22. Von Schill flipped over Tomes 8, then Crows 8 and called a stay on 20.

"First hand to me, eh?" chuckled Lord Pieter, gathering in the stack of coin and paper. He nodded to Barnaby, who lifted an ornate crystal jug filled to the brim with a vivid green liquid. "Czech Absinthe. I have a bottle brought through the Breach every now and again. A quite excellent tipple."

Som'er watched, disparaged, as the emerald liquor was poured into his shot glass, then Barnaby went around the table filling both the doctor's and Von Schill's glasses. Pieter, of course, didn't need to drink as he'd won the hand.

At his side, the Brewmaster was loading two bullets into Som'er's pistol—one for each card he'd played—then turned it grip inwards with the chamber open so the other players could all confirm it was loaded correctly.

"Foreign muck," the ancient Gremlin muttered, giving the green drink a dark look. "Proper liquor oughta be clear. The real color's on yer tongue an' in yer mind."

"Ah hears ya, Brewmaster," Som'er agreed.

Von Schill was loaded with three rounds, as was the good doctor. Pieter would normally have had to take three rounds as well, but winning with "Bullet" on 21 allowed him the privilege of defaulting during the shooting turn.

Once the pistols were loaded, the seconds set out shot glasses on the bench – an equivalent number to the bullets each player had been loaded with.



"Your good health, gentlemen," smirked Lord Pieter as the others reached for their glasses.

Som'er downed his absinthe in one swallow and grimaced. It tasted watery and weak and fancy and dumb. Just exactly the kind of hoity-toity dishwater he'd expect from an over-blown pillow like Pieter. Making it green didn't help any, either.

"Pistol bets, gentlemen," Pieter said.

Som'er threw two coins into the center of the table, Von Schill and Doctor Sharp each contribute three – a hundred scrip for each bullet.

The three losers collected their pistols and lined up beyond the table, facing the row of empty shot glasses. Som'er went first and shot a glass into a fan of sparkles, dead center. His second went a touch wide, however, and dug a groove in the wooden bench. Having missed, he'd lost his chance of claiming the scrip and would have to take another shot of absinthe as forfeit. He shrugged – he was better with a blunderbuss, anyway.

Both the doctor and Von Schill proved more accurate. Neither man missed a glass with three shots apiece. That was to be expected from Von Schill who made his living in dangerous places, but Som'er hadn't reckoned on the good doctor being quite so skilled. Those long thin fingers were apparently good for more than holding a scalpel.

As neither Von Schill nor Doctor Sharp had missed a shot there no winner of the pistol round and the bets were left on the table to boost the next pot.

Som'er grudgingly accepted his second shot of absinthe, throwing it back violently in the hope it wouldn't touch the sides on the way down and thus avoid having to taste it.

As befitted the "seconds matching players on penalties" rule, the seconds were then required to match their playing partners for drinks. This was to avoid the unfair of advantage of a second replacing their incapacitated compatriot without having previously consumed an equivalent amount of intoxicants. Kruger and Timeswell each took one shot of absinthe and the Brewmaster took two. Som'er feared for His Excellency's refined palate, but the old Gremlin showed no ill effects as he downed the two measures back to back.

The dealing hand moved anti-clockwise and next up was Von Schill, which proved little different for Som'er other than he busted out on three cards rather than two. Lord Pieter won the second hand too, collecting both the bets from the hand and the previous pistol round, although on a score of 20 he couldn't avoid the upcoming shooting round.

For the penalty, and as it was always "dealer's drink", Kruger produced a long bottle of smoked glass and poured a measure of amber liquid for Som'er, Doctor Sharp and Von Schill. "Fifteen year old cognac," he said as he delivered the measures. The doctor murmured in quiet pleasure at this and Pieter made a show of looking disappointed at having missed such an excellent spirit.

Som'er just glowered at the dark liquid. What was it with big folks and putting colors in their liquor? He downed his shot with the others and grimaced violently.

"Fifteen years old?" he complained, working his tobacco to try and mask the flavor. "No wonder it tastes so bad— damn stuff gone off! All that coin on the table, ye'd think the man wud spring fer a new bottle."

The doctor looked at him with open revulsion (which Som'er dutifully marked up on his mental tally of reasons to loathe him), but Von Schill just smiled and Lord Pieter hid a titter behind a lace kerchief. It was uncertain whether he was laughing at the comment or Som'er himself but the hefty Gremlin preferred to pursue one vendetta at a time and had his sights fixed squarely on Doctor Sharp.

The shooting round came next. He dropped three more coins on the table and lined up for his three bullets. He missed two, which meant he had to take another two shots of that thick, syrupy gunge. He did so, but now with such rancor that Kruger had his free hand hovering near his gun-belt while he poured. Von Schill won the shooting round this time when both Doctor Sharp and Lord Pieter missed a glass.

When it came time for the seconds to match their players, Som'er was fairly having kittens. He'd barely been able to get that last gulp of cognac down past a rebelling throat that objected to having to drink fifteen-year-old anything. When he saw three shot glasses of it being filled for His Excellency, he felt certain that all this bilge-water would hopelessly ruin the Brewmaster's ability to ever again craft his alcoholic magic, but the three shots vanished one after another and the hunched old Gremlin just shrugged dismissively.

The doctor's turn to deal came next around and Som'er's luck shifted infinitesimally for the better when he scored 20 on four cards, but ultimately lost out to Von Schill's "Bullet" on 21. He watched suspiciously as Timeswell produced a dark green bottle but was pleasantly surprised when the liquor poured into his shot glass was clear. "Gin," the man explained. "Tanqueray No. 10."

Som'er took a tentative sniff then downed the shot. His eyebrows shot up.

"That ain't bad," he whispered to the Brewmaster as he contemplated the taste. "Ain't quite what ah'd call 'shine, but that ain't bad at all."

Som'er was so surprised at the tolerable flavor of the gin that he deliberately missed all four of his shot glasses so he could tolerate it some more. Sure he lost another four hundred scrip in the process but he took the philosophical view that he wasn't playing with his own money anyhow.

When the Brewmaster's turn for five shots of gin came around, Som'er leaned close to see what he made of it.

"It's got potential," the Brewmaster said, nodding and smacking his lips. "Why yes, I'd say so."

It was finally Som'er's deal and he shuffled the cards expertly before firing them out across the table. He was deliberately sloppy in dealing the doctor's hand and took secret acidic pleasure in watching the man having to re-arrange them into the perfectly symmetrical order he clearly required.

Having his hands on the deck seemed to improve his luck and he finished on 21 with four cards. Unfortunately for him, Doctor Sharp also called "Bullet" on three cards, which put the pot into contention. It would go to the shooting round to decide, which put the doctor at a slight advantage of only having to hit three glasses against Som'er's four, but it was only money.

The real treat was that now the Brewmaster would be serving up something special for the gamblers. Enough with the fancy colored sewage they'd been flouncing around the table, now they'd get a *real* drink—Bayou style.

The Brewmaster hummed for a moment as he fingered through the sack, then lifted out a hefty clay jug, nodding to himself.

"The night's still young, fellers, so I thought I'd ease y'all in gentle," he said as he un-stoppered the jug and poured a measure for both Von Schill and Lord Pieter. "This a little concoction of mah own, I call 'er 'Gator Juice'."

"Why doncha hit me with a little o' that juice, Brewmaster?" asked Som'er, nudging a glass in the wrinkled old Gremlin's direction. The Brewmaster grinned and moved to oblige, but Doctor Sharp looked stricken.

"But what are you doing?" he objected. "You are in contention for the hand, sir. You have no forfeit this round. You do not need to drink."

"Who says anythin' about *needin*' ta drink," Som'er shot back, lifting his shot glass between thumb and forefinger once the Brewmaster had filled it. "What's wrong with jus' *wantin'* ta?"

He lifted the glass to his eye and gazed at the crystal clear liquid. "Now, y'all see that? Clear as mountain air. *That's* how liquor oughta be. None o' yer fancy colors. Ah don't rate drinkin' nothin' less'n ah c'n see through it."

Von Schill took his shot, coughed, swallowed several times and then sat quite still while a slow grin crawled over his face. Lord Pieter was holding his glass at arm's length, looking very uncertain. "This...is homemade, you say?"

"That she is, boy," the Brewmaster said. "Brewed with these two hands, right here."

"The Brewmaster's a legend in th' Bayou," said Som'er, pride swelling his chest. "Always been one, always gonna *be* one. Ain't nothin' alive knows more 'bout liquor than th' Brewmaster. Ah'll kill any man says differn't."

"Clearly this Brewmaster is of considerable cultural significance to your people," Pieter said, still looking very concerned about the contents of his shot glass. "I am certain that his title and position are well deserved, and would hate to cause any offence, unintentionally or otherwise."

"So quit flappin' yer lips and drink," grunted Som'er.

Lord Pieter had the look of a man who was unaccustomed to being addressed in this informal manner, but he raised the glass in a brief wordless toast. Som'er matched him with his own glass and they both drank.

Som'er was familiar with Gator Juice and had sampled it many times before. He was in complete agreement with the Brewmaster that this was an excellent introductory liquor to acclimatize his fellow gamblers to the world of Bayou 'shine. Hardy anyone ever died after drinking it.

For a moment or so, Pieter seemed to consider the unique flavor. The corners of his mouth began to curl up in what might have been relief that the beverage proved more palatable than expected, and then his entire body gave a violent jerk and he squawked like a kicked parrot.

Both Som'er and the Brewmaster roared with laughter.

"D'ya get that little snap at the end, thar?" he shouted. "Thas why we calls it Gator Juice, boy!"

Lord Pieter tried to force a smile although his ruddy coloring had diminished significantly. "Quite...quite lovely," he stammered, wiping his mouth with his kerchief, which was trembling. "Pistol bets, please, gentlemen."

The evening progressed. Som'er won a few hands but his pile of coin inexorably shrank. Von Schill and Doctor Sharp continued to win with frequency, but Lord Pieter seemed to have had much of the wind knocked from his sails after the introduction of "Gator Juice" and, following a serving of the Brewmaster's "Banjo Explosion", a few hands later, he subsided to monosyllabic answers while belching sourly and mopping his bulbous forehead.

After "Banjo Explosion" came "Hot Pepper Thunder" which sent Doctor Sharp into a coughing fit and caused Lord Pieter to dry-heave twice before he got himself under control. Both men suffered a noticeable deterioration in their aim, pistol barrels shivering while they drew beads. This in turn led to substantially more penalty drinks and before much longer Lord Pieter was slurring his words and spilling his liquor. His second, Crumb, still seemed in reasonable condition despite matching his associate's shots and it was after two shots of the Brewmaster's "Bush-Meat Pot-boiler" that the Lord retired in favor of his second with many apologies and unsteady legs, belching almost constantly.

Through it all, Von Schill seemed unfazed, although he was grinning far more often than he had earlier in the evening. His aim was as steady as ever and the only sign the alcohol was having any effect at all was the slight sparkle of sweat on the crown of his balding head.

"That's some liquor," he commented after he had finished his shot of "Blue Swamp Fricassee", a particular cheeky cocktail that had been known to leave Gremlins without the use of their knees for days at a time.

"Best damn liquor in Malifaux," boasted Som'er.

"Certainly the most potent," suggested the doctor, who had finally unbuttoned his starched collar. His second, Timeswell, had big sweat rings under his arms and looked none-too-steady even though he was sitting down. Som'er cast an experienced eye over the second and figured he'd last another half dozen shots, tops.

Som'er, who still felt perfectly clear-headed, decided that this might be a good time to probe the mercenary for information, now that everyone's tongues had been substantially loosened.

"So, I reckon you must get all kindsa jobs," he said in a casual manner while the Brewmaster loaded his pistol.

Von Schill shook his head while gathering in the cards. "Nope," he said.

"No? Ah thought a feller like you would be travellin' all over Malifaux fer all kindsa folks."

"Nope," Von Schill said again, shuffling.

"But ain't y'all a mercenary?"

"Nope."

Som'er frowned with puzzlement. "Then what is y'all?"

"Tired of this conversation," Von Schill said, and began to deal.

Som'er subsided, grinding what teeth he had left. Maybe after this was all over, he and the mercenary would have to have another discussion on the niceties of social intercourse—with his fists.

The hands continued and everybody was beginning to feel the effects of so much alcohol. The doctor's precise pronunciation was getting progressively thicker, Crumb kept giggling for no obvious reason and even Von Schill was a touch unsteady when he stood up from the table, although his aim was as sharp as ever.

Of course, Som'er was perfectly fine, but he was having some trouble reading the cards he was being dealt. Somebody must have smudged them, or perhaps it was the failing light. He certainly wasn't drunk, heck no.

He tried several more times to goad Von Schill into talking, but the man was as taciturn a person as the Gremlin had ever met and it was all he could do to get a response out of him never mind a conversation.

The next big game-change took place while Doctor Sharp was completing a pistol round. He took out his first two glasses with that flimsy little .25 pistol, but his final shot went high, ricocheted off the marble wall beyond and took Crumb through the shin.

The man shrieked and fell over, clutching his leg with both hands like he'd been shot. Som'er sniffed with distain. Personally, he felt that anything under .45 caliber didn't count.

The doctor staggered to assist but Crumb fended him off, apparently of the opinion that the good doctor was now more of a liability than a help. He yanked off his bandana, lashed it tightly around his leg and hopped away in search of a physician who hadn't taken over thirty shots of strong spirits in the last few hours, which in Malifaux was likely to take some time.

The incident had badly shaken the doctor who was just sober enough to recognize that shooting a man was somewhat in violation of his Hippocratic oath. He returned to his seat while Kruger poured him a measure of bourbon as his forfeit for that missed round. The doctor looked at it miserably and threw up his hands.

"I concede," he said in a voice thick with alcohol and emotion. "Arthur, my friend. You must replace me."

But Timeswell was slumped face-down on the table, snoring. He had apparently dropped off during the shooting round.

"Arthur!" the doctor snapped, shaking his second vigorously by the shoulder.

"Just another ten minutes, mother," murmured the other man before sliding off his chair to the floor, where he resumed snoring.

"Blast," said Doctor Sharp. Without another look at either of the remaining players, he stood with the slow unsteady dignity of a very drunk man and strode purposefully away while listing to one side like he was caught in a high wind. Shortly after he left the room there was a heavy thud and a series of bumps. Som'er imagined that was probably what a body falling down a flight of marble stairs might sound like.

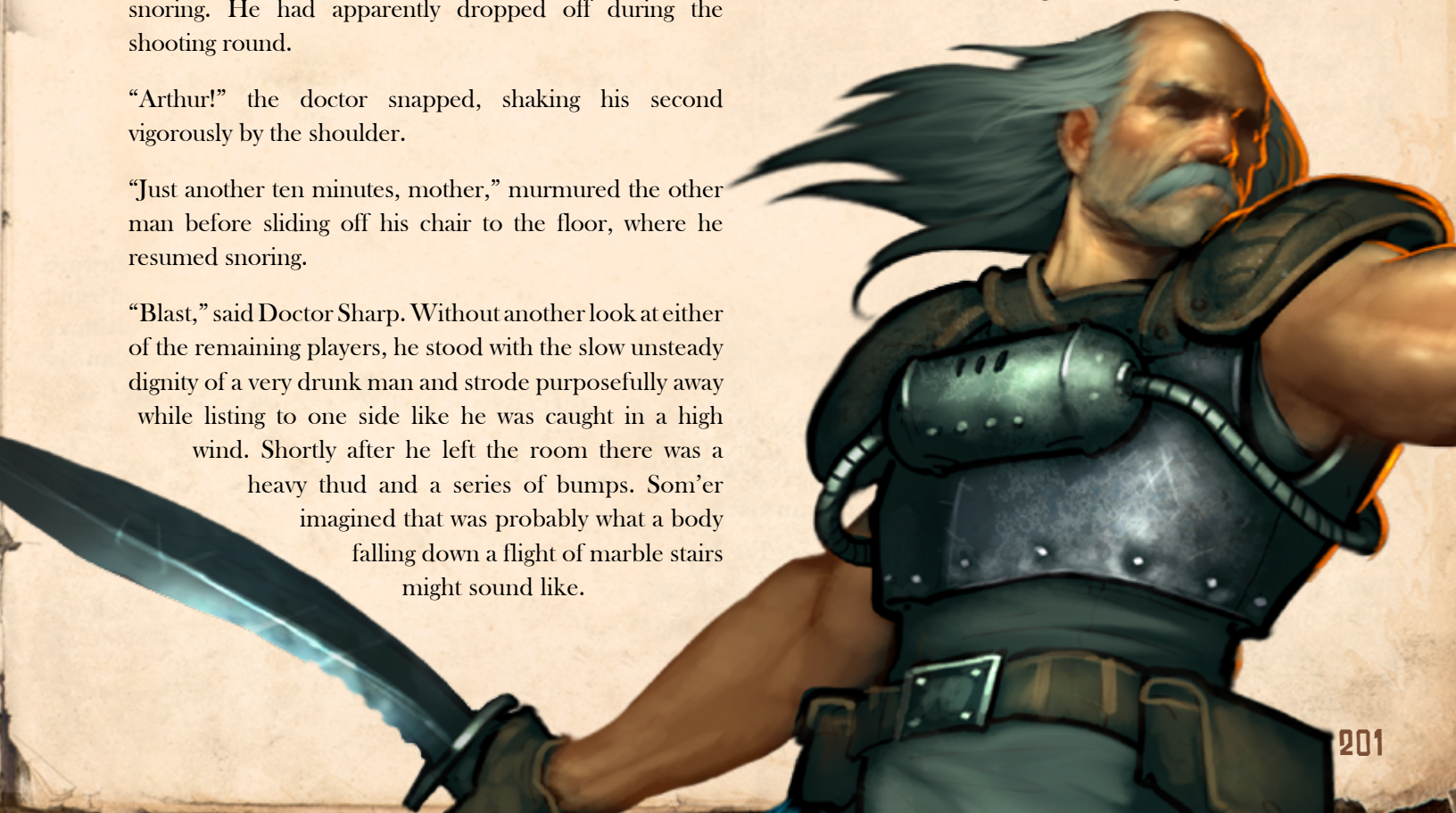
With both Crumb and Doctor Sharp out of the game, their sizeable remaining wagers were pushed into the middle of the table to be added to the next hand's pot. Som'er had to admit that there was now an awful lot of scrip up for grabs. Winning now would have placed him in a good position as he had been gradually hemorrhaging coins since the start of the evening and was down less than a thousand.

Von Schill by comparison had managed to win back as much as he had lost, and had yet to miss a single glass during any shooting round, while Som'er seemed to miss more than he hit. If he was going to win enough to stay in the game, it would have to be with the cards.

"Y'all sure play well fer a fightin' man," he said while he shuffled the cards for what was in all probability his last hand. His shuffling was slower as usual. The cards seemed to be fighting back.

"I assume that's a compliment," Von Schill said with a wry smile on his face. He was looking flushed and sleepy, but his hands were as steady as ever and his eyes were still sharp.

Som'er began to realize that Von Schill was not going to transform in the slack-tongued blowhard he had hoped for. The man was like a steel trap – the Gremlin knew no more about him now that he had when he walked in the door. He was going to lose half of his remaining funds with this hand, and the rest during the shooting round and have



to report back to Zoraida with his tail between his legs, the money gone and no intelligence of any sort to report.

Things certainly started that way. Som'er busted out on 22 with three cards after taking a chance on a 16 and flipping a Masks 6. Von Schill had wisely stuck with 18 and took the massive pot that included the wagers from Crumb and Doctor Sharp, and left Som'er with three gold Sovereigns to cover his pistol round.

The one consolation was that he got to celebrate his forfeit with a glass of the Brewmaster's "Midnight Locomotive" which very nearly burned his face off.

Like a condemned man, Som'er waited for His Excellency to load his pistol with the three shots he would likely miss. His maudlin brooding was interrupted by a sharp snap of gunfire and looked up to see Kruger, who had been getting quietly and compliantly drunk without drawing attention to himself, had inadvertently shot off his own index finger while loading Von Schill's pistol.

"Um," he said, blinking at it stupidly.

Von Schill lurched to his feet, spilling coins, and whipped off the other man's belt, wrapping it tightly around his wrist. "Keep it raised," he said, "and keep this belt tight until you get back to HQ. Get the surgeon to sew you up."

"What about your second?" Kruger slurred.

"I'll load my own damn pistol," the mercenary growled.

Kruger threw a sloppy salute, getting blood on his face, and stumbled out.

While Von Schill was cleaning his pistol with his shirt front, the Brewmaster leaned close to Som'er.

"He's alone," he whispered. "Now's our chance. You gotta win the next round, boy."

"Ain't no way ta beat him in shootin'," Som'er hissed back. "Feller ain't missed a shot yet."

"Ye'll lose the shootin' round, true, but ye paid for that already. It's the *next* hand ye gotta win."

Som'er was struggling to follow.

"Ain't got nothin' left ta wager. Ah'm out o' the game after the shootin'."

"There's yer wager," the Brewmaster slipped a freshwater pearl about the size of a child's marble into his hand. "That'll get ye in for one more hand, but ye needs ta win."

"Huh?" Som'er was still in the dark. He failed to see how one more hand could make any difference now.

Their hushed conference came to an abrupt close when Von Schill looked up, his weapon loaded. "Shooting round," he grated.

Som'er took his place and was surprised to feel the floor give slightly under him and he walked around the table. Damn place was falling apart—needed to get some sturdy Gremlin architecture in here. Damn floor was all uneven.

Von Schill had set up his own glasses for his shooting round and shot all three without hesitation or error. Som'er took aim at his own three but they seemed to be trying to dodge. He shot the bench twice and his third bullet caromed off the wall and screamed around the circular chamber, sparking and ricocheting until it smashed a half-drunk bottle of fortified wine that Lord Pieter had left behind and embedded itself in the seat of his chair. A few days later, he would find a bullet hole in his britches a half-inch south of his unmentionables and immediately go in search of a drink to medicate his belated shock.

Von Schill snorted with laughter and filled three spare shot glasses with something he called Vodka. Som'er drank them obligingly, but in all honesty could taste nothing after the Brewmaster's last dose of "Midnight Locomotive".

As he slumped back into his chair, Von Schill yawned and stretched.

"Guess that's it," he said, scratching. "I have to admit, for a little feller you sure know how to put it away."

"One more hand," Som'er slurred in response, trying to keep his eyes focused under the brim of his big hat.

"With what? You lost your last coin in the shooting round."

Som'er placed the pearl on the table with elaborate care, lest it roll away. He seriously doubted he'd be able to catch it.

Von Schill looked at the precious stone and shrugged. "Why not. One more hand."

He dealt Som'er six cards starting with Rams 9 and dealt himself a start of Tomes 10. Som'er let the pearl trundle towards the center of the table and Von Schill dropped a stack of coins in to cover.

"Bets down," he said, flipping over Masks 5 and Crows 5 to sit on 20.

Som'er reached down – the cards seemed a long way away—and managed to flip his second card over. Rams 9. He was sitting on 19, and had lost again.

"One more card," the Brewmaster whispered in his ear.

"I cain't flip on 19—I'll bust out," he retorted in a stage whisper that Wesley could probably have heard outside.

"So what's ta lose, boy?" chuckled the Brewmaster. "Flip."

And so Som'er flipped over his third card.

Tomes 2.

"Well, ah'll be," he murmured. "That's Bullet right thar."

Von Schill chuckled and leaned back in his chair. "Well done. You won yourself enough for another couple of hands, but first you got to get through the shooting round."

"An' before the shootin', there's a forfeit less'n the rules is changed," said the Brewmaster pleasantly. He slid a thin clay flask from inside his sleeve and shuffled around the table to Von Schill's glass. "A little somethin' I like ta call 'Wise Old Owl'."

Som'er blinked slowly at the small stack of coins on the table while the Brewmaster poured and Von Schill drank. There were ten coins in the pot, plus the Brewmaster's pearl. He might make another two rounds out of that, but he'd be losing two-three hundred scrip every shooting round. He just didn't understand why the Brewmaster insisted on continuing to play—losing was inevitable at this point.

"So," the Brewmaster said, leaning on his stick and fixing Von Schill with a shrewd eye. "Where'd you take that big crate you smuggled through the Breach for Ramos, last moon?"

"Warehouse 9," Von Schill said without a moment's hesitation. "Bentback Dock, straight south from the Star Theater."

Som'er's mouth fell open.

"Whuh?" he gurgled.

"Much obliged to ye," said the Brewmaster and spun on his heel. "Get your butt movin', Jones. Effects won't last long—time we wuz gone."

"Whuh?" Som'er said again.

"Wesley!" His Excellency bellowed with substantially more volume than Som'er thought was possible. "Get in here an' give an ol' Gremlin a hand with this dummy."

The apprentice came at a run and hooked his hands under Som'er's armpits, hauling him to his feet and helping him out of the chamber and down the stairs on rubbery legs, leaving a blank-faced Von Schill still sitting at the table.

"How'd...what'd...how come..." Som'er started a few times. They passed a snoring Doctor Sharp sprawled on the marble staircase, and then half a dozen equally comatose masked heavies scattered about the entrance. The Brewmaster took all of this in his stride, staff moving quickly as they hurried across the wide promenade and back into the claustrophobic alleys again.

"What in tarnation's goin' on?" Som'er finally bellowed when the cold night air had restored some of his wits. "How'd you git that feller ta spill it so quick?"

"Shame on you, Som'er Teeth Jones," the Brewmaster scolded him. He seemed utterly unfazed by all the liquor he'd drank. "You think all I does is brew 'shine ta get you folks drunk? Wesley—constituent ingredients o' 'Wise Old Owl', if you please."

"Blood-beech bark, ground. Swine mushroom, sliced 'n' boiled. Uh...swamp adder venom, three drops, an' a pinch o' nutmeg for flavor."

"Good boy," the Brewmaster nodded. "An' it's purpose?"

"S'a real potent suggestive, Excellency," the Apprentice puffed, laboring under the weight of Som'er. "Y' git a feller ta drink it an' if the dosage is right, they'll tell yer pretty much anythin' you want."

"You drugged 'im!" exclaimed Som'er, swerving violently with the realization and almost crushing Wesley. "You drugged 'im an' he spilled 'is guts!"

"Now yer getting' it," the Brewmaster grinned.

"But why wait till now?" Som'er complained, reeling. "Why not just dose the feller right at th' start?"

The Brewmaster shrugged his hunched shoulders and his eyes crinkled with amusement. "Well, why not? I ain't seen a good game o' Bullet in an age, an' like you said yerself, ah likes a drink."

LUCKY EMISSARY

Roll, roll! Faster, ya can do better than that y'pudgy sonofahawg, FASTER!

Great magical doin's across the land, hey? Folks makin' the world different, other folks breakin' the world all up? Great powers an' schemes an' dest'nies?

Well, whyn't you just drop yer pants there, reach down an' just cram all that as far up as it'll go?

Haaa, see that? Trashed the house, lookit them splinters fly! Thazzit, folks, run!

The Lucky Effigy never wanted to get made. Even when it was just a puff of witch-breath still being stitched into a body, it knew it wanted no part of any of this.

Quitcher whining! Y'wanted to be a big fellow in the Bayou, hey? Well, yer running with someone awful special now! Kick those feet up or lose yer toes, haw haw! C'mon now, faster! FASTER!

But here it is. Well, all right then. Time to have some fun.



LUCKY EMISSARY — COST 10

Enforcer, Rare 1

EMISSARY OF FATE

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	6	9	6	6	3

ABILITIES

Power Sink: When this Crew scores 1 or more **VP** from the Strategy, this model gains the following Condition for the rest of the game: "**Destined +1:** At the end of this model's Activation it heals +1 damage. This Condition may not be removed by other models' Actions."

Hard to Kill: While this model has 2 or more **Wd** remaining when it suffers damage, it may not be reduced to below 1 **Wd**.

"Roll It That Way!": When another unengaged friendly model within 3 flips (not cheats or plays) one or more , this model may push up to 3" in any direction after resolving the current Action.

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1.

LUCKY EMISSARY

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) It Was Your Fate To Be Trampled (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 3): Target suffers 3/4/6 damage.

Caught In The Spokes: After resolving, place the target anywhere in base contact with this model.

Charge Through: After succeeding against an enemy model, instead of dealing damage, push the target 4" away from this model, then this model takes a Charge Action against a different target if it is not engaged.

(1) Dead In Their Tracks (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 10): Target model gains **Slow**. If it already has **Slow**, it gains **Paralyzed** instead.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) "Onward, Bessy!" (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12): Push this model up to 3" in any direction.

(0) "Reach Into The Hat...of Destiny!": This Action may only be taken while this model has the **Destined +2** Condition or greater. Remove the **Destined** Condition from this model to flip a card which may not be cheated for every other friendly model in play and apply one of the following results to the model, depending on the suit:

- Place a Scheme Marker in base contact with the model.
- The model receives the **Fast** Condition.
- Heal up to 2 damage on the model.
- Place the model within 4" of its current location.

50mm

SPARKS

At first, the Rail Workers shooed the little Gremlin off, throwing stones and loose pieces of metal at him. But every day he returned with his over-sized wrench, trying to lay some track for himself. One day, Mei Feng had enough, and she raised her hand, preventing her workers from scaring the beast off. She watched him work with a half-smile, amused at the little creature that wanted to be human. But, at the end of the day, the Gremlin's section of track was perfect.

So the next day the workers shrugged and let him work, glad to have help with their burden. Eventually they even gave him the nickname "Sparks" as a friendly gesture. They thought of him as good luck and laughed at his antics.

And all the while Sparks watched the humans, and learned.



ABILITIES

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Hostile Work Environment: Enemy models within ❶8 may not target models friendly to them with Actions.

Accomplice: After this model ends its Activation a friendly model within 6" may Activate immediately as a Chain Activation.

Getting Creative: Once per Turn, when a friendly Living Gremlin is killed within 6" and LoS, it may drop a Scrap Marker instead of a Corpse Marker.

SPARKS

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) My Beatin' Wrench (**MI** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.
▤ ***Blaze:*** After damaging, the target gains the **Burning +1** Condition.

(0) Metal Platin' Means You's a Robot (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 6): Discard target Scrap Marker within 6" to give target other model the Construct Characteristic and the following Condition until the end of this model's next Activation or until this model leaves play: "**Armor +1:** Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1."
▤ ***Overtime:*** Once per Turn, after succeeding, this model may take a second (0) Action this Turn.
🐺 ***Go Get 'em:*** After succeeding against target Gremlin, push the target up to 5" in any direction.

(1) Packed With Explosives (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 10): Target gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Unstable:** Attack Actions targeting this model which result in a damage flip gain +🌩 to Moderate and Severe damage."
▤ ***Fiery Contents:*** After succeeding, the target gains the **Burning +1** Condition.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Wind 'em Up (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12 / Rg: 6): Target non-Leader Construct within 6" gains the **Fast** Condition.

30mm

GLUTTONY

He never went hungry, no matter how hard the times. In his days on the rail crews, the days in the mountains and the prospecting camps, the days beating time for the load haulers on the river barges, even the nights fetched up at the back of the Crossroads Hotel's shabby stage, and Lord knew there was a town that knew short commons.

Big he was, but not weak. Able to take what he wanted. It was always his joy to eat well, and if the longing expressions on his gaunt companions made each bite a little tastier, well, we're all sinners, are we not?

They liked his style, that nice young couple, and understood him through and through. Hunger might be the best sauce, but other folks' hunger is most delicious of all. So he'll follow their request, spread the appetite, and eat his fill every damn day.



GLUTTONY COST 8

Enforcer, Living, Mercenary, Rare 1

CROSSROADS SEVEN, TORMENTED

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	5	10	5	7	2

ABILITIES

Come On In My Kitchen: Enemy models which end their Activation within ❶3 which did not take a (1) Interact Action during the Activation must discard a card or suffer 2 damage.

Hard to Wound +1: Damage flips against this model suffer ⍈.

Df (⍈) Hunger Pains: After this model fails, the Attacker must discard a Scheme Marker friendly to it and within 6" of it or suffer 2 damage.

GLUTTONY

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) None Can Be Found (**Ca** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 1): Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.

(1) A Rhythm to Those Who Hunger (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 6): Target enemy model gains the following Condition until the start of this model's next Activation, or until this model leaves play: "**Mad With Hunger:** Whenever a Scheme Marker is placed within 6" and LoS of this model, push this model into base contact with the Marker, then discard it and this model suffers 2 damage. End this Condition after this model removes 2 Markers in this way."

⍈ ***Leftovers:*** After succeeding, place a Scheme Marker into base contact with any enemy model within 6" and LoS of the target, other than the target.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

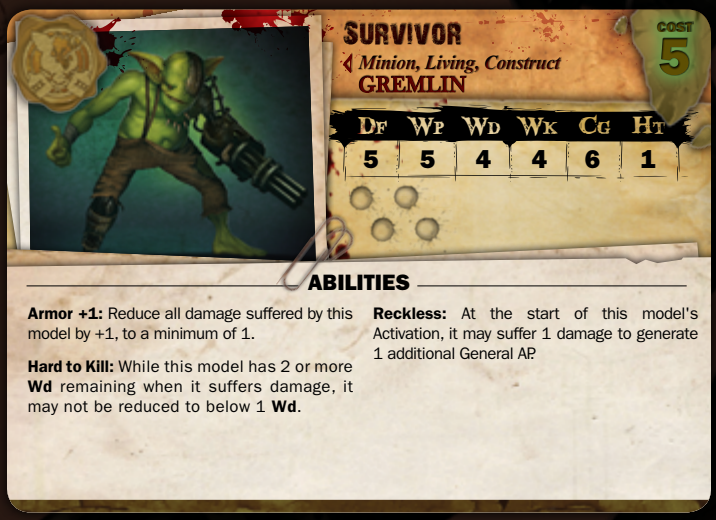
(0) Feast! (**Ca** 5 / TN: 9✕ / Rg: 6): Discard all Scheme Markers within ⍓2 of target other friendly model.

40mm

SURVIVOR

Gator attacks are just a part of life on the Bayou. Every village has a number of Gremlins missing arms or legs. And they are the lucky ones; the unlucky ones simply never come back out of the depths of the murky swamp.

So when Sparks first saw the mechanical limbs belonging to many of the Rail Workers, he knew exactly how to put such things to use. Every day he got closer to the humans, studying them, trying to unlock their secrets. Now he has a lucrative business making replacement parts for other Gremlins who got just a bit too close to the fearsome gators of the Bayou. At first, his new limbs were simply getting the job done of filling the gap. But as time passed, he has learned how to take custom orders. Now if a Gremlin loses his leg to a Gator, he can rest assured that he can have a new leg crafted that can fire like a Gatling Gun, or any other manner of useful modification.



ABILITIES

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Hard to Kill: While this model has 2 or more **Wd** remaining when it suffers damage, it may not be reduced to below 1 **Wd**.

Reckless: At the start of this model's Activation, it may suffer 1 damage to generate 1 additional General AP.

SURVIVOR

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Rusty Replacements (**Ml** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 2/4/5 damage.
⚔ ***Rusty Weapons***: After damaging, the target gains the **Poison +1** Condition.
🕮 ***"Oh, Hey, Shiny..."***: After resolving, this model may push up to 4" towards target Scrap Marker within 8" and LoS.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) "A Gremlin With Mechanical Limbs...Slowly Back Away." (**Ca** 4 / TN: 9🡅): Until the end of the Turn, enemy models within ❶4 may not Charge and reduce their **Wk** to 4 if it was above 4.

(0) "This Thing Shoots?!" (**Ca** 4 / TN: 9): This model gains the following Condition until the end of the Turn: **"This Thing Shoots?!:** This model's **Rusty Replacements** Attack Action counts as being Rg ⌐9 instead of ⫻ 2."

30mm

MECHANIZED PORKCHOP

The giant, metal pig strutted about the village, bowling over its flesh and blood cousins with ease. Sparks stood by its side, beaming with pride and yammering the ear off of any Gremlin who would listen to him about his "masterpiece."

All the other Gremlins gave him a long-suffering smile. They liked Sparks, he was a nice enough feller', always shared his 'shine, never made too much trouble; so none of them had the heart to tell Sparks how badly he had failed. They shook their heads, how could the self-proclaimed "genius mechanic" not see the most blatant design flaw?

Eventually, Sparks grew frustrated with the reception of his work. "What?" He bellowed. "What's the problem?"

A little Gremlin to his side looked up with sheepish eyes. "What good's a pig ya can't eat?"



MECHANIZED PORKCHOP COST 7

Minion, Construct

PIG, FOUNDRY

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	5	6	6	8	2

ABILITIES

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Walking Rage Machine: Other friendly models within 3 which declare a Charge Action immediately suffer 1 damage and gain to Attack flips for the duration of the Activation.

Detachable Tail: Once per Turn, after this model completes a Walk Action, a Scrap Marker may be placed into base contact with it.

Bayou Two Card: This model may Cheat Fate with the top card of its Fate Deck.

MECHANIZED PORKCHOP

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Metal Tusks (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Target suffers 2/3/5 damage. This Action must declare a Trigger if able.

Blaze: After damaging, the target gains the **Burning +1** Condition.

Bowled Over: After succeeding, push target 4" directly away from this model, then push this model into base contact with the target.

Gore Frenzy: When damaging, this Attack deals +1 damage. End this model's Activation after resolving this Action.

Pound to Dust: After damaging, discard all Scheme Markers within 3 of the target.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Flamin' Porkchops (**Ca** 5 / TN: 11): Until the end of the Turn, any other model which ends its Activation within 3 gains the **Burning +1** Condition.

50mm



Will you answer the call?

To all PUBLIC-SPIRITED CITIZENS and TOWNSFOLK of RIDLEY



You are invited to present yourself for membership of the

FIRST RIDLEY CITIZENS' RIFLES

A voluntary union of concerned and able-bodied Citizens who are prepared to take a greater role in the defense and safety of this Township and its District and the residents, settlers and travelers therein,

counteracting the growing and regrettable influence of seditious elements, outlaws, Arcanists and the many dangers native to our new World

To be commanded by Captain Whitman E. Thorngrave of His Majesty's Fourth Canadian Regiment (ret'd), with certain costs to be borne by the Aldermen of the Township

Prospective members are asked to report to the meadow south-west of the town off the rail line at 4pm sharp on the afternoon of Thursday April 24th, with a Rifle (or other long-arm) and not less than twenty rounds of ammunition.

Trials and recruitment ceremony to be followed by retirement to Sillitoe's Hotel for refreshments

The Founders reserve the right to turn away members of disreputable associations such as but not limited to the Miners' and Steamfitters' Union or Freikorps. Please be aware that Guild regulations may render its employees ineligible to serve.

GREMLIN UPGRADES

CONFLUX OF MISFORTUNE

COST: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Som'er is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  The Bayou Is a Harsh Mistress: Friendly models within 4 which flip a card from the top of their deck using **Bayou Two Card** gain to the flip.
- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (0) She's Out of Control! (**MI** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 1): Target suffers 2/2/3 damage.



RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

CONFLUX OF INEBRIATION

COST: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if The Brewmaster is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  That's the Stuff: When this model suffers damage from the **Poison** Condition, its controller may push it up to 5" in any direction.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Blind Drunk: Target model within 6" with **Poison +3** or greater must discard two Soulstones or cards or gain the following Condition until the end of the Turn: "**Blind Drunk:** This model suffers on all duels."



RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

CONFLUX OF BLOOD TIES

COST: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Ophelia is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Survival Gear: Friendly Kin which begin their Activation within 4 heal 1 damage.
- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (0) Stupefied (**Ca** 6 / TN: 10 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 4): Target model gains the following Condition for the rest of the Turn unless it discards two cards: "**Stupefied:** This model suffers to **Df** duels against **Sh** Attack Actions."



RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

CONFLUX OF BACON

COST: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Ulix is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Pig Whistle: Friendly Pigs may not target this model with Charge Actions.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) "Gentle" Nudge: Push target friendly Pig within 2" up to 6" in any direction, then the target suffers 2 damage.



RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate



Conflux of Explosive Force

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Wong is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Chain Reaction: Blast Markers placed within ❶4 of this model by friendly models which deal damage, deal +1 damage.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Prepped and Ready: This model's controller draws two cards and then places two cards from their hand on top of their deck, in any order.

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

Conflux of Bushwhacking

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Mah Tucket is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Well Equipped: After flipping for initiative, this model's controller may discard a card to add the card's suit to the initiative flip (this may result in two benefits from the **Chores** Ability).
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Supper Time!: Until the end of the Turn, this model draws a card after killing or sacrificing an enemy model.

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

Lucky Conflux

Cost: 0 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  The Power Rages: Friendly Minions within ❶4 gain ✚ to all Attack duels.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) On the Tides of Fate: Discard a Soulstone to draw two cards and then discard two cards.

RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate



This chapter contains a story as well as new models and Upgrades for **THE TEN THUNDERS** Faction.
These models and Upgrades are not a part of the Campaign and may be hired normally during any game.

FROM THE ASHES

BY: N.A. WOLF

Never forget where you came from.

That was the last thing they had told him before the roar of the arcane vortex deafened him.

It came in a sudden flash, and before he knew what had happened, he was sucked through the shimmering tear in the fabric of reality. His insides were on fire and his hair stood on end, as if an electric current had passed from his fingers to his toes, liquidating every single organ in his body as it snaked its way from top to bottom. The world spun around him as hues of impossible colors flashed before his eyes. He thought he could see shapes in the swirling chaos, but he felt so violently sick that he could spare no effort to interpret any of them. Every particle of his body was rushing to escape, but he stood firm by pure force of will, determination surpassing his own incomparable pain.

And then it was over. He was on the other side.

Huang Dawei gulped lungfuls of pure mountain air as his sight and hearing returned to him. Panting on all fours and feeling as though he were about to retch, he looked upward to the wink of dying stars pulsing in analien sky.

He was on Earth no more. Never there did the heavens look so infected, bleeding with streaks of miasmic emerald. Craggy peaks and scorched ground stretched for miles in the pale light of twin moons.

In the vast wake of this jagged landscape, it took a moment for Huang Dawei to notice the saffron-robed figure looming over him. The man wore a cracked, porcelain mask and he held out a thin blanket in one hand and a glass bottle of clear liquid in the other.

"Drink this, it will help with the sickness." There was no warmth in the torakage's voice.

Huang Dawei stood up with a groan and raised the bottle greedily to his lips, downing its contents in a single gulp.

"Now," he said, taking the empty bottle away, "tell me why you are here." He pressed the blanket into Dawei's hands.

The answer came to him easily. It was what they had told him to say, but he fought not to make it sound pre-rehearsed and mechanical. "My home has been destroyed, my country shattered to pieces. There is nothing left for me anywhere else." He clutched the frayed fabric.

The guard nodded at him and allowed him to pass, whispering beneath the faceless mask, "Never forget where you came from, Huang Dawei. In this new world, memories will be all we have left. We will need them to make it our own."

The memories were strong indeed.

The Three Kingdoms, Earthside. Day zero.

On the eve of the Harvest Moon, brilliant hues of orange, pink, and crimson cast a tapestry across the hazy skyline as day transformed into dusk, staining the red-tiled roofs of the tallest temples with pale patches of ochre light. In the fading cruor of the setting sun, the streets of Zhong Guo's capital exploded with a cacophony of bangs and shouts as firecrackers and celebratory canon blasts erupted in gouts of flame. Blood-colored streamers hanging from every doorway in the streets caught the eye, each decoration inscribed with characters of good luck and prosperity in bold, black strokes. But this day was not a day of celebration for the massive crowd of protestors screaming in the central square.

It was a day of revolution.

Da Laohu stood erect on the gallows and began the struggle meeting in his booming voice, magically magnified to project itself over the shouting of the throng. "Greatness is measured only in absolutes. The gods hand greatness unto us through the Mandate of Heaven, and we hold on to it forever. You are born with greatness, or you are not, and it is all up to Fate. Fate alone will determine our future..." The crowd echoed in agreement. Shouts from every direction rang in his ears louder than gongs. *Kill the foreigners! Liberate Zhong Guo! Freedom begins today!*

Laohu cast a steely glance at the three Guild Redcoats bound and gagged at his feet, kneeling before the crowd

gathering about the gallows. He drew upon the frenzy of the mob, and with contempt, he spat at the golden rams pinned to their chests. All three stared at the wooden planks of the stockade, unable to look up at the crowd shouting adamantly for their demise. A stinking shower of rotten fruit, mud, and sewage flew up at them in a putrid deluge.

"These foreigners," Laohu continued, "have come into our country to prove that the Mandate rests upon their shoulders, and not ours. But they are dangerously mistaken," he growled, extending his arms to the crowd with a wan smile. He bent down and held one of the guards close by his throat. "Scared and lifeless, they kneel before you, besmirching our harvest festival with the presence of foreign devilry. They even dare to bring in the worst of all sins to corrupt our people for their profit during our sacred day! Look!" He let go of his subject with disgust.

Hauling one of the other prisoners to his feet and reaching into the satchel tied to his back, Da Laohu pulled out a bag of crushed poppies. "Poisoning our people with opium, the nectar of Hell itself. And there's more!" he thundered. He reached into the pouch again and pulled out a pebble so small that no one could see it distinctly, but they all knew what it was.

Línghúnshí. Soulstone. The crowd grew immediately silent.

"We fight like dogs for these *rocks*—thousands of years of noble history reduced to naught but barbarity. Were we not the center of the world once without them? Without them, were we not living in elegant palaces of lacquered wood and jade while the West lived in huts of mud? Well I say we have had enough. *Enough!"* Da Laohu smiled. He had rehearsed well indeed. They had told him exactly what to say, and it was working.

The crowd began to raise their fists in the air, shouting and screaming even louder than before. Those at the back formed a solid wall to impede the wave of Guild officers now scurrying onto the scene. Wardens, peacekeepers, and other riot-control constructs steamed behind them in the chill autumn air. The guardsmen began forcing the crowd apart, drawing swords and batons. Some fired pistols into the air to scare the protestors into dispersal, but it was to no avail. They could not make it through the masses swarming the gallows to save their captured comrades.

Da Laohu's voice rose again. "The Mandate was once ours before the Black Powder Wars ended and the Guild occupied our lands. The gods are testing us. Will we not answer?" The crowd screamed its assent, pumping its fists towards the heavens as it roared and shouted over and over, *zhège guójiā shì wǒmen de. This country is ours.*

Smiling once more, Da Lao Hu concluded, "The imperialist foreigners must die! We start today with these three dogs. Fate has decreed it...and no one cheats Fate!" The speech ended with a flash of steel and three jets of arterial spray. The crowd roared its approval as the parched wood of the gallows drank deeply its crimson feast. With disgust, the bodies were kicked off the stockade into the depths of the throng, ripped apart and trampled in a haze of blood. And yet...

Da Laohu was gone before a squad of Guild guard broke through the mass of bodies and began firing indiscriminately into the crowd.

Not even when the Eastern Division of the Guild Imperial Bureau starved, branded, and horribly lacerated the few survivors of the massacre could they identify the name of the man who had led the struggle. The survivors could not even recall what he had looked like—a porcelain mask had disguised his face. Behind their tears and blood, they could only call him "The Boxer" for the clawed, metal gauntlets he wore on each hand, so much like the talons of a ravenous tiger.

The day of the Boxer's rebellion was the beginning of the end for Zhong Guo. No one knew that better than the doctor Huang Dawei, who had watched the entire massacre from the window of his apothecary, wondering the whole time whether or not such barbarity had doomed his country more than the Guild ever could.

Looking up, Dawei saw the others arriving through the tear in groups. Men, women, and children emerged in a flash, some holding rucksacks close. Many families nursed infants or pets. Most were worn and starved, but a few remained upright and proud. As the families from the Three Kingdoms took their first steps upon Malifaux's earth, many retched or clasped their stomachs as though about to vomit, until they realized that they had navigated safely across the tear and stood upright in relief. Others were screaming, hands clasped over their temples or eyes, blue fire dying from their pupils. A few moments and shuddering breaths later, they too stabilized. A poor few were not so lucky. A series of covered, white lumps were

attended by weeping men and women—the sheeted bodies of those whom the journey had claimed.

A rough hand placed itself on Dawei's shoulder. He looked up quizzically, still holding his blanket close to fight the chill mountain breeze. "You are the doctor, are you not? We have been expecting your arrival." The speaker was a woman. She was shorter than he was, but her size made her no less intimidating. Though her features were soft and her face pale and heart-shaped, the soot and grime coating her thin nose and pursed lips gave Dawei the distinct impression that this woman was not to be trifled with. She wore not the traditional qipao customary of women from her country, but instead a pair of dark green-gray slacks and a stained white tank top that clung tightly to her muscular torso which was tattooed with rippling dragon's scales. Her hair swept the ground behind her in a long braid that culminated at the top in a bun held tight with thorny pins. They glittered in the moonlight like the flanges of a perverse crown.

"I am the doctor you sent for," he stammered.

"Let us hope for your sake that you are. Da Laohu told me that you would be joining us. I have much to ask of you, *Huáng Yīshēng. Zǒu ba,* come with me."

The Three Kingdoms. Earthside. Five weeks occupied.

The executions in the capital's central square triggered an open rebellion. Mass anti-Guild protests had erupted in almost every city. Each had been more fervent than the last. All the while, the Guild hunt for the man known only as "The Boxer" was futile. No matter how many houses were raided, suspected affiliates tortured, or bribes paid, he remained invisible, like a toxin indistinguishable from the lifeblood of the country.

The Guild Imperial Bureau, frustrated with its failure, funneled even more guardsmen into the rowdier cities under the pretense of asset security. And so the lives of three faceless cogs within a great machine condemned the lives of hundreds of thousands, not only by blade or black powder, but also through the harsh scrutiny of Guild oversight and the unpayable debt stipulations of the post-rebellion peace treaty. The outer villages, decentralized hotbeds whose loose governance provided a haven for anti-Guild groups, were targeted and starved into submission.

Grain had been part of the reparations tax levied by the overseers of the Imperial Bureau; it was to be sent straight through the Breach to feed Malifaux's mining colonies. With no grain available in the city, the burden of reparations had been placed on the peasants who were the farthest from any position to pay them. Once the farmers made a weary journey to the coast to load the last bushels from the autumn harvest onto the ravenous Guild steam ships docked at the treaty ports, their families were left with naught but a meagre share for the winter. The frosts were soon approaching, and both man and swine rotted away with little distinction from each other in the murderous cold of the shortening days.

Tales of cannibalism and, even more harrowing, of infanticide, were common; they had once been ghost stories told in times of abundance as a reminder of a worse fate. Now, they were all too real. While farms decayed, the opium trade flourished. Many, under the impression that the end had come, resigned themselves to stupor and malaise in smoky opium dens spotted across both the countryside and the cities like sores.

The legation quarter of the capital which housed the Guild "ambassadors" was especially protected, not only by elite men, but also by great constructs the likes of which most in the Three Kingdoms had never seen. People heard tell of bat-like creatures with telescopic heads that could screech an alarm the moment they saw an intruder, or four-legged steel beasts with cat-like features that could scurry up the exposed flanks of buildings, harpoons swiveling from their backs and ready to fire. Perhaps the most profane were the bipedal constructs which seemed to make a mockery of the human form. With huge shields in one hand and broadswords the width of an entire man in the other, they marched through the desolate streets alongside the Guild platoons.

It was for fear of the protests, and the great metal beasts designed to ruthlessly quash them, that Huang Dawei stayed out of the capital. While once he travelled weekly to secure various herbal remedies to administer to his patients in the countryside, he now paid his neighbor, Ming Yue, to bring them instead. She was a tinkerer and a peddler, and she made the journey biweekly to sell whatever trinkets she either accumulated from late night scavenging or cobbled together from her own designs.

"You mustn't be afraid of those constructs. You're becoming a recluse, you know," she told him one evening

with a frown as she deposited the goods for Dawei on his kitchen table. Her choice of clothing always mystified him. Although she wore the conic hat of a rice farmer, her tattered clothes were distinctly westernized. Loose pants and a teal blouse hung from her lithe figure, and strapped to her belt and thighs were innumerable pouches full of tiny parts and gadgets.

The lamp illuminated an eclectic bundle of herbs, gnarled roots, and small jars whose juices sloshed and bubbled sluggishly. Ming Yue offered them to Dawei with a flourish. "Tell me, how are they different than the komainu which pull the wagons during our festival parades and protect us from the demons during the winter? How are they different than the things that I make?" She pulled out a tiny, fluttering lump from one of her pockets and stroked it affectionately. It was a brass cicada which chirped and waved its elegant wings once wound.

"I don't like them," Dawei decided flatly over the buzzing of Ming Yue's little companion. "Our constructs... they have the souls of our ancestors to guide them. The Westerners speak of some abomination called a..." he stumbled to find the right words, "a...logic engine. The constructs of our people are fuelled by those who watch over us. They are family. The tools of the Westerners are just tools, made to kill."

"Ah," she said knowingly, "You fear them because you do not understand them. *Wǒ de mèi ya*, you are too narrow-minded! I hate the Westerners as much as you do, but there are lessons to be learned from them. Imagine how our own constructs could be tailored with a few scavenged parts...or with a logic engine of their own." She gazed at her cicada thoughtfully through the lens of her cracked monocle. "You know, sometimes I wonder whether or not tradition condemns our people. We are surrounded by an enemy who sees itself as superior precisely because we regress to old habits when fighting a completely new threat." With a look of disdain, she suddenly crushed the cicada in her hand, putting an end to its chirping. Dawei flinched. "We have to tear down the old to build the new."

Dawei was silent. Ever since the Guild occupation grew more aggressive after the Boxer executions, his already limited liberties under the laws of the Imperial Court had been stripped, his stomach had been virtually empty, and his country remained engulfed in flames like a corpse marked for destruction upon a pyre. "The new" was certainly very far off. At last, after careful deliberation, he said, "The old ways are still worth fighting for. I want to see any Western doctor heal the sick as I have. What do they know of curing the spirit as well as the body?" He scoffed, and abruptly stood up to snuff out the candle light, leaving Ming Yue a little abashed despite the five silver coins he placed in her outstretched hand.

As he led her to the door so as to console himself alone in the darkness, three knocks alerted Dawei to the presence of a visitor who would change his life forever. His name was Da Laohu, and he was dripping blood onto the packed-earth floor of the doctor's home.

The woman whom he now followed blindly into the shadows called herself Mei Feng. She led Dawei through the craggy Ten Peaks under the cover of darkness, drained as he was from his journey through the Breach. They could only travel by Delios—under the light of the trickster moon—she had told him urgently, lest unwanted eyes watching the band of refugees pouring almost nightly from the Ten Peaks spoil the secrecy of the tear.

The sun was just poking over the jagged peaks when the bustling town came into view beyond the mountain ridge. They had marched all night to reach the town at the piedmont, Dawei stumbling in the darkness and Mei almost floating above the ground with the balance of a phoenix mid-flight.

"This is Promise," Mei Feng said as they finally walked down a dirt road that served as a central avenue to the settlement. Dawei's eyes grew wide with surprise. It was unlike anything he had seen in his village Earthside. Gone were the earthen homes and their roaring hearths, ancestral shrines, stables for swine, or acres of paddies to which he had been accustomed. Instead, wooden and cement buildings, sturdy and new, each with verandas and porches connecting with the main street, sprung forth from the dirt. In the distance, the desert stretched for miles in every direction, its earth cracked and raw.

Despite the paralyzing mysteriousness of this strange new world, Dawei felt slightly more at ease here. The plodding of horses' hooves, the click of wooden sandals, and the shouts of street acrobats, not to mention the calls of vendors selling juicy dumplings, steaming pork buns, or candy-coated fruits and insects made him think of home. Even the air smelled comforting. It was acrid and smoky

with faint, sweet hints of incense, roasted meat, and burnt sugar, just like it was in the capital.

About half of the people in this town seemed to be from the Three Kingdoms. As he followed Mei Feng in awe, Dawei picked up not only tongues from Zhong Guo, Cho'sen, and Nippon, but also local dialects so specific that even he could not understand them. Before he could listen any further, Mei Feng grabbed him by the arm and dragged him forward with the ghost of a smile on her lips. All the building signs were written in both the common tongue of the Guild and *Han Zi* characters with broad strokes and cursive addenda. They had barely walked one hundred yards, but Dawei had already seen signs for saloons, brothels, a jail, and restaurants serving both Western and Three Kingdoms fare. Most notable were the general stores selling sundry goods which any resident of Malifaux City could have immediately identified as illegal Earthside contraband —items whose sale usually resulted in execution. Yet they were advertised freely here, and, as it seemed, with pride.

"This town is unlike any other in Malifaux," said Mei Feng. "The Guild have control on this side of the Breach just as they do Earthside, but they are strongest and most consolidated in Malifaux City. We are the farthest from there of any settlement—for some, the journey can take several weeks or even months by foot. Most don't make it out this far, and those who do are certainly not with the Guild." She chuckled mirthlessly. "Laziness and sloth are the best secret keepers, so long as we don't succumb to them."

"I don't understand...who built this place?" Dawei was looking enviously at diners sitting on the veranda of a noodle shop indulging in a rich food which he had not tasted since before the Guild occupation.

"Our organization did. After we discovered the second breach, we realized that we had an avenue to smuggle in those from Zhong Guo afflicted by the Black Powder Wars." She smiled at him. "We give them hope and a new beginning, and in exchange—"

At that moment, a woman covered from head to toe in soot knocked Dawei aside and threw herself in the dust at Mei Feng's feet. Her tear-streaked face was clenched with anguish, her words constricted with pain. "Mei *[illegible]o bàn*, where is he? You promised I would see him again if I paid my dues, you promised! *Má shàng gào sù w[illegible]*, tell me now, please! Where is my son?" She clutched



at Mei Feng's ankles, her tears cutting paths of clarity through the grime caked on her face. Everyone in the street shuffled away awkwardly, pointedly keeping their eyes off Mei Feng and her supplicant. They continued their business as if such an event were a normal occurrence.

Before Mei could answer, the woman was thrown away from her with a violent shove from behind. "You do not have permission to touch Mistress Feng, Xiao Shu. Do that again, and you may never see him again in this life!" The voice was thunderously loud. It belonged to the biggest man Dawei had ever seen. He was a head taller than Mei Feng, and his torso was three times as thick. He thumbed a large coal shovel strapped to his back with his sausage-like fingers which made him even more intimidating than his rotund face. He was completely bald but for a braided queue dangling over his shoulder.

"Let her be, Kang." Mei Feng shot him a meaningful look, gesturing almost imperceptibly at Dawei before she placed a soothing hand on his forearm. Mei extended a hand to the woman splayed in the dust. "Get up, Xiao Shu...The money you sent was used to cover your son's medicine. I am sure he has recovered and will return to you soon."

Thoroughly terrified, the woman picked herself up from the dust, cast one look of fear and hatred at both Mei Feng and the man called Kang, and shuffled away, limping in the dust.

"Who was she?" Dawei asked, still trembling.

"Her son was one of my rail workers injured in a construction accident," she answered shiftily. "She wants to find out what happened to him after she sent us the money needed for his...recovery." Looking fazed for the first time since he had met her, Mei quickly changed the subject. "Dawei, this is my closest companion, Kang. He keeps an eye on me and oversees the rail workers."

Kang bowed his head ever so slightly in Dawei's direction. "This is him, then? The doctor Laohu sent?"

"Laohu says he can bring people back from the point of death." She looked up at the sky in disbelief.

"Funny, I thought he would be bigger...What they say must be true. The Guild's really starving our people Earthside, aren't they? You look like a plucked chicken."

Dawei gulped and nodded.

Kang put on a big smile. "Well then, there's plenty of food here, and plenty of opportunity. Especially for you. We have been waiting for someone like you for a long time."

"I was told that I could be a doctor here in exchange for my passage away from Earth, and for keeping Laohu safe," Dawei wavered.

"Quite right," boomed Kang, clapping him on the back. "There is a rail line being constructed to connect Promise with the ruins of Chastity, an abandoned town beyond the outskirts of Malifaux City. Between Nephilim attacks and mining accidents, we are in need of a good physician to look after our wounded."

"Nephilim?" he asked.

"Ah," replied Kang knowingly with a glance at Mei Feng, "They are the...locals. You must have very many questions. Best not to ask too many though..." the smile faded for the briefest second. "Do your job, and everything will be just fine." This time, it was harder for him to disguise the insincerity that wavered in every syllable. "Still, if you can do what Laohu says you can do, you shouldn't worry. Mei's brother is never wrong."

The Three Kingdoms. Earthside. Eight weeks occupied.

Dawei's hut was packed; seated within its smoky confines were at least a dozen people, all wearing robes of bright saffron bound with jet-black leather straps. In the center of the ring sat a great bubbling pot in which vegetables, noodles, and even pork—so rare in the time of famine—drifted about in abundance.

Laohu's wounds had finally begun to heal. He loved telling the story of how he had gotten them. Although the gory details seemed to violate the norms of polite dinner conversation, he could always elicit a raucous laugh from his mealtime audience whenever he did. Somehow, the story was different with every retelling. Tonight, he told the others that a stray pistol shot meant for his head had struck a powder keg during one of his raids, and that the explosion had left him horribly burned, but it took twenty of the Rams with him in a righteous fireball.

There was little to suggest that this version of the story had any more truth to it than the others. On the night Dawei treated him, Laohu had suffered from deep cuts across

his chest and arms inconsistent with any explosion, like he had been in a struggle with a multitude of swordsmen whom he had been very lucky to best.

Dawei put his head in his hands as Laohu described his brave dash to this village while suffering his "burns" to the amazement and the approval of the others. At the end of his dramatic retelling, Laohu looked to Dawei, as he did every time, and added, "It's thanks to this man that I am still here to enjoy such a feast tonight!" thumping him on the back with a chortle for good measure.

This part, at the very least, was true. Dawei had saved his life that night, and when he awoke, Laohu had thanked Dawei profusely. Impressed and amazed, he insisted that Dawei apply his healing powers to some of his...friends. And so Dawei fell deeper and deeper into the conspiracy, eventually coming to know the true identity of the Boxer and his cohorts as he healed them after each of their raids.

The more he knew about the rebels, the less he liked them. They had taken over his home and occupied his village, claiming that the inconspicuousness of the small farming hamlet so close to the capital made it an ideal hideout. It was thrilling at first, to be a part of the rebellion that had enflamed all of Zhong Guo. It had even given him great pride knowing that he was supporting the people risking their lives in the Boxer's rebellion to save the country from the clutches of the West. But once the rebels began to demand food and shelter from those who were already struggling to pay the reparations mandated by the Guild, they began to outlast their welcome.

Guests are like fish, went the old Three Kingdoms proverb. *After three days, they really start to reek.*

Rumors abounded that the revolutionaries stole vegetables and swine at night. The meal that Dawei ate guiltily tonight solidified these fears. As the memories came flooding back, Dawei said nothing, but he shifted uncomfortably and slurped his soup without tasting it as the thugs made themselves cozy in his home once again.

Ming Yue seemed enamored with Laohu and took no notice of any of these rumors, or of Dawei, who continued to shift uncomfortably in his seat, hardly eating. "I was there that night he came for healing. He was such a mess!" she said to the crowd over the bubbling stew, "Dripping blood all over the place like prey shot by a Mongol arrow. He was so brave!"

Da Laohu seemed to appreciate the simile, and he grew even more excited "Yes, yes! Oh, there was blood everywhere! It was glorious!" The steely glint in the Boxer's eye made Dawei especially uncomfortable. He felt like a fly in a web, awaiting the return of a spider. "I know it's hard to believe, but I swear to you, that's what happened. *Zhēn de.*" The steel tiger claws on his hands glinted in the firelight as he raised them up in triumph.

"Don't you ever take those off, even to eat?" Ming Yue smirked.

"Never!" Laohu responded, standing up to his full height and spilling soup from his bowl into his lap. "The number of times people have tried to kill me at the dinner table... It is hard to trust anyone now that the Guild are offering such a tall sum for my head! Anyway, enough bragging. We have business to move on to this evening." Laohu and his companions put their bowls down. "Doctor, why are you sulking? I was about to offer you a proposition," the Boxer growled.

"It's nothing," said Dawei evasively, taking another slurp of soup. "Please, tell me what is on your mi—"

"I know that our presence makes you uncomfortable," Da Laohu interrupted matter-of-factly. "You seem to think that we have imposed much upon you and your village."

"It is no imposition when you fight for justice," replied Ming Yue before Dawei could speak. "We are honored to host you, my Boxer."

Laohu shot her an encouraging smile. "Your companion seems much more excited about our cause than you do," he said to Dawei. "Do you not believe in us?"

Knowing that he had no other answer, Dawei responded, "Of course I do. But I am a doctor. I heal people, not encourage their deaths. I swore an oath to protect. Bandaging you up so that you can go out and hurt others seems like a violation of my family vows."

"You cannot think like that," said Ming Yue fervently. "The Westerners of the Guild have abused us. They assume that the Mandate is theirs to take. Have you not seen what they have done to our people? They need to be exterminated." She eyed him imploringly.

He took a deep, shuddering breath. "I think," said Dawei, scrutinizing Ming Yue with a scowl, "that you are

dissatisfied with what little you have made of your life as an exiled daughter of a concubine, and that you are abusing the circumstances to inject some adventure into your life, no matter the cost upon your soul...or those of others. You advocate openly for slaughter." The words came streaming out before he could dam them. "If you think that these raids are the answer to our problems, then you have forgotten your own heritage, Ming Yue." He scowled.

She looked as though she had been slapped in the face. Her eyes swam with tears, and Dawei felt the slightest pang of regret, even as she shouted back, "Then you are both a coward and a fool! For the gods' sake, you pay your neighbor to buy you groceries because you are afraid of setting foot in our capital city!" She glared at him with the fury of a wounded beast.

"Enough," interjected Laohu, placing a comforting hand on her shoulder. He turned to Dawei. "Your concerns are not only natural, but also honorable, doctor. We are indebted to you, truly. As I said earlier, I would not be sitting here with you had you not saved me from death. More importantly, the revolution would have been over, and the people of Xiamen, Guangzhou, and Peking would never have had the courage to rebel with me. Thousands now fight for freedom knowing that I still stand." The others murmured their assent. It did not make Dawei feel any better.

"Whatever you may think of us," continued the Boxer, "I am about to prove to you that our cause is just."

"Oh?" Dawei stood up, his fists curled. "What can you possibly do to atone for all of the lives you have taken? To recover all of the food you have taken from those already suffering the consequences of *your* actions? To call your violent crusade 'just?'" He was shaking now.

The Boxer remained uncharacteristically calm. "We can give our people a new beginning."

"What?"

"We are not alone, doctor. Those who are helping us can repay what we have taken, tenfold. Our rebellion is not orchestrated by peasants and brawlers." He looked around the room at his companions. "We are not laymen."

"Your table manners suggest otherwise," said Dawei.

The Boxer ignored this. "Tell me, doctor. Have you ever heard of the Ten Thunders?"



"Nonsense. A child's tale about a righteous storm from the gods that swept away a great tide of demons from Beyond. What does that have to do with anything?"

"Not a child's tale," he said with a smile. "A real organization of protectors who keep the peace in the Three Kingdoms. They have been doing so for centuries in Nippon, Zhong Guo, and Cho'sen. Now, these great men and women support us in our struggle for freedom from the Guild. The Ten Thunders *are* the Three Kingdom's greatest rebellion against the West, and they have plans for the restoration of Zhong Guo."

Dawei stood up. "This is nonsense! Utter nonsense! I have helped you, Laohu, and you have repaid me and my people with theft and lies. And now you are telling me about fantasies and secret guardians? What can you possibly promise me about new beginnings when your word is so riddled with deceit?"

Laohu stood up and clasped Dawei by the hands. "If you don't believe me, then trust *this*." He placed a silk pouch in between Dawei's fingers. "Open it."

Wearily, the doctor untied the drawstring. The green glow that came from within told him everything that he needed to know. He had never seen a Soulstone before, let alone imagined that one bigger than a pebble could possibly exist. The four in the pouch where the size of small plums. He drew the pouch shut again around its fortune. "Where did you get these? Not even the Guild has Soulstones like this. Not even in the imperial treasury are there such things!"

"Directly from the source," Da Laohu beamed.

"What are you saying?"

"I'm saying that the Ten Thunders are in Malifaux, and that we are making it our own. No imperialists. No war. No unequal treaties from the West. From the ashes of our home Earthside we will build something even greater than the five thousand years of history before us."

Ming Yue's eyes lit up. "I knew there had to be something deeper to our struggle...even when I had my doubts, I kept telling myself..."

"Your faith will be rewarded," said Laohu kindly. He looked around at the other masked men. "We are the Thunders, and we are strong. We would like to make you a proposition that you cannot refuse."

"I still don't understand. What are you asking of me?"

He took a deep breath. "This brand new world, and everything it has to offer, can be yours too. There are thousands of people who grow tired from the pains of the Black Powder Wars, refugees who have lost everything to the Guild. We are relocating them to Malifaux where they can start over. We want to take you with them."

"I..." Dawei did not know how to respond. Was any of this possible—a new life? A new world away from war, famine, and death? "What will I do when I get there?"

"You will have a proper medical practice of your own. We will supply you with everything you need, so long as you continue to work. That's all we want. Passage in exchange for your loyalty and service."

He tried to gather his senses, but he could not think of what to say. He cast a glance at the bag of Soulstones and handed them back with a look of regret. "This whole time, I doubted you. I'm sorry."

"There's no need to be, doctor," said Laohu, taking off his right tiger claw to shake Dawei's hand properly while receiving the bag in the other. "It would have been too much to take in had we shared it with you earlier. We'd rather you think of us as uncouth thugs than guardians of a secret gateway to a new world. It's easier to keep secrets that way." He grinned. "Just remember who it was that brought you there. *Never forget where you came from.* You think we have, but I promise you, we haven't. Everything we've done is about preserving our heritage... just not on this earth."

The man splayed before Dawei was horribly burned. The skin of his torso and forearms curled upwards like blackened parchment, revealing the raw flesh below. "Help me stretch him out on the bedding. Quickly, he's losing blood." The komainu growled its assent at Dawei's command and sunk its lower back level with the doctor's table. The patient had been secured safely astride it on a bamboo stretcher.

Thinking quickly, Dawei undid the leather restraints around his ankles and wrists before guiding the groaning man off the metal beast's back, careful not to touch his burns. "Can you hear me?" Dawei took the man by the hand, feeling his pulse. "You are very badly burned, but I promise I can heal you. What's your name?"

The man couldn't respond. He was in so much pain that his eyes rolled into the back of his head.

"No matter," sighed Dawei, before he reached towards the shelf behind him for his herbs. Humming softly to himself, he mashed them into a fragrant balm which he slathered onto the rawest parts of the burned flesh while whispering fiercely under his breath. The man screamed at his touch, but Dawei was relentless, covering every exposed muscle and nerve with mint-green paste. At last, the man's breathing returned to normal, his agony abated, and he fell into a deep sleep.

A voice from behind made Dawei jump. "How do you do it?" Mei Feng was standing in the entryway of his station, arms crossed and drumming her taloned fingers on her forearms in amusement. Today her long braid was curled into a tight bun, two crossed jade daggers holding it in place at the nape of her neck.

"This is my grandfather's remedy for burns," he said with pride. "A few herbs, when applied with a simple healing incantation, can work wonders on the body. Your man will be scarred, but the skin will grow back without lasting repercussions. Give him a week and he will be ready to work the rail lines again. I don't foresee a prosthesis to be necessary."

Mei Feng looked impressed. "Laohu was right about you. I've never seen anything like this."

"Actually," said Dawei, whose smile had vanished at the mention of Laohu's name, "neither have I. These burns are inconsistent with the others I've seen this week." He gave her a suspicious glare. "Who is he, and how did he become so horribly injured?" Dawei asked, reaching for fresh dressings to secure the ointment on the wounds.

Mei Feng paused. "This man is one of my rail workers." She looked down at the floor with a frown. "It was Xing Xing, one of my new rail golems. He overheated and vented steam at the wrong time. I had to decommission him afterwards."

"I've treated seven burn victims this week, although none hurt as badly as this one. I'm worried about your men, Lady Feng. Perhaps you are endangering them unnecessarily?"

Mei Feng's nostrils flared and her eyes met his. "Best not to ask too many questions. They can be mistaken for ingratitude."

"Forgive me, Lady Feng, but I have observed that your men are in considerable pain. Please don't forget that I also issued three new arms and two legs this week."

"They know the risks, and they are paid handsomely for their services. You of all people should recognize that things here are infinitely better than they are Earthside."

"I won't deny it," said Dawei with a smile, "and I am grateful for everything that the Thunders have done for me. Better have Zhong Guo's refugees serve the Thunders here than be persecuted by the Guild."

"And you have aided us well, doctor. The respect is mutual, although I understand that it took you some time to make up your mind to leave Zhong Guo."

"I did not realize then that emigration to Malifaux was not a retreat, but rather a victory for our people," he replied passionately.

"Well said." Mei Feng looked at the man snoring on Dawei's operating table, apparently lost in thought. She collected herself hastily, hoping that he did not notice. "I came to tell you that this patient is your last today. Construction on the rail lines has ceased. You are dismissed for the evening." She scratched the ears of the komainu affectionately with her clawed fingers. It rolled onto its back and gave a raspy, grating bark of pleasure. "I can see this one has served you well. I forged it myself. The spirit of one of my ancestors rests inside her, so take good care of her."

"As she has taken good care of me, Lady," said Dawei, sealing the last of his medicine jars and making for the door. "Watch him tonight; if he wakes in pain, please summon me," he ordered the komainu, which barked once again in understanding. He left Mei Feng behind, still apparently lost in thought, and minutes later, Dawei felt the reassuring chill of the evening breeze on his skin as he sought his favorite bench in one of the Hidden Temple's many rampart gardens.

Built into the sturdy face of the Ten Peaks, the massive monastery that the Thunders called the Hidden Temple was more like a fortress than a place of worship. Great wooden beams of crimson created a sturdy shell filled by enchanted mortar and inlaid flagstones as far as the eye could see. The attention to detail—whether in the painted designs around each of the doors or the thousands of murals depicting misty valleys, dragons, phoenixes, and great armies clashing in pink sunsets—were astounding

for a structure of this size. As he stared out at the view before him, Dawei could not help but admire how each crenellation on the rampart was intricately carved with the head of a different zodiac animal. It was a fitting place for the Thunders to call home. The winding passageways would surely confuse any intruder not accustomed to them, and its strategic construction into the side of the cliff made it virtually impervious to siege. Dawei had seen nothing sturdier—not even the great red palaces of the Forbidden City.

Noticing that the sun had not yet set, he decided to abandon the confines of the fortress for the evening to enjoy a meal in the town below. He navigated quickly through several narrow passageways and emerged at the entrance of the fortress. Two Thunders brothers pulled open the great bronze doors, revealing the winding road to Promise before him. It took him little time to find himself in the heart of town. It was just as reassuring as it was the day Mei Feng had introduced it to him a few weeks ago—the town almost felt like home.

The streets were less busy at twilight. Shopkeepers began to close their windows and doors grimly, hurrying to board up any exposed points of entry that might abandon their wares to the mercy of whatever nocturnal horrors—human or otherwise—prowled the streets while the city slept. Exhausting as the daily hassle of closing and reopening might be, the sense of security offered by sturdy planks and bewitched iron chains was well worth their weight. As he turned into a side alley near one of his usual eateries that was still open, Dawei saw something out of the corner of his eye that was most unusual amongst the ordinary evening bustle.

Mei Feng traveling alone.

Her usual companionship—Kang, her loyal rail workers, or her constructs which always accompanied her during her appearances outside the Hidden Temple—were absent tonight. Swift and sticking to the shadows, Mei Feng had covered herself with a ragged brown cloak to disguise her usual tank top and trousers. Dawei would not have noticed her from behind had it not been for her braid, still curled in a distinctive bun held in place by two daggers, both of which stuck out from the cloth of her hood like covered horns.

Dawei knew that she only ever travelled alone so as not to attract attention, just like the night when she had first brought him to Promise under the cover of darkness. What did Lady Feng have to hide? Curiosity go the better of him, and ignoring the rumble in his stomach, Dawei darted past his usual dinner spot to follow her. He kept her at the very edge of his vision, and due to his good fortune, her complacency, or her own preoccupation, Mei Feng never once looked behind her to see if she were being followed.

After several tense minutes, she turned into a rickety wooden shack at the end of another empty alley. Dawei waited several moments. *This is stupid*, he told himself. *She will find out, and whatever her secrets are, they are not my concern.*

An image of Ming Yue swam in his memory, unbidden. *Coward.* Was that the last she had ever thought of him before they had parted?

With a surge of boldness, Dawei looked behind him, checking that the alley was deserted before opening the door just a crack. Through the narrow slit, he saw that Mei Feng had her back to him. She was leaning over the slumped figure of a man tied to a chair. Dawei's stomach sank when Mei Feng pulled down her hood and untangled one of the knives from her braid.

"You have not paid us your dues this month," she said, bringing the knife against the soft flesh of the man's neck. Her voice was quiet and determined, barely resonating through the crack in the door. Dawei had to strain to hear more.

"I have nothing left to give the Ten Thunders." He let out a wet, sputtering cough that Dawei was sure trickled with blood. "You have taken everything from me already. Just kill me. I can't do this anymore."

"That would be among the best of all possible outcomes for you," she said nastily, "but unfortunately you don't deserve it." Without warning, she thrust her knife into the man's thigh. She covered his screams with her other hand, smothering the man completely. Dawei gasped. A shot of fear danced along his spine.

"You're fortunate that I'm here and not one of my rail workers. They have a lot less restraint, you know," Mei said almost conversationally.

"I told you," the man cried. "I have nothing left to give. My shop is not selling enough to feed my own family—my

daughter is begging in the streets, and I caught her going into one of the saloons to find work. You bitch! Do you have any idea how humiliating—" the man let out another muffled scream as Mei Feng twisted her knife.

"Then work harder. What did you promise us when we smuggled you and your family out of Guangzhou?" The man hesitated. "Well?" she withdrew her knife with a horrible squelching sound that made Dawei's stomach curl. The man screamed again.

"My loyalty," he cried in agony. "Please, stop it, I don't want to give it anymore, please!"

"That's right," she said sourly. "The Guild were at your doorstep, and we were there to save you. While the canons roared around your city and your relatives were slaughtered, we gave you everything—a new home, a new life, permits for your own business. I'd say you owe us. So when we ask something of you, you give it to us, on time, every month. Do you understand?"

Dawei saw the man nod vigorously. He had nothing left to say.

"I'm not sure you do," she said, her back still to the door. "I'm going to stay with you just a little longer until that point becomes even clearer."

Dawei could not listen any further. Shuddering and trying to keep himself steady, he closed the door as quietly as he could and ran, back through the alley, through the streets of Promise, and up the hill to the Hidden Temple, where he barricaded himself in his chambers barely an hour later. Ignoring the cries of the komainu which looked quizzically at its caretaker's alarm, Dawei collapsed on his bed and fell into a deep sleep, the cries of the extorted still ringing in his ears, the image of Mei's bloody daggers seared into his memory.

After what seemed like an eternity, a series of knocks awoke him with a start just after midnight. Mei Feng appeared at his door. Her cloak was splattered with blood, and the daggers that had been in her hair were nowhere to be found. "Please, doctor, you must wake up! It's an emergency." She grabbed him by the wrists and shook him awake. "One of my staff working the late shift at the steel mill has been horribly injured. A drilling machine went right through his thigh, and he's missing some fingers. You must fix him up."

The Three Kingdoms. Earthside. Fourteen weeks occupied.

On the last eve before his departure, Dawei lingered outside, picking herbs from the garden. The nutrients in the soil were all but depleted; with no livestock or crops left to recycle, the ground had nothing left to give. He scowled at the dead leaves as he shucked them from their wilting stalks, disappointed that they outnumbered the healthy ones three times over. He looked up at the sound of Ming Yue's voice. She traipsed over to him and knelt down in the soil, unafraid of dirtying her new saffron garments. He looked at them disdainfully, but he could not help but think that the robes, the black leather sandals, and weapons strapped to her sides which now took the place of her usual pouches made her look more beautiful than ever.

"I've heard the rumors. You're finally going to be in one of their raids tonight?" He couldn't look her in the eye.

"Yes," she wavered. What could she say to him that would assuage his fears? "I've trained for eight weeks with the Boxer." She thumbed the sword of wxu-shu strapped to her back. "I can finally be of use to him."

"I bet you can," he said unimpressed, and with a bit more poison than was warranted as her sword cut through the air in several graceful strikes.

She looked taken aback, bringing her practice strike to a halt. To Dawei, it seemed that this goodbye was not going the way she had hoped. "What's bothering you?" she asked tentatively. "You told me just this morning that you are ready to leave tomorrow. You were at peace with the decision."

"I was...it's just...soon, I'll be gone. Missing from the place where our families have been for generations, like we've never set foot here. I'm going into some dangerous new world that we know nothing about. And you're not even coming with me."

"No," she said, rising to her feet from the dirt and placing a hand on his shoulder. "I told you, I can't. There is still hope for Zhong Guo. Anyway, it doesn't matter. Like you said, I'm the daughter of a whore." She sheathed her blade bitterly. "I still would be in Malifaux. Here, I can be a revolutionary." She collected herself with a shuddering

breath. “But you *must* go, promise me. You have a future there.” Hoping to lull his anger, she pulled out a tiny lump from her pocket. It was another mechanical cicada. It chirped pleasantly in her hand, fluttering its delicate brass wings in time with the evening breeze.

Ming Yue gulped. “I fixed it. It’s powered by a logic engine that I took from one of the Western machines...it’s much more stable than before. All of my ancestors are rather moody.” She forced a laugh. “Please, take it in case—in case I don’t come back. That way you’ll have something to remember me by.” She turned away abruptly, as though she couldn’t bear to look at him any longer. “Goodbye, *Huáng Yīshēng*. Please don’t worry. The Thunders will protect me. Just promise me that you’ll go.”

Without seeing the look of disappointment etched in Dawei’s features, Ming Yue turned her back on him, pulling her oni mask over her face as the last rays of the sun set behind the shriveling rice paddies in the steppes.

Mei Feng was alone in her chambers when Kang led Dawei inside. He left the two of them alone at Mei’s nod. “News?” she said, looking at Dawei expectantly. “Please... tell me that he’ll live.”

“Yes,” said Dawei hesitantly through gritted teeth. “There was a bitter infection in the thigh wound, but I was able to drain the pus and mend the flesh. I had to replace his right hand with a prosthesis. He lost three fingers, so I thought that he would be happier with a new hand instead.”

“Then he’ll survive?” she asked, intently.

He nodded wordlessly.

“How soon can he return to work?”

He shrugged.

“Why are you so quiet?” she demanded, staring him up and down with narrowed eyes. “You seem to be taking less pride in your work than usual this evening, doctor. Usually you cannot wait to tell me about the success of your latest procedure. What’s wrong?”

“I cannot do this anymore,” he said.

“Can’t do what?” She took a comforting step closer, but he shuddered back, repulsed by her.

“Don’t touch me, you lying witch!” The words on the tip of his tongue slipped out before he could swallow them. It was only then that she seemed to understand.

Mei let out an exasperated breath, as though she had been waiting for this moment and was dreading its arrival. “You were never supposed to discover the truth of your patients. How long have you known?” she asked him brusquely.

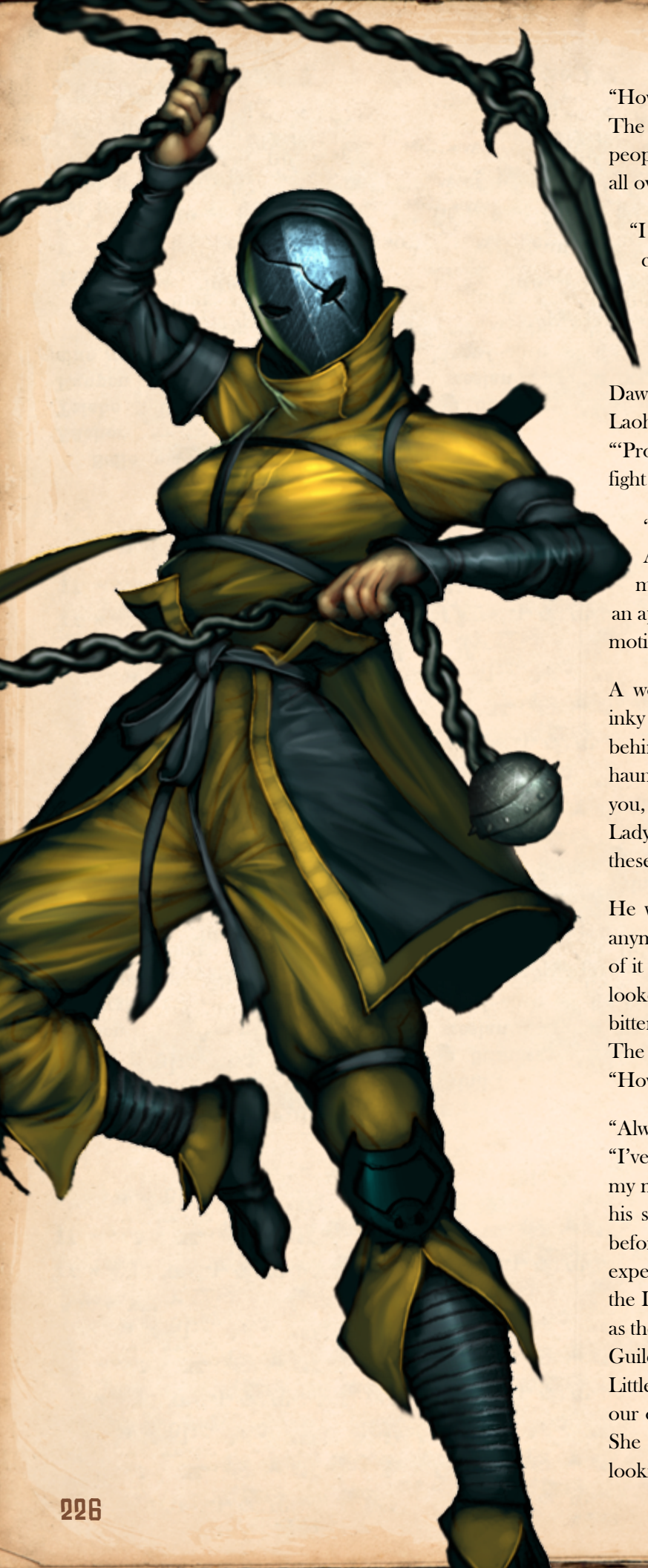
“Long enough to know that I have damned too many innocent people when I thought I was helping them.”

“You *were* helping them. Many of those you have healed over the past few weeks were my rail workers actually injured on the lines or in the mills. The Foundry speaks very highly of you, Dawei.”

He wanted to throw up again. “How many?”

“How many what?” she snapped, turning her back to him.





"How many people..." he struggled against his own shame. The words wouldn't come. Not without pain. "How many people did I stitch up just so that you could torture them all over again?"

"I don't know. Enough to keep the protection money coming in, I suppose. Nothing is more lucrative than fear. An endless cycle of pain and rebirth is surprisingly effective at getting people to empty their pockets," she said dispassionately.

Dawei fell to his knees. "Was any of what you and Laohu told me about the Thunders real?" he shouted. "'Protectors of the Three Kingdoms?' The rebellion? The fight for Zhong Guo's future?"

"Of course it is, just not in the way you expected." A shadowy figure shifted in the back of the room, making Dawei jump. Mei Feng looked back and cast it an appraising glance. "But don't take my word for it." She motioned with her hand.

A woman in saffron robes stepped forward out of the inky darkness, a curved sword strapped to her back. Even behind the oni mask, Dawei could never mistake her haunting voice for anyone else. "I'm sorry that we lied to you, *Huáng Y□sh□ng*," said Ming Yue with a sigh, "but as Lady Feng said, the rebellion, the hatred of the Guild—these things are as real as you or me."

He was not shocked to see her. Nothing surprised him anymore. After a long silence, he screamed, "Then none of it was real if that is the standard that you judge by!" He looked at the floor and hoped that she could feel every bitter wave of fury and resentment radiating from his soul. The thought of matching her gaze was too much to bear. "How long have you known?"

"Always." She stepped forward into the light with a sigh. "I've been a Thunders operative my whole life, just like my mother. You were never to know." She put a hand on his shoulder. Dawei let it flutter there for half a second before he swatted it away in disgust. "What did you expect? My mother was a concubine thoroughly abused by the Imperial Court. The Thunders gave her purpose, just as they have done for me. My trips into the city were about Guild reconnaissance as much as buying you supplies. Little did I know that one of the greatest potential assets to our organization was living ten yards from my doorstep." She pulled off her mask and handed it to Mei Feng, looking at Dawei sadly. "My new mission became *you*."

"What do you mean?"

"We needed you in Malifaux," Mei Feng answered briskly. "Ming Yue was to persuade you after we verified how prodigious your talents were. Do you think it's just Fate that on the night my brother Laohu was injured and near death, he ended up in *your* village?" Mei Feng scoffed. "Fate can only control so many variables."

"Laohu...his injuries..." Dawei stammered.

"Laohu grew careless and was outliving his usefulness. The Oyabun saw fit to have him killed, until Ming Yue thought that he would make an ideal test subject for your talents if he were flogged within an inch of his life instead." Her mouth creased just ever so slightly. It was the closest expression of genuine regret she had ever shown him. "He's more indebted to you than he would care to admit, but then again, my brother has always been an obnoxious ingrate," Mei Feng said bitterly. She looked at her own Tiger Claws sourly, as though the idea of sharing any family relic at all with her brother were a source of eternal shame.

"I was an informant then, nothing more," Ming Yue admitted. "Convincing you to come to Malifaux was the last part of my martial training. As you know, being a part of this organization comes down to more than skill with a blade."

She said it with pride, and it was as if she had stabbed him. Everyone had used him, even her; she was not just some pawn in a grander scheme. "I thought you were with me always." Dawei pulled out the cicada from his pocket. She shook her head.

He crushed it in his hands and flung the pieces at her. He thought he could see tears swimming behind her eyes as the tiny gears flew around her. "I have nothing to tell you except that I'm sorry," she said sternly. "Everything I did, I did for Zhong Guo. The Boxer did the same. The East was already lost...the rebellion was only about making chaos to give people incentive to emigrate to Malifaux. The opium too. What's been circulating is ours, not the Guild's. But it's all worth it for a new future."

"What future? One involving the mass extortion of innocent people who think they are beginning a new life of salvation? One that treats human traffic like livestock to be herded, prodded, and milked?"

"No," said Mei Feng resolutely before Ming Yue could answer, her arms crossed. "A future where our people and our culture can survive in a new world."

Before he could stop it, the same thought rushed into his head once again. *Never forget where you come from.* How far he had strayed indeed, and he hadn't even realized it. If this was the glorious future the Thunders had envisioned, he wanted no part of it.

There was only one thing that he could do now.

The face of the Ming Yue he thought he knew, the one he wanted to be real, flashed before him again. *I know you can be brave.* "Lady Feng," he said, reaching forward for her clawed hand. "You're right." He pulled it close, feeling the hard metal and sharp points of the Tiger's claw on his skin.

"About what?" she said expectantly.

"That to the Thunders and their vision for a new future, *anyone is disposable*," he whispered, and before she could resist, he grabbed her arm with newfound strength and pulled her Tiger's Claw hard, thrusting it upwards into his stomach with a gasp of pain.

Mei Feng heard Ming Yue scream as she felt the blood soak her hands and the sharp claws of her fingers slice Dawei's sinew, sever nerves, and grate bone. Magical energy beyond her control drove the metal forward deeper and deeper until it burst through his back in a crimson shower.

Mei Feng shuddered and fell to her knees, Dawei's blood hot, wet, pooling around her. He coughed and brought his lips to her ear, smearing her pale face with blood. The final, strained words before his departure would haunt her.

You're disposable too.

With a deep, shuddering breath, Mei Feng flung the body from her in disgust, dismissed a morose Ming Yue, and summoned Kang to fetch a bucket of water and a rag. When he returned, she began to scrub the floor of her chambers, feeling Dawei's blood cake between her fingers as she scraped her soapy knuckles against the stone until they were raw. She hummed as she worked in Kang's presence, seemingly unperturbed. But with a jolt of fear that she was too clever to show, she wondered how she could continue to forge a brand new world that never really was, or, as she now knew beyond a doubt, never truly would be. There was nothing from the ashes but lies.

SHADOW EMISSARY

To get her hooks into the Ten Thunders Zoraida created a puppet shaped around the image that the Three Kingdoms cast in her own mind, and so the Shadow Effigy set out from her hut as a sinister, silent figure in a ninja gi, sugegasa and torakage mask. It was given its duties, and it fulfilled them, flitting through the night with its adopted brethren, feeling its ties to the Swamp Hag growing ever weaker as it bound itself to a new path.

Then came the cataclysm, and its old existence was broken and made new.

Now the Emissary has burst out of the trappings the Effigy was made with, and has taken a new form, drawn from the hearts and spirits of the Three Kingdoms: a dragon, stern and regal, speaking with a voice of wind and thunder.

Let its mother see it now, and tremble



SHADOW EMISSARY

COST 10

Enforcer, Rare 1

EMISSARY OF FATE

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	6	10	5	7	3

ABILITIES

Power Sink: When this Crew scores 1 or more **VP** from the Strategy, this model gains the following Condition for the rest of the game: "**Destined +1:** At the end of this model's Activation it heals +1 damage. This Condition may not be removed by other models' Actions."

Hard to Kill: While this model has 2 or more **Wd** remaining when it suffers damage, it may not be reduced to below 1 **Wd**.

Rolling Thunder: At the start of this model's Activation, it may discard a card to gain the **Focused +2** Condition until the end of the Turn.

SHADOW EMISSARY

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) The Angry Winds (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 7 or 2): Target suffers 2/3/6 damage.
Word of the Emissary: After damaging, take this Action again. This Action may not declare Triggers.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(1) The Rite of Strength: Once per Turn, target other friendly non-Leader model within 6" with an Upgrade is pushed up to 4" in any direction and gains the **Fast** Condition.

(0) Aspect of the Dragon (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12): Choose one of the following effects. Until the end of the Turn, apply the chosen effect within 10:

Dragon's Breath: When an enemy model suffers a damage flip which benefited from **Focused**, the damage flip gains + to Moderate and Severe.
Dragon's Scales: Friendly models which have the **Defensive** Condition reduce all damage they suffer by 1, to a minimum of 1.
Dragon's Claws: Enemy models suffer a penalty to their **Df** equal to the value of their **Burning** Condition, to a maximum of -2 **Df**.
Dragon's Blood: Enemy models which suffer damage from the **Poison** Condition suffer 1 additional damage from the **Poison** Condition.

(0) Prophecies in Thunder: This Action may only be taken while this model has the **Destined +2** Condition or greater. Remove the **Destined** Condition from this model to give all friendly models in play the **Focused +1** Condition.

50mm

LUST

Oh, she could see it in their eyes as they danced, see it in their smiles, the way their bodies wrapped together and spun apart. Impossibly, she could even hear the whisper of black and scarlet clothes against their skin, and the sound was bewitching. She could feel the heat coming off them like smoke, and she knew she wasn't the only one.

She did her best to keep up, help them along, sent her bow moaning and screaming across the strings, sent the music into madness and followed it there. They liked it, she could tell. They wanted it. Wanted more. She wanted to give them more. They showed her how. Made her a promise, collected one in return.

She barely remembers what was said, but she remembers how it felt. She'll make everyone she meets feel like that. She'll make them want it, oh yes she will.



LUST COST 8

Enforcer, Living, Mercenary, Rare 1

CROSSROADS SEVEN, TORMENTED

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
6	5	8	6	7	2

ABILITIES

Looking For a Soul to Steal: Enemy models which end their Activation within ❶6 must discard a card or suffer 2 damage, unless they took a Walk Action during their Activation which ended closer to this model than they started.

Df (🕮) Your Eyes Betray You: After resolving, this model's controller may draw a card.

Manipulative 12: If this model has not yet Activated this Turn, when an enemy model targets this model with an Attack Action, the enemy model must pass a TN 12 **Wp** duel or the Action immediately fails.

LUST

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Heartbreaker (**Ca** 7🕮 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 1): Target suffers 1/2/6 damage.
🕮 ***Dream Maker:*** After damaging, look at the top three cards of the target's deck, discard one non-Joker card, and place the rest on the top of the deck in any order.

(1) Now, Kiss! (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 6): Target enemy is placed into base contact with another enemy model within 8" and LoS of it. The target and the model which it was placed in base contact with must each pass a TN 13 **Wp** duel or gain the **Slow** Condition.
🕮 ***Love Hurts:*** After succeeding, the target suffers 2 damage.

(0) Proper Positions (**Ca** 6 / TN: 12 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 10): Target model is pushed 4" towards another model in its LoS, chosen by this model.
🕮 ***Love Hurts:*** After succeeding, the target suffers 2 damage.

30mm

WANDERING RIVER MONK

The temple of the Wandering River is the second oldest temple in the Five Rivers Valley. At least that is if the old legends are to be believed. It is said that the first element was fire, and then his brother wind appeared to enrage him and spread his flame.

The monks dedicate themselves to speed and agility. They dart in and out of combat, landing unseen blows on their enemies before disappearing in a gust of wind. Indeed, they have an unnatural control over the winds themselves, knocking down their opponents with mighty bursts or using them to speed an escape.

They are, in many ways, the most secretive of the temples. Relying on stealth and speed to accomplish their goals has given them a keen understanding of the power that comes with operating from the shadows. Their techniques and training are hidden from outsiders on pain of death.



WANDERING RIVER MONK

COST 7

Minion, Living

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	5	6	5	7	2

ABILITIES

Reading the Wind: The first time this model takes the Focus Action during its Activation it gains an additional **Focused +1** Condition.

Df (⌨) Leaves in the Breeze: After resolving, place a Scheme Marker in base contact with this model.

Butterfly Jump: After this model is successfully targeted with a non ⫻ enemy Attack Action, it may discard a card to push up to 3" in any direction. Range, LoS, and cover are drawn from its new position and, if it is no longer a legal target, the Action immediately fails.

WANDERING RIVER MONK

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Fury of the Nine Winds (**Ml** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 1): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.

- ✖ ***Blown Away:*** After damaging, place the target within 3" of its current position, not in terrain.

(1) The Roaring Anger (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐8): Target suffers 1/3/4 damage and is pushed 3" away from this model.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Leap (**Ca** 4✖ / TN: 10✖): This model immediately moves up to its **Cg**, ignoring intervening terrain and models during the move.

30mm

OBSIDIAN ONI

Obsidian Oni are fearsome creatures to behold. Their skin is the shimmering black obsidian of their namesake, and they wield heavy, spiked clubs in combat. It is said that they are children of the volcano; they erupted into the world amidst flames and smoke. And where they walk, the flames of battle follow.

Those who know the old magics of the Three Kingdoms can call the Obsidian Oni into service, binding them through ritual and sacrifice to a singular purpose. Those who are weak willed are sometimes consumed by the very Oni they seek to call. But if the need is great enough, they are worth the risk for their prowess in combat.

Obsidian Oni march across the battlefield, shrugging off arrows and calling down flames from the heavens on those who stand in their way. Men flee before them, and death is left in their wake.



OBSIDIAN ONI COST 6

Minion
ONI

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	5	6	5	6	2

ABILITIES

Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1.

Ruthless: This model is Immune to **Wp** duels during its Activation.

Explosive Demise 2: All models within (↑)2 suffer 2 damage when this model is killed (not sacrificed).

OBSIDIAN ONI

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Spiked Club (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 2): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage.
- ***Crushing Strike***: When damaging, the damage flip gains for each in the final duel total.
- ***Blaze:*** After damaging, the target gains the **Burning +1** Condition.

(1) Flames From the Heavens (**Ca** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 8): Target suffers 1/4/5 damage. This damage flip gains if the target has the **Burning** Condition.
- ***Scorched Remnants:*** After damaging an enemy, place a Scrap Marker in base contact with the target.
- ***Mark the Way:*** After damaging an enemy, place a Scheme Marker in base contact with the target.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) The Strong Grow Stronger: Discard a card to heal up to 2 damage on target non-Leader model within 6" which has an Upgrade attached.

40mm

JOROGUMO

Kameko held the knife in a shaky hand and sliced a long cut along her palm, allowing the blood to spill on the cold ground. "I call upon you as my ancestors did in times of old! Hear the call of my blood and answer my request!" She waited at the mouth of the cave, and for a moment, she despaired.

But in the depths something stirred. Something old. And hungry. Slowly the spiders emerged, covered in dust and detritus. Awakened from their long slumber, they carried their heavy glaives. Kameko trembled. "Go to Malifaux, find the one called Misaki and give her aid. If you do, they will spare my family."

"And you know our price, girl?" The beast snarled, its voice like a razor being sharpened.

Kameko nodded, tears streaming down her face as the spider seized her.



JOROGUMO COST 9

Minion

ONI, LAST-BLOSSOM

Df	Wp	Wd	Wk	Cg	Ht
5	6	8	5	6	3

ABILITIES

Hard to Wound +1: Damage flips against this model suffer ⊟.

Hard to Kill: While this model has 2 or more **Wd** remaining when it suffers damage, it may not be reduced to below 1 **Wd**.

Eat Your Fill: After killing or sacrificing an enemy model, this model may choose to heal all damage it has suffered and end its Activation.

ATTACK ACTIONS

(1) Glaive (**MI** 5🗡 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 3): Target suffers 3/4/6 damage.

Crushing Strike: When damaging, the damage flip gains 1 for each 🗡 in the final duel total.

Entrap: After damaging, push the target into base contact with this model.

(0) Vicious Bite (**MI** 6🗡 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 1): Target suffers 2/3/6 damage, ignoring **Armor** and **Hard to Wound**.

Venomous Bite: After damaging, the target gains the **Poison +3** Condition.

TACTICAL ACTIONS

(0) Wander the Earth: Push this model up to 2" in any direction.

JOROGUMO

50mm

It took me many weeks to fully heal from my wounds, and in the time I spent in the Lady's house and under her protection I spent many hours speaking with the healer she had appointed to attend on me, a Monk of Low River whose name I never learned. One night, after we had played cards but before the lamp had burned all the way down (the latter marking that his duty was done for the day), he told me about his passage through to Malifaux, and as he spoke I realized he had not come through the Guild's Breach but by the second passage the Three Kingdoms had long been rumored to possess. I do not know why he trusted in me; perhaps it was our shared heritage.

I must suppose that that second Breach must be some warm place, at sea level, and pass through to Malifaux high in the mountains, for my monk described a great blasting wind that blew through the Breach for as long as it was open, laden with the fragrance of tropical flowers and thick with moisture that he described forming glittering frosts on the Breach house and slick clear ice underfoot. It is my understanding that the heavier pressure of the air in a coastal land would create such an effect if the Breach were opened into the thin air of the mountains.

He told me that it had taken him time, even with the calm and fortitude his training had imparted, to adapt to the bitter cold of the Breach house on the Malifaux side, and even after he had accustomed himself to this there was a final test he had to pass.

Often when the Breach opened, he said, the rush of wind would carry birds or insects through, little wrens or swallows, bright butterflies or elegant dragonflies from the gardens of the counterpart Breach house Earthside. These poor creatures should have been doomed to perish from the extremity of their passage, but this was how a Low River monk would prove themselves. They would take up the lifeless body of the insect or bird, and use their healing powers and the magic in the air of their new home to breathe vitality back into its body. If they could carry it back into the stream of wind, back through the Breach and send it on its way alive once more, then they had earned full passage and could travel on into Malifaux.

I have not seen him since I departed the Lady's service, but when winter comes down onto the city I often remember that tale and picture my monk, some small warm life gently cradled in his hands, pushing through the clamoring wind to carry it home.

TEN THUNDERS UPGRADES

Conflux of Combat

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Mei Feng is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  Echoes of Power: Once per Turn, after a friendly Master within 6 deals damage with an **MI** Attack, the Master may discard a card to take the same Action again after completing the current Action.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Deconstruction: Push this model up to 3" in any direction, then place a Scrap Marker in base contact with it. Until the end of the Turn, friendly Leaders which target the Scrap Marker with an Action gain +6 **Ca** for the duration of the Action.



RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

Conflux of Hunger

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Jakob Lynch is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  The Hunger Calls: This model gains + to Attack flips against models with the Brilliance Characteristic.
- This model gains the following Attack Action:

  (0) Sweet Whispers (**Ca** 6 / TN: 10 / Rst: **Wp** / Rg: 12): Push target model up to 4" in any direction.

  New Secrets: After succeeding, draw a card.



RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

Conflux of Exploration

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if McCabe is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  The Explorer's Call: After deployment, this model may select a non-Avatar Upgrade with the Restriction of Lucas McCabe which is not already attached to any models in this Crew and attach it, ignoring all of the other usual restrictions for attaching Upgrades.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) "Take This!" (**Ca** 5 / TN: 9 / Rg: 10): Discard a non-Avatar Upgrade with the restriction of Lucas McCabe from this model and attach it to target other friendly model regardless of restrictions. Then, the target may be pushed up to 4" in any direction.



RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate

Conflux of the Dawn

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Shenlong is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  The Dawn Surges: When a friendly model within 6 discards an Upgrade, that model may heal up to 2 damage.
- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) Visions of Dawn Light: End a Condition on target friendly model within 6" to draw a number of cards equal to that Condition's value, up to a maximum of 3. (Conditions without a value are considered to have a value of 1 for the purposes of this Action.)



RESTRICTIONS

Emissary of Fate



Ancestral Conflux

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Yan Lo is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the Ancestor Characteristic and retains it even after being killed or sacrificed. If an Emissary of Fate is summoned using the **Rebuild Corpus** Action, attach this Upgrade to it
- This model gains the following Abilities:

  Tethered Soul: The **Ca** of this model's Attack Actions may not be raised above 7 by the **Chi** Condition.

  A Warrior's Memory: While this model is in play, the friendly Master gains +1 **MI** to all **MI** Actions.

  Ancestral Call: When a model within ❶6 attaches an Upgrade, this model gains the **Fast** Condition.



Restrictions

Emissary of Fate

Conflux of Thunder

Cost: 0 SS

- This Upgrade may only be attached if Misaki is this Crew's Leader.
- This model gains the following Ability:

  The Thunder Calls: Friendly Masters within ❶8 of this model which kill or sacrifice an enemy model during their Activation immediately gain 1 additional general AP.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) The Call of the Storm: Push this model up to 4" in any direction.



Restrictions

Emissary of Fate

Shadow Conflux

Cost: 0 SS

- This model gains the following Ability:

  The Power Rages: Friendly Minions within ❶4 gain ◆ to all Attack duels.

- This model gains the following Tactical Action:

  (0) On the Tides of Fate: Discard a Soulstone to draw two cards and then discard two cards.



Restrictions

Emissary of Fate

From the Desk of

Lucius Mattheson

Mister Lynch

I wish to speak with you, in as much privacy as your establishment is capable of furnishing, on a matter of some urgency. I am sure you will not take this message lightly given the troubled times our city currently endures.

I shall arrive at your door on Sunday night at eleven PM precisely. I understand that you are hosting no special functions that night and your upper rooms will be available by nine PM. Kindly reschedule whatever other activities you may have had planned so that our meeting may proceed.

My chief clerk, M. Jacques Patenaude, will precede me by fifteen minutes to ensure you are prepared for my arrival.

I look forward to speaking with you.

MATTHESON

SHIFTING LOYALTIES

BY: MATTHEW FARRER

“Thank you for the tea, Monsieur.” To be honest, Jacques had drunk almost none of it. It had a perfumed taste that was probably considered “complex” or “invigorating”. Jacques didn't care for it, and had burned his tongue on the first sip besides.

“Oh, don't mention it,” said Jakob Lynch, whose long limbs were folded into the chair opposite. “Pleasure to serve a guest with a less usual palate. Most everyone who comes in here goes straight for the spirits.” That seemed to amuse him for some reason Jacques couldn't quite follow. “You won't be offended if I, uh...” He raised his eyebrows and held up a silver hip flask.

“Not at all, Mister Lynch. Please.”

“Your very good health, then, Monsieur Patenaude,” Lynch said, and took a pull on the flask. Jacques had one final sip of tea, and put the cup down.

They were sitting at a table on the sweeping mezzanine above the Honeypot Casino's main floor. Even on a Sunday night, it was busy. A hum of voices welled up from below them, threaded through with the rattle of roulette balls and the clink of glasses from the bar. Jacques wasn't particularly surprised. He did not frequent casinos, but even he knew the Honeypot's reputation as the house that never rested.

But even so, the place was not quite what he expected. Malifaux was a strange melange of the modern with the inhumanly ancient, wealth and desperation, high sophistication and slapdash frontier make-do. It was a mixture that the Honeypot seemed to embody.

The Honeypot had set up in a grand Old Malifaux building, a seven-story warren with an ornate stone facade that jutted into the terrace street. Surely it had once been a theatre, or a meeting-hall, or even a parliament, if whatever had first built this city had had those. But the fittings overlaying the house's soaring, if slightly funereal, grandeur were jarringly cheap and crude: threadbare furnishings, rugs worn almost to rags, bars and shelves that were little more than bare planking. Only the gaming tables themselves showed any sign of expense. And then mixed in with that came odd dashes of gentility. Behind the bar, the occasional fine brandy or whisky nestled in with the cheap bathtub grog, and the ugly paintings around the walls were punctuated by elegant calligraphy or silk hangings. The armchair Jacques sat in was sagging, stained and frankly musty-smelling, but the octagonal table on which his cup rested was laid out in a beautiful geometry of red and black lacquer. The Three Kingdoms touches to the place were obvious. That was reassuring. It suggested that Jacques was on the right track with the business he had here tonight.

“He'll be angry, won't he?” Lynch said. Jacques jumped.

“I beg your pardon, sir?”

“Lucius. The good Secretary. He was very emphatic that I arrange a private space for his visit. Wasn't he, Monsieur Patenaude?”

Jacques swallowed. He had read everything he could on Lynch in the manor's exhaustive files, but it only now occurred to him to wonder how much Lynch knew about him.

Lynch shook his head and laughed.

“You can relax, you know. I know perfectly well that letter wasn't from Mattheson. You do his handwriting well, but not well enough. And trust me, Lucius wouldn't have asked me to 'kindly' do anything. He would have just told me what was happening. Additionally,” he glanced down at his watch “it's one minute past. Would he ever be a whole minute late?”

“He would not, Monsieur Lynch. And so you see through me. I had to ensure I would be admitted here, and could speak with you directly.”

“Ah!” Lynch laughed again. He had an engaging laugh, bright and unselfconscious. Jacques was surprised to feel himself relaxing. “I have had many folks at my door insisting on speaking to me directly, for all sorts of reasons. But none have ever gone about it quite the way you have.” Lynch was still smiling, but now in his eyes Jacques could see the chilly calculation of the professional gambler.

“I need your help,” Jacques said. “The help of your... business. Your, uh, associates in enterprise.”

“You'd like to employ the Honeypot for an occasion, is that it? Well, we don't ordinarily-”

“Please, Mister Lynch. If you wish to set the games aside then let us do that. I need the help of your true employer.”

“That's not actually as specific a request as you might think,” Lynch said, and his smile grew oddly opaque for a moment. Then he grinned and swung a gangling arm to clap Jacques on the shoulder. “But I'm being unkind. I did sort of guess what you might be wanting. We're ready for you. Would you like to bring your tea with you? No? Gone cold? Shame. Well. Off we go!”

“Things are not quite their usual tempo, are they?” Lynch said over his shoulder as he led Jacques through a bewildering crisscross of passageways, twisting stairs and doors. “Martial law. Curfews. Talk of rationing, indeed!” He spun around and looked Jacques earnestly in the eye. “You'd know this, Jacques, is all this talk true of a scrip levy to fund a pumping station to fix the city's water supply? Because...” And then he laughed that charming laugh again. “Listen to me, talking civic politics. People will say I've become respectable. It'll be the ruin of me!” He started walking again. “Now in my heyday I'd already be on the train up the Frostrun line to one of these instant boom-towns on the river, deck of cards in my pocket, ready to make my fortune off these new-minted water tycoons the importation racket has raised up. Well, someone's fortune, anyway.”

They passed into a little arched chamber ringed by stairs and doorways and Lynch picked an exit apparently at random.

“But we get older, Jacques,” he said as they arrived at a door that looked exactly like every other one they had walked past in the last ten minutes. “Things happen, don't they? Obligations, commitments, debts. They just seem to appear like barnacles. And one day you find you're just not your own master anymore.”

“Monsieur,” Jacques said, “you have the advantage of me in many ways tonight, but I believe I could educate you about finding yourself in the employ of an unholy master.” Jacques was surprised to realise he had crossed himself as he spoke, but the change in Lynch was more startling still. For a moment all the cheery animation left him, leaving Jacques staring into a haggard death mask and hollow, despairing eyes.

“You know,” Lynch said hoarsely, “I am almost tempted to ask you to put a wager on that.” And then the smile was back on his face, and he was opening the door.

She was dressed in lustrous yellow silk, and pearls gleamed in her hair. Before her on the low table she knelt at sat a pitcher of sake and three cups. By her side on the floor rested a *bisento* polearm, its heavy cleaving blade demurely shrouded in cloth. In Lady Misaki's hands was the forged Mattheson letter.

Jacques did not count himself a brilliant mind, but he thought he understood the message. A convivial drink, if we like what you bring us. The blade, if we do not.

“You are a man of position, Monsieur Patenaude” she said. Her enunciation was flawless, both English and French. “You may not have formal power, but you certainly have influence and respect. And safety, too, working under the wing of one of the most dangerous men in Malifaux. A blessing not to be dismissed in these times. And yet you risk a hanging by venturing here tonight.”

“I risked a hanging the instant my pen touched that paper, Madame. And if it is ever discovered, the risk will become certainty. For as long as you hold that letter in your hands, you hold my life also.”

Misaki didn't respond to that. Nor did Lynch, who was sitting awkwardly cross-legged halfway up the table. Nevertheless, Jacques got the impression that had been the right thing to say.

“So may I speculate, Madame,” he went on, “that since your response to my visit was to come to these premises in person to meet me, that you are equally serious about hearing me?”

Misaki and Lynch shared a look, and it was Lynch who spoke.

“Well,” he said. “That depends. What is it you'd like us to smuggle for you?” He looked from Jacques' shocked face to Misaki's tiny frown of disapproval, and laughed. “Oh, come on. I know when it's time to just put our cards down.

We know you were out on the Breachside line, pretending to monitor a Guild dispatch but fussing about in all sorts of places you had no business. You were trying to find loopholes in the new transit controls, weren't you? We don't think you'll manage that without tipping your hand to your boss. Even travelling as far as the Breach itself now requires a signed warrant of passage. As a forger you're not completely hopeless, Jacques, but you're not good enough to produce one of those.

"And we know you paid court to Colette du Bois, too. Nice touch taking the flowers to the stage door to pretend you were an admirer, by the way, but it looks like she was no help. Colette has no equal within the city, but to get anything Earthside she has to use the same trains as everyone else, and the new controls are cramping her style. And finding that out made you desperate enough to forge that letter and come to me. To us," he corrected, nodding to the end of the table.

"Because you do not rely on traffic through the Breach," said Jacques, "since you possess your own." And their reactions were a joy. Lynch rocked back as if he'd been shoved; Misaki's posture did not change but she put a sleeve-shrouded hand across her mouth to hide her expression. Above it, her eyes blazed.

"You did say it was time to put our cards down, Monsieur Lynch."

"I did. I just didn't realize you were going to slap down a Joker. I'm trying to decide what color it is."

"Secretary Mattheson is a very well-informed man. I do not handle all his papers nor convey all his messages, but I see enough of them to suggest certain conclusions. And besides..." What the hell, he could allow himself a little flourish. "...traffic through the Breach has been limited to Guild-sanctioned essentials for weeks now, and yet the tea you served me on my arrival was fresh. Do you have a plantation here in Malifaux? I submit that you do not."

Lynch was laughing again, head thrown back. Misaki lowered her hand.

"What is it you wish us to bring to you?" she asked.

"I do not wish to arrange transportation into Malifaux, Madame, but in the other direction. Through to Earthside. Does that change matters?"

"Not in any substantial way," she answered. "However. Our road to the Kingdom is precious to us, and we are most careful what we entrust to it." She stopped, and there was silence for a moment.

"She wants to know what you're smuggling out," Lynch put in when it became obvious Jacques had missed his cue. "You know those dashing smugglers in the penny magazines with their codes of honor about never asking questions? Well, they can do that because they're in a storybook. We need to know. So. Soulstones? Bayou narcotics? Relics? Old Malifaux texts? Specimens? Blueprints?"

"The contraband, Madame et Monsieur, is myself." If Jacques had not been so well-bred he would have slumped with relief. There. It was out.

"Yourself." Misaki sounded like she didn't believe him. "You risk all this to escape your enviable position, and flee from Malifaux."

"Yes, Madame. An escape. That is what I desire. Escape from this hellish place, before the Governor-General finishes his tour of the towns and returns to Malifaux City. I beg you to assist me, and whatever I have in my power to pay, or to arrange, I shall do it for you in return."

"*Why*, Jacques?" Lynch broke in. "I see plenty of poor bastards I wouldn't blame for wanting out, for plenty of reasons. The Guild's strangling the city, and every disaster—the earthquake, the fires under the ground, the filth in the water, the riots—is an excuse to tighten their grip. The Union and the Thunders are almost at war—come on, milady, it's no secret, not from him—and the Neverborn never stopped being at war with all of us. The Event when the comet fell set things in motion we can all feel...all right, some more than others, perhaps," he added, seeing the puzzlement on Jacques' face. "But..."

"But in you," Misaki said, "we see a scholar and a courtier, placed within the fold of highest authority. You put yourself in danger from that very authority, which could go so far to keep you safe no matter the tribulations of the rest of the city. And so we wonder, Monsieur Patenaude, what threat do you see in the highest halls of the Guild that makes you feel more in danger there than here?"

"May...may I have some of that sake, Madame?" Jacques managed to take the cup without his hands shaking, and downed it in a gulp.

“So come on, Jacques,” Lynch said. “Anything in your power, right? So here it is. You must know what's happening in the manor. What is it, Jacques? What's he *doing*?”

And he told them.





The Vice-Regal Reaffirmation of the Incorporation,
and presentation of the Municipal Seal of the town o

Abednego

Make damn sure they keep proper order at this one.

No more bloody muttering or backtalk.

His Excellency should NOT have to tolerate this.

The Event to commence at 10am sharp.

- Order of Ceremonies -

An Entry Parade by the Mayor, Magistrate, Aldermen, Guild Auditors &c. of the Town, along with other Dignitaries and persons considered to be eminent and loyal, at the discretion of the Mayor.

All Rise for the entry of the Governor-General and the Vice-Regal Party.

Address of Welcome by the Mayor.

Affirmation of the Oath of Contract to the Guild, followed by Three Cheers for His High Excellency, the Chancellor and Monarch.

Address by the Governor-General.

Presentation of the Official Seals to the Mayor, Magistrate and Comptroller.

Presentation of the Plaque bearing the Municipal Seal.

Vote of Thanks.

The Event to be followed by the Governor-General leading a Procession from the Event and proceeding in Parade to a Reception and Celebration.

Once again, there was that glorious moment when it changed.

The Municipal Seal went to the Mayor, of course. And because the Mayor had been voted in, the influence reached through him and gently drew in every adult in the town. It didn't even matter if the vote had been crooked—and how many of these towns were free of crooks? The symbolism was there, and it was the symbols that created the binding.

The Court Seal went to the town's Magistrate, dressed in his wig and gown, eyes twinkling behind his mask. More and more of the town Magistrates were adding masks to their regalia now, as Lucius seeded even the tiniest district courts with his personal protégés.

And finally the Guild Seal. To the Comptroller. The most important official, appointed directly from the manor to make sure the elected rabble didn't get ideas above their station. There were still a handful of towns that didn't have them, where the Aldermen thought they ran things. He wondered why he had ever allowed that. Sloppy. Never mind. Soon he would have everything in order.

As each official took the seal and bowed to him, he could feel the work strengthening, building. It was like the first luxurious stretch after a long sleep, and like the exhilarating strain as he shouldered heavier and heavier weights in the Manor's exercise hall, and like the pressure-popping feeling of ascending a cable-car spire in an electric lift that was moving too swiftly.

Ascending. He liked that word.

The sensation was no less thrilling for being familiar. Nothing he had done since had equaled the scale of what he accomplished the night of the Masked Ball, but All Hallows' Eve was months in the past now and every new work brought its own unique satisfaction. Every addition expanded his control, intensified the power radiating through the invisible architecture he was building.

He held up the municipal plaque, a heavy tablet of brass engraved with the town's number; the name he had allowed it to take; a simple emblem that it could boast about and call its own. For this place it was a fist and a bell, although he couldn't remember why. It didn't matter.

He let the red velvet wrapping slide off the plaque and flutter to the floor. The spell was already tightening about them, and even the last little bit of fidgeting and fussing had died away. The whole hall sat statue-still, their eyes fixed on the plaque as he held it up.

"To the folk of Abednego!" he boomed. "Loyal men and women of the Guild, citizens of Malifaux! Long and fruitful be your labors, and long may your town prosper for them! Huzzah!"

And that was all it took. He felt his will make the push like a physical muscle. The plaque shuddered in his hand, the lynchpin of the work, and a moment later everyone in the packed hall was on their feet, applauding.

The Governor-General smiled. A purple-blue spark flared in his left eye for a moment, and then a similarly colored glow came through the skin of his right temple as though another spark had ignited beneath his skin. Nobody in the crowd betrayed any reaction to it at all. He noticed that some of them were clapping their hands in synchronization, oblivious to what they were doing. He smiled again. Order. Order from chaos. It would work. He would make it work.

Behind him, an attendant hurried forward to pick up the gold-fringed velvet cloth the plaque had been wrapped in. It would be needed to wrap the next plaque when they moved on in the morning. There were four more towns to do before this leg of the Vice-Regal Tour was over.

TRANSMITED: LATIGO

RECIEVED:

THE GUILD

- INTERNAL COMMUNICATION -

File after reading: ☐

Destroy after reading: ☒

EARTH TIME

4:13 am BREACHSIDE TIME

PLEASE INFORM HIS EXCELLENCY AT ONCE:PERDITA ORTEGA HAS LEFT LATIGO TRAVELLING DIRECTLY TOWARDS VICE-REGAL COLUMN-REPEAT-PERDITA ORTEGA NOW TRAVELLING DIRECTLY TOWARDS VICE-REGAL COLUMN-STOP-SUBJECT HAS ELUDED WATCHER CARRYING OUT LAST SURVEILLANCE ORDER -STOP-ATTEMPTING TO REESTABLISH SURVEILLANCE PLEASE RECONFIRM INSTRUCTIONS-STOP-SURVEILLANCE OF CRIID HOPKINS JUSTICE ET AL IS CONTINUING-ENDS-

Guild official communication. DO NOT REPRODUCE under penalty of death.
To be decoded by authorized personnel only.

DECODED BY: Yoyo 4:13 am

CONFIDENTIAL



Perdita knelt in the middle of the badlands trail beneath the down-blast of great wings. Her eyes were closed, her face solemn but calm. The wingbeats pushed her hat from her head and she put out a hand to catch it. Dust swirled around her as the great white beast climbed higher, dwindling into the sky. Perdita didn't move until the breeze from her steed's wings was gone and its screams were too faint to hear.

Once she was alone Perdita stood, replaced her hat on her head and started walking. The depthless indigo film that had filled her eyes while she rode her Neverborn beast gradually melted away. After a score of steps they were once again the color she had been born with, the intense black that came to only a few Ortegas in a generation.

"She'll be a fiery one, this," the midwife had said. "See in her eyes? They're already cinders!" Francisco had told her that story. She could remember him trying to imitate the woman's voice, and both of them laughing at how he sounded.

That was a good memory, a warm one to hold on to after all the madness. The plummeting red star, the long darkness of her coma, the...being that had come up out of the earth to attend upon her (she tilted her hat back and craned her head to look into the sky, but her steed had flown too high to be seen now), and the desperate battle for Sonnia Criid's life in the hellish conflagration beneath the city. She did not sigh, or smile, but she turned the memory over in her mind as she walked. The only sound she could hear was the crunch of her boots on the dry trail-dirt.

The revelations—and oh how she had fought against using that word for so long, just calling them dreams, fancies, *las corazonadas, las sospechas,* trying to deny the power of the change in herself—the revelations were getting harder to hold in her mind. Some came slamming into her with an almost physical shock; some flowed in silently like a river. But if this endless new knowledge was a river, then she was more and more certain she would soon drown in it.

She would look at a person and remember everything about them as though they were an old friend, but then realize that she had set eyes on them for the first time a moment before, and simply known all about them with that one glance. A ride into the forests or the Bayou could bury her in strange memories and unnerving certainties about what was around her. When she had led the way into the flames to confront Cherufe and save Sonnia she had been unable to distinguish between what she knew was happening, what she thought might happen, what she was planning to do, what she *knew* she would do.

So little could be counted on anymore. Perdita had been unconscious for the bright blast that had swept across Malifaux, but its after-effects were horribly apparent to her. The scars had been left across the city, across the land... and on her companions. Sonnia Criid had been burned into a rail-thin, steel-masked ghost of her old self. Lady Justice, always aloof, seemed to have drifted even further from the society of anyone but her own Death Marshals. Hoffman, the little engineer, avoided her when she was in the Guild compound, but still, she knew. He had had a visitation of his own, a great beast like hers, but of bright metal that re-wrought itself around him. She knew these things. She just didn't know what they meant.

Perhaps, she thought with a bark of laughter, Fate had made a mistake. She didn't bury herself in books for fun, didn't sit among clouds of great words like the smoke from some fat cigar. She dealt with problems she could see, not ones she pulled off a page. What if she and Sonnia had been given one another's curses? Criid would have loved the revelations, she could have taken them into her library and...well, do whatever one did with piles of old books. And she, Perdita, could have used the flames, oh yes, she knew just how she would use those.

She stopped walking, and peered ahead. The dust cloud she had seen from high in the air was closer now. She could make out the mounted outriders and marching guards. And in their midst there was a great, savage glitter of sunlight on steel.

The Governor-General's land ironclad was even bigger than the enormous locomotive that pulled the train back and forth through the Breach, a great rolling fort whose battlements were steel plate instead of stone, grinding across the hardpan on metal treads broad as railway sleepers. A curved brass plaque on the prow bore the thing's name: MAJESTIC, in bold Imperial capitals. The Guild flag and the Governor-General's personal pennant flew over its peaked roof. Perdita could see no smokestacks. The thing must be running on Soulstones. She wondered how much of the Guild's wealth had been sunk into this creation.

She did not know that, but she knew this: *he* was in there.

The cavalcade was soon close enough for her to make out the faces of the Guard troopers marching around it, heavy boots scuffing up a gray-brown haze. They were big sons of bitches, probably chosen for it, rifles over their shoulders, faces shaded under broad hats and masked against the dust and glare with bandanas and goggles. Out beyond them she could see the outriders, Guild cavalry in variant uniforms she hadn't seen before, sweeping out to the sides to box her in.

Perdita jutted her chin, lit that flashing Ortega fire in her dark eyes. She flicked her coat back, cocked her hip with her hand on her Peacebringer, and waited for them to come and get her.

The fan hanging from the office's ceiling cooled the room a little, but the Governor-General had still made a concession to the warmth of the afternoon: his uniform jacket was off, hanging on a brass frame by the door. His high-crowned hat perched atop it, making the whole affair the highest-ranking scarecrow in Malifaux. The coattails stirred in the breeze from the fan. He sat at his desk, his back to the French doors that opened on to the *Majestic's* observation deck. Their stained glass made a mosaic of his crisp white shirt sleeves.

From out on the deck came a burst of shouting, and the doors rattled as someone tested the catch. The Governor-General's expression didn't change. He signed the last of the papers in front of him, rolled a blotter over it, capped his steel-nibbed pen and placed it in the little carved rack on his desk just as the doors crashed open. A gust of warm air pushed through the room, carrying the odd, bitter scent of the badlands dust, and after it came Perdita Ortega, tossing her hat onto his desk and dropping into the office's other chair. Her glossy black hair was so long she had to twitch it aside with her hand so that she wouldn't sit on it.

His sentries came hurrying in after her, not quite game to actually grab her. The woman with the sharpshooter's lanyard had left her rifle slung but hadn't quite dared to draw her baton; the man with the braided beard had one hand out like a pugilist and the other touching the engraved steel Thalarian Collar about his neck. White vapor drifted out from behind his smoked-glass goggles.

For a long few breaths the four of them made a tableau in the bright afternoon light, and then Perdita put her boot up on the edge of the desk with a clunk that made both Guards start.

"Are you going to have your two *munequitas* throw me out, boss?" she asked. "I didn't bring my badge or any fancy papers, but I thought maybe you could tell them who I am."

By way of reply the Governor-General snapped his fingers and tilted his head, and both Guards jerked into motion as though he'd applied a spark to their hides. A moment later they had closed the door behind them and the Viceroy was alone with his monster hunter.

"You're getting dust on my desk, Ortega," he rumbled, glaring at the little scatter of badlands earth across the mahogany and red leather. Perdita tilted her boot this way and that, dislodging a little more, then dropped her foot again. The rug was thick enough that her boot barely made a thud.

"Dust gets into everything out in the badlands, boss," she said. "I could've warned you about that, if you'd told me you were setting out my way. But I didn't get word, boss, didn't get no warning. It's dangerous out on the fringes. When trouble comes at you here it comes hard. You should have sent word to Latigo, *mi Jefe*. I promise you you'd have been safer with me and my posse than with all..." she waved a hand about her.

"You don't like my cavalcade?" the Viceroy said. "Too bad. I'm rather pleased with it. We've made excellent time around the drywash towns and the Bayou borders. We'll pass back through Edge Point and into the city in time to strike out for Ridley by month's end. I'm making history, Ortega, and history won't wait for us."

Perdita spent a few moments digesting what that might mean. The Governor-General didn't move, even when her fingertips stroked the intricate leatherwork around her holster.

"I'm not used to asking anything to wait for me," she said eventually. "Ever. If I need something to stop for me I'll make it, I won't beg it. And if it still won't stop I'll just..." she shrugged.

"Climb aboard?" the Governor-General said, arching an eyebrow. "We didn't stop for you to embark, I'd have felt it. Did you really walk up to the front of my ironclad and just clamber up it?" Perdita just twitched her eyebrow in

response, and he couldn't help but laugh. “No wonder my Guards were so flustered. Knowing you by reputation didn't prepare them for the real thing.”

“You should tell 'em to pay more attention to the stories.”

“Oh, I'm sure they've heard plenty of those. There were stories about you by the time you'd been here a week. The little girl who turned her nose up at an armory shotgun and went hunting Nephilim with a pistol instead. I remember that.”

“Never even got the shotgun. I was last in line. Quartermaster told me he'd run out. Cheap things anyway, though.”

“Of course they were. I could barely arm my regulars properly; I certainly couldn't afford anything fancy for the double-bucks.” He snorted at Perdita's look of surprise. “You didn't know that? I paid for the first two Irregular cohorts out of my own pocket.” He sat back in his chair. “Our official treasury was empty and the Soulstone mines were still just a dream. A golden fleece somewhere out there. I was a Lieutenant-General but my rank only applied this side of the Breach. Commandant of the Malifaux Resettlement Corps. I couldn't just requisition a larger force. I pushed my authority to the limit just getting Vienna to sign off on replacing our casualties.”

The Governor-General's gaze had wandered away from Perdita as he weighed the old memories.

“Our headquarters was just two houses we barricaded together. We'd only just started to take the fight out into the city. House by house. Room by room. Cobble by bloody cobble, it seemed like sometimes. We were going through Guard recruits so fast that we couldn't even clothe them properly. I saw men stand posts in second-hand uniforms with bloodstains around the patching where the last owner had taken his death-wound. And all the while the Breach flickering in the distance. Bright, dim, bright. It was less stable then. I think every one of us was sure at least once that it was going to go out again and we'd make our last stand in those grubby little rooms.”

“My officers hated the idea of sharing the barricades with a rabble of civilian fortune-seekers. Hah! I did too, but I did what was necessary. I remember the night I decided. I'd seen three men die on the Cenotaph Square barricades between sunset and moonrise, before we beat the creatures back. I unloaded my gun, gave all the rounds I had left to the men, and I went back to those squalid little houses and I wrote and signed the order.”

“So if you paid for us yourself, what was the surety for? Why'd I hand over two dollars to get on the train?” Perdita was getting drawn in despite herself. It felt good to speak and listen instead of simply knowing.

“I wanted desperate people,” the Governor-General said, enjoying the reminiscence just as much. “People who thought Malifaux a better future than whatever Earthside had for them. But I didn't want every town in the land just emptying its poorhouses through the Breach, either. Setting a two-dollar surety for enlistment in the Irregulars turned out to be just the right threshold.” He grinned. “And it guaranteed that nobody ever referred to the Irregular Auxiliary again. I've no idea who christened them the double-bucks, but it caught on. Because of the surety and the weapon. Double barreled shotgun and a pouch of buckshot shells. Clever. Malifaux seems to bring it out in people. Things have meanings. Things...words, symbols... have weight.” His eyes grew hooded.

“They told us it was what our lives were worth,” Perdita said sourly. “We all believed it too. The stories that were going around Earthside on what it was like...” She shook her head. “I believed the stories about the monsters and the devils and the dead men. But I guess I believed the stories about the streets paved in gold and Soulstones, too, 'cause I got on the train, didn't I?”

“What were you, Perdita? I don't remember. First intake?”

“Not the first. They were making fun of us at Breachtown, the train marshals. Said we weren't the first, we wouldn't be the last, but we might be the stupidest.” She caught herself and closed her mouth.

“No,” the Governor-General said, spotting it. “Go on.”

“One of them told me I sure was the stupidest, and I sure weren't the prettiest, but I'd do. Told me to get into the station office with him instead of on the train.” Her mouth twisted. “Wasn't much of a man, but I guess he thought taking it out on a little girl would make him more of one.” Her grimace became a smile. “Well, the piece he tried to pistol-whip me with after I kneed him, but before I hit him with the lamp? That's the gun I was wearing when you pinned that badge on me.”

“Hah! You never told me that story before. I suppose you're going to say that you carry it with you to this day?” Perdita gave a loose wave of her hand.

"Nah. Heffernan .32 five-shot. Piece of junk. But it worked long enough for me to bag two Nephilim on the barricade that first night after I got the badge. I got...well, something, anyway, out along the river two nights later. Still don't know what it was, 'cept it ate two flatboat crew, but good enough for a bounty. After a week I had enough scrip for a Collier and exactly one load of ammo."

"After a week you had a *reputation.* Everyone was talking about the little double-buck *pistolera.*"

"There you go," Perdita said. "People should listen to the stories."

"You were such a skinny little brat," the Governor-General said happily. "That was what everyone said to those stories at first. 'What,' they would say, 'that skinny little brat? How could she have done those things?' But a girl who could make it to Malifaux all by herself...Your family came later, didn't they? I didn't deputize them. It must have been Lucius."

"Wasn't that *puta serpiente,*" Perdita growled. "He hadn't arrived yet. Was some man Gideon."

"Ah, the good Captain Gideon," the Governor-General smiled. "Of course." He studied Perdita again. "And they let you come through alone. Hm."

"Didn't let me. Didn't know. I was young but I knew the trouble we were in. No money, and the whole country going crazy with the Breach open again. Was hard for us. I remember lying awake and listening to them in the next room." She was mildly surprised she was revealing so much, let alone to this man, but it felt good to let the words flow.

"They talked most of the way through to dawn, argued about it. We could only afford for one to go through. Maybe do okay, send some money back, help the family out. Francisco was all duty, said he would be ashamed as the eldest son for anyone else to go. Santiago kept shouting that he was the strongest, we must send the strongest. Papa told them the day he failed to lead his family from the front was the day we would put him in the grave. Hours and hours of this. They tired each other out." Perdita smiled at the memory. "And when they were all asleep without agreeing, I snuck out and stole the two dollars, got dressed outside the front door so's I wouldn't wake them. I walked the rest of the night and I was at the Breachtown station at dawn."

"I should have known," the Governor-General chuckled.

"Nobody spoke to me on the train," Perdita said. "I think they thought if they talked to me they'd feel responsible. Best just leave the little girl in the corner and pretend someone else will look after her." She shrugged. "But they didn't talk to each other, either. So maybe it wasn't me."

"How many of your double-buck cohort do you suppose are still alive?"

"We don't exactly circulate a newsletter, boss," she said, shaking her head free of the memories. "I didn't know most of their names." She shrugged. "But word comes round sometimes. Pikoulas, the old Greek, I hear tell he's a big man up on the mountain lines now. Optimal Murphy's still around. A schoolteacher up at Ridley, if you can believe it. Got himself a fancy gearwork arm after something in the forests made off with his old one. I hear he still takes your scrip and pins on a badge on occasion. He was the one told me Zephyr Gray's dead, with the family she started. She was a good woman."

"The old days really are dying, Perdita," the Governor-General said softly, and it was that very softness, something she had never heard from him before, that silenced her.

The distant grinding of the treads sat between them in the air for a moment.

"That's what this is, then," Perdita said. "The old days are dying. History's moving on and it's not waiting for us." She was conscious of the muscles in her neck and shoulder, the way she was when she was preparing to draw. "For *us.* You, you're riding up inside history, that it?"

"Look around you," he said. "Look at the machine you're sitting in. Think about what you must have seen as you climbed up it. That is the future of Guild rule. The cavalry squadrons. The rifle corps. The Hunter and Warden constructs. The sanctioned spellcasters."

"The *what?"* Perdita sat up straight from her slouch, her studied insolence forgotten. "You're deputising *brujas* now?" She shot a look back over her shoulder. "That was what that bastard in the collar was, wasn't it? boss, I don't wanna be anywhere near your office when Sonnia finds o-"

The Governor-General's fist slammed down on the desk.

"You still don't understand, do you, Ortega?" With a visible effort, he reined his voice in. "We are both old

Malifaux hands. We have both fought in and for this place longer than most. In consideration of that, I have treated you better than you deserved after you came clambering up my engine like some common bandit. I shall make *one* more attempt to help you understand."

The fire was back in Perdita's eyes. Not a blaze, but a deep smolder that looked harmless. The way a spark looks harmless until it reaches the end of its fuse and touches off the dynamite.

"Frontiers," he told her, "do not stay frontiers. Wild lands are tamed. Through toil and leadership and bloodshed, wildernesses are built into nations. And yes, Perdita, frontiers are a place for heroes. Legends. People who not only fight and toil but inspire. You have been all that and more. So has Criid. So has Lady Justice." The Viceroy laced his fingers in front of him, and Perdita noticed they were discolored, as if he had dunked them in purple-blue ink. The mottling on them seemed to be moving.

"A wild frontier gives heroes plenty of room to simply do as they wish," he went on. "You went and hunted your bounties, so desperate to earn your scrip and show your family you weren't some poor dependent mouth to feed." Perdita's expression stiffened at that, as though he had physically slapped her. "Criid became obsessed with hunting rogue magicians, but Criid is obsessed with everything about magic, her own command of it most of all. Justice...she's as inscrutable as a stone goddess, that one, but no-one doubts her calling." The opalescent color on his fingers was intensifying, and the fingernails were glowing a faint electric blue. Ignorant of the change or indifferent to it, the Governor-General talked on.

"You were magnificent figures. Herculean. You rallied people around you. Around your legends. And I would take any tool I had at hand to conquer this place, no matter the weight of it, or how it blistered my hands.

"So I put badges on you and your family and let you build your fortress in the hills where you could slam your gates on my officials. Same as I put a badge aside for Criid while she chased witches up street and down lane, and commandeer rooms for her libraries and that damnable Yellow Crypt. I put a badge on Lady Justice, and I watched while that whole freakish troop of Death Marshals sprang up under her command. I let you all draw on my resources, give orders to my Guards, laugh in the faces of my Proxies when they asked for an accounting. Because there was a time when Malifaux needed you. And I have always done what is needed."

"And now you're all grown up," Perdita said. "And the heroes get put out to pasture."

"Are you surprised?" he asked her. "Did you ever hear the stories of the great days of the Spanish Main? Its dashing privateers and wicked pirates, cannon and cutlass, buried treasure?" He didn't wait for an answer. "All gone now. The great buccaneers are long since hanged or drowned. The Main is plied by comfortable steamships, on reliable timetables, owned by banks and syndicates. The Wild West? Sheriffs and outlaws? Gunfighters dueling in the street at high noon?" He sat back and waved a hand. It left a faint purple trail in the air after it. "Was any of that left by the time you grew up? The prairies are bound by railroads and telegraph lines now, the towns have paved streets and electric lights. And those great names the children like to pretend to be...?" He let the point hang.

"You don't believe what you're telling me," Perdita said. "You can't. You think that's Malifaux now? You think the place is ready for...for banks and timetables and...history books? You think all you need now is some wet-eared little recruits who keep their brass buttons polished? You think you're past needing Criid, or Justice, or me?" She leaned forward, fists resting on the desk.

"Well let me tell you what I know. I *know* we are less than a day's ride from Ash Circle Spur. Know why they call it that? 'Cause my brother and his *pistoleros* found nine wagons smashed and burned there. Armored wagons, well supplied. Seven families made their stand in that circle, and the Neverborn piled their chewed bones six feet high. Santiago gave them a burial. Within three days the Neverborn had been back, dug up the bones, smashed them and scattered them all across the hillside. Just so we'd know how much they hate us.

"I *know* if you turn northeast from here you'll hit Cave Creek, where the badlands end. Little train of settlers thought they'd set up there. Couple farmers, couple cattlemen, a brewer. Was one of the farmers and his little daughter came knocking on the gates of Latigo six weeks ago, too broken to talk for days. But eventually they told what happened. What they had found growing up in among their crops, and what their animals turned into. The daughter drew pictures instead of talking. Maybe I'll show them to you.

"I *know* you've come from Abednego. I also know that *mi Abuela* had to send my brother and my cousin and a half-dozen *pistoleros* out to Abednego not one month gone because they'd seen Nephilim circling in the sky at sunset and things we still got no name for had come sniffing around in the night. They got there just hours before the attack. Nino went up on the town hall roof with his rifle and more'n a hundred rounds, and he came home with no ammo in his satchel. They left two *pistoleros* there in the ground, a brave brother and sister, and another three from the town. They tell you about that, boss? Write you a nice report for Lucius to keep in a file? Show you the new graves when you had your parade?"

"And you're the only one who can stand in the way," the Governor-General said. His voice was still soft, but it had lost its gentleness. "Your little handful of heroes are the only ones who can save the day." A faint mist of sky-blue light wafted out of his right eye. "I keep forgetting how young you are. I think your head is full of too many stories to understand what's happening here."

"I think I've been through too many battles to not understand! Did you even think of talking to me before you came out here? Did you think of talking to any of us about this, this history you think you're making? Do you understand the danger?"

The glow in the Viceroy's hands flared and faded, and the curling light around his right temple suddenly sucked back into his eye and vanished. He smiled.

"I understand control."

"You don't control *shit!*" Perdita shouted, coming up out of the chair. "There are monsters in the badlands, and more in the high forests! There's a living snowstorm that's starving your mining towns in the mountains! There's whole tribes of Gremlins breeding up in the Bayou that're smarter than any we've seen! You don't even control your own goddamned city! More than half of it's still barricaded 'cos you still don't have the strength to retake it! What about the tunnels? Your city's on what's almost a whole second city down there. What's in those places? Poison! Monsters! Plagues like no-one's ever seen! Neverborn! Ghosts that skin your people, eat their flesh! Dead who won't stay dead, and what's worse, *monstruos humanos* who make more of them! That's your control, boss. That's the Malifaux you ignore, while you sit on your ass in a velvet chair in your manor and let Lucius show you pretty papers that tell you how in *control* you are."



"You're welcome to stay with the cavalcade until we're back at the city, Ortega. And then perhaps you'll understand what I mean."

"Please, I've seen-"

"*WHAT* have you seen, then?" the Governor-General roared, suddenly surging to his feet and over his desk until they were nose to nose, eyes locked. "If it's you I should be asking for reports, then report! Tell me why you and your family disappeared from Latigo on some damned goose-chase into the Bayou! Why yes, Lucius did show me a *pretty paper* that told me that our Guards, our *brave brothers and sisters* that you are so concerned about, were stretched to their limits keeping the Neverborn from the fringe towns while you decided to hare off looking for a statue. How very *heroic* of you to go off on an archaeology trip instead of fighting the battles I personally deputized you for."

"You don't-"

"Don't what? Don't know? Don't understand? Don't realize what you went through when that red comet fell? If you think this threat is so terrible, then perhaps you can explain to me why some of my most potent and trusted agents see fit to treat this crisis as their own private adventure? You don't want to be pushed to one side, Ortega? Tough. You put yourself there. You all want so badly to be free agents with your own agendas? Don't complain when you don't get treated like trusted insiders anymore."

"Insiders?" Perdita asked. It took an effort to keep her voice steady. "Inside what? You trust your new pet *brujas*? How do you know how many of them are Arcanists, or worse? You trust Lucius? What's he telling you, boss? What's he doing to you? You think I can't see how you're changing?"

"I know what hangs in the balance here," he growled back at her. Their faces were still only inches apart. "Humanity's whole venture into Malifaux has risked far more than anyone Earthside understands. There can be no mistakes. This crisis does not need leadership. It needs rulership." Slowly, he straightened and pulled back from her, lowered himself back into his chair.

"I am doing what is necessary," he said. "As I have always done. I am *becoming* what is necessary." He gave a smile, a narrow, sly smile that did not belong on his blunt, craggy features. "As for what you are becoming, Miss Ortega, perhaps you should think on that. And on what path you are on. Have a think about danger, and control, and trust. While you ride home on that creature that flew to you out of the earth."

He knows, she thought to herself, and then the next thought chilled her to the marrow. *And I don't. I can't tell what is in him. Can't read him. When I walked into this room the revelations dried up, like they're shadows and he's a fire. Becoming? What is he becoming?*

He watched her expression change.

"How could you think I wouldn't know? I know you ride the skies on your Neverborn pet. I know Criid's obsession with her magic has filled her up with something she can't control, and I know what that thing is. I know what Justice teaches her Marshals about the magic of death, and what those teachings are doing to them. I've seen what Hoffman amalgamates into when the power surges up in him. You're all turning into vessels for the very things I appointed you to battle against."

He held up a cupped hand, then closed his grip. Air and light seemed to bend and deform around his fingers, as though the room about them were a painted canvas that he was crushing in his hand.

"Because I let you slip. I could not keep you controlled. Perhaps it's too late for you. But I will do better with your successors. My work is too important to fail."

Perdita straightened up in silence, and stepped back from the desk.

"My father may be crazy," she said, "but I know he was a good and wise man. It took this place to make him crazy. You...you're doing it to yourself."

They looked at each other for a few moments. There was a tiny squeak from above them as the fan turned. There didn't seem to be much else to say, and so Perdita turned on her heel and left him there, staring after her with his unnatural, lambent eyes.

STRIKE!

BE IT KNOWN THAT THE

MINERS' & STEAMFITTERS' UNION

by order of the Union President **Dr. Victor Ramos, PhD (Eng.), BSc., M. Phil. &c.,** *and after formal endorsement by the* Union Executive Council, has authorized a

GENERAL STRIKE

for all Union workers in the town of Sunbeam this 20th January next, so as to coincide with the visit of the Governor-General and his Officials.

Members are asked to assemble at the Union office on

SUSSEX ST. BY 11AM

to raise Banners and commence a March to the Sunbeam Town Hall, there to hear Speeches, Songs &c and extend to the Vice-Regal party

"A VERY WARM WORKING-MAN'S WELCOME!"

All citizens of the Town are cordially invited to participate in a spirit of Fraternity and Progress.

SOLIDARITY MAKES US STRONG



The town hall burned, of course, but it was what happened just before that which made the evening really interesting.

English Ivan was there in the thick of it. He had come into Sunbeam the previous afternoon by private coach, paid for with scrip that couldn't be traced to the Union. He had not reported to the M&SU offices, the way all members were supposed to do when they arrived in a new district. Instead he had sat in his stuffy little hotel room, rereading his coded instructions and wondering if Ramos had finally gone completely mad. In the evening he had taken a stroll, keeping well away from the miners' pubs. His business here had to be a secret, at least for now.

That morning he had pulled a scarf around his mouth and a cap down over his eyes and walked out to watch the rumbling metal monster that was the *Majestic* come laboring up from the lowlands. He had heard the marchers come down Sussex Street, and hadn't been able to help a proud smile when the sound of all hell breaking loose came from the square.

And now here he was at sundown, in a street full of surging crowd and flickering torchlight, shouting "Back! Make room! Let them through, let them through!"

The injured were falling back from the fighting, staggering on their own or supported by their comrades. Men and women alike cradling broken limbs or wiping at bloody faces. Up ahead at the square and the Town Hall the clamor only intensified.

Ivan didn't like this. He was no firebrand, no picket-line warrior. He was at his best in the Union's small, precise, *secret* operations, where he could use his mind like the weapon it was. There just wasn't a place for that here. It would be like trying to fight a cattle stampede with a surgical scalpel.

Damn Ramos and his special missions.

Two pairs of stretcher bearers shoved past, and Ivan took advantage of the gap they opened to work his way forward through the crowd. Over the shouting he could hear wildly-blowing Guard whistles, and a moment later the mass of people in front of him roared with satisfaction. The Guild thugs were retreating. Ivan smiled. That made five times they'd tried to break the lines and failed. The Guild would deny it, and the *Record* wouldn't print it, but the truth would get out. The Governor-General trapped like a rat in the town hall, unable to scuttle back to his armored bolt-hole because of the anger of the good working people of Sunbeam. Powerful stuff.

He pushed a little further, but the crowd here was packed solid. Ivan was not a big man, but even if he had been he'd have needed a Rail Golem to force a path. So he went up instead, half-vaulting up on the men in front of him, calmly ignoring their glares. He still couldn't see much more than the M&SU banners bobbing up and down against the bright yellow lights of the Sunbeam Town Hall across the square.

"Hey!" It was one of the men whose shoulder he was using, a beefy fellow whose stubbly face was cratered with pink pock-scars from some long-ago blasting accident. "Careful!"

"No way to see what's going on otherwise, is there?" Ivan answered him. "You can put up with this or you can give me a running report, how's that?" He dropped down to rest his arms, and the man turned on him. He towered more than a full head over Ivan.

"No shoving forward," he said. "Workers work together, right? Didn't you listen to Mei? Hold the line!"

Hold the line. Don't initiate, force the Guild to be the aggressors. It made for potent propaganda, when it could be adhered to. He wondered how long this crowd would-

Hang on a minute.

"Mei Feng is here?"

"She only went and led the bloody march down Sussex Street," said Ivan's other support post, a thickset gent with a watchman's cape and a stylish gray goatee. "Where've you been hiding?"

"Anywhere I can," Ivan said, and made to boost himself up again.

"Hoy there," the gent said, turning to look at Ivan properly. "I know you."

"I don't think so."

"No. *No.* I know you. You're Engli-" With little visible movement and no discernible effort Ivan reached up, clamped the man's lips together with his fingers and yanked the surprised face downward.

“If you know who I am,” he said, relying on the ruckus around them to make sure his words didn't carry, “then you know I must be here on business. And you know I don't answer questions and I don't accept setbacks.” The man nodded, to the extent that Ivan's pincer grip would allow it. “Good. Now. Get me to the front of the line.”

It was easier said than done. Big though the two men were, the crowd was still packed tight. In the end, they simply each took hold of one of Ivan's arms and bodily hoisted him up and forward.

He was still up there when the Governor-General came out onto the balcony, and that meant Ivan saw the whole thing perfectly.

He came out alone, without the gaggle of town dignitaries who usually used such occasions to wave and preen. Ivan waited for a grand gesture, an order to the frightened Guild Guards in the street below, some angry oratory. But there was none of that. The Governor-General just stepped to the balcony rail and turned his face to the darkening sky.

His eyes and hands flashed, bright enough to be seen down the length of Sunbeam's high street. After-images danced in Ivan's eyes.

The crowd hushed, as though the light had been a signal. English Ivan slid out of his helpers' grip, working his way forward as he dropped, stopping one rank back inside the crowd.

The Governor-General's head vanished in a brilliant nimbus of light. For a moment Ivan caught his breath, trying to think of what would happen when the headless body crumpled to the balcony floor, but the man remained standing. And then, still standing parade-ground straight, he rose.

He levitated silently until he hung above the railing, and then walked out into the empty air. Purple-blue light, eerie and silent as an aurora, surrounded him like a cloak. It made shapes, but they flickered like lightning and shifted like firelight, and Ivan could not make them out.

And now the order went out to the Guards. Ivan shook his head in confusion: he had heard nothing, the Viceroy had not spoken, but the order had gone out from that floating figure as surely as...

...as a pulse of energy racing across the land from a falling star. Ivan wondered why his mind had fixed on that image.

And then there was no time for wondering, because the Guards were advancing on the Union line again.

This was no well-drilled charge: the Guards jerked forward in unison as though yanked by ropes. One or two lost their footing and seemed to actually skid along the ground. Their faces were either blank or twisted into expressions too strange for Ivan to read, and each Guard badge threw off a flaring purple light in echo of the radiance above them. But however bizarre their manner, the Guards were raising weapons. Not batons, this time. Guns.

Mei Feng stepped forward to meet them.

English Ivan had crossed paths half a dozen times with the heroine of the rail crews. He'd spoken to her twice, taken tea with her once. Now, he was sure, he was going to watch her die.

Mei Feng planted herself in front of the Guards, shouting a challenge and pointing to herself. The meaning was clear. *You start with me.* A roar of support went up from the marchers and Ivan was startled to hear himself joining in. Moving stiffly but in perfect unison the Guards swung their weapons to bear on her.

There was a heavy mechanical thud as though some giant piston had fired, and Mei Feng was gone. Where she had been was a thick pillar of steam, although there had been nothing there to vent it, and where she was now...

Ivan blinked.

Mei Feng was in amongst the Guards, standing over a sprawled man wearing Sergeant's stripes. Ivan barely saw Mei move, but now another Guard was flying back into the second rank; a flicker of motion and two more Guards reeled and fell, one with her tunic in flames. In the middle of it all Mei Feng stood in a deep fighting pose almost as balletic as a Star Theatre coryphée, and then there was that metallic slamming again. A dozen shots cracked out, but the bullets crisscrossed through a second steam-cloud that was no longer where Mei Feng was. As the Guards milled about where she had been Mei Feng's words rang across the square like a bell.

“Claim the streets! Make the town free, my friends! Rise!”

The crowd didn't need telling again, and when they surged into the square they carried Ivan with them. He didn't fight it, didn't want to. His attempt at cool detachment was swamped by a hot surge of emotion at Mei Feng's voice.

The Governor-General hung overhead inside nested shells of radiance like the shockwaves of hot gas thrown out from an exploded star. Shapes shivered around him and were gone: a chariot pulled by rams, a high-backed throne, a Breach gate. In his fists the light formed the shapes of a royal orb and scepter. Lines of blue-white power crawled around his brow like a coronet.

Coruscating energy leapt from Guard to Guard, anchoring to them at their badges, linking them like loops of chain. The Guard line re-formed and met the charging Unionists head on. Ivan's vision was a bouncing blur but he heard shots, cries, and the crack of batons against flesh.

There was a flood of yellow-white light and a roar as though a foundry door had opened, and Mei Feng was in among them. And she was heart-stopping.

It took no sensitivity to feel it, not now. Ivan wasn't gifted the way the Union's secret mages were, or even as Ramos himself was reputed to be, but he'd been around Arcanists his whole time in Malifaux and he had never experienced anything like this.

Mei Feng hung four feet above the ground, a pedestal of flame coalescing under her feet. A forest of scarlet banners ghosted through the air about her as though she were conjuring a workers' army of her own, and her every dancing movement was in time to a great shouting chant that erupted from nowhere. She scythed through the Guards who mobbed about her trying to drag and club her down, striking with fists encased in metal and haloed in flames, every blow landing with a flash of fire and a boom like some vast industrial machine.

Ivan had the sudden certainty that he wasn't watching Mei Feng and the Governor-General do battle. He was seeing the cracks through which two primal powers were erupting into the world. It was the same sensation as when he stood in among the gears at Hollow Marsh station, between enormous forces that could crush him utterly. Except that here there was no deftly-engineered gap to step through. These two were going to collide.

The Governor-General was now surrounded by a softly-glowing mirage of himself, a giant in an ornate Guild dress uniform. One of the phantasm's great hands gripped a Guild seal, the other a long-handled axe whose haft was bound into a bundle of rods.

He spoke a word. Nobody really heard what it was, but it wrung distorted, buzzing echoes out of the air and the ground thrummed like a cello string. Every streetlamp around the square blew out as though a grenade had gone off inside each little box of glass.

The crowd swayed and rippled, silenced. Ivan felt the same oppressive urge that had settled on all of them, the urge to sink to his knees, to know his place and obey. Teeth gritted, he fought it.

Then Mei Feng held up a fist and all traces of fear in the crowd vanished. Cheering, the spell broken, they pushed the Guard line back, further back, almost to the town hall steps, even the Governor-General swaying back through the air as though tethered to his troops. Mei Feng's ghostly crimson banners were snapping in an intangible wind and swaying in rhythm to the crowd's shouting, but something was wrong. The banners were tangling themselves about her. They were catching the flames from her hands and starting to burn even as they dragged Mei Feng's limbs out, stretching her like a prisoner on the rack. The force of her manifestation bore her up into the air, slammed her into the crowd, bore her up again. Her eyes were shut, and cords stood out on her neck. She seemed to be trying to cry out.

Screams and shouts came from all around Ivan. The crowd was beyond control now. Parts of it fought, parts fled, pure atavism, fear and rage, nothing more. Ivan was knocked to his knees, and covered his head with his hands. From around him came the shrieks of the trampled.

Above them, the Governor-General's voice split in the air and became a great shout like a trampling force that struck every surface on the street at once. The front of the Town Hall lit up with corposant that scintillated through every color in the spectrum. English Ivan felt heat like brands pressing into the skin over his ribs and heart. Yellow-white flame and purple-blue lightning filled the square. They expanded, intensified, reflected each other's colors.

Everything went white.

Ivan opened his eyes. His cheek was pressed into the rough road-paving. He blinked, but that seemed to be as much movement as he could make. His body felt like lead. He could hear nothing but his own blood and breath roaring in his ears. It took several moments for memory to return.

With a wrenching gasp he staggered upright. How long had he been unconscious? He yelped as he registered the heat from the metal under his clothes, and then saw that dropped torches from the crowd were still burning. So, not long.

He was the only one moving. The street was piled thick with bodies, most motionless, some twitching. He could hear one or two beginning to moan with pain and shock.

Gingerly, he touched his shirt. The arcane wards harnessed to him under his clothes were still hot to touch, and after a moment Ivan realized that the ornately-worked metal discs were now strangely smooth. They had deflected the worst of the aetheric overload from the manifestations before the town hall, but they had been scoured blank in the process. Impressive as that was, Ivan decided he wasn't going to think about it closely just now. He was going to get the hell away.

Slightly to his own surprise, he walked forward instead, on wobbly legs, to where Mei Feng lay. The iron skin on her hands and forearms was cool now, and the power that had radiated out from her was gone. She was still breathing.

As an old-school Union operative, Ivan had never been quite sure about Mei Feng. At best she was a dangerous rival to the Delegates' Council for the loyalty of the rank and file, at worst he suspected her of having an agenda that was not the Union's. But the memory of her, the power of her voice; the sight of her standing out in front of the line as the Guards came on, that stayed with him.

He stooped down, pulled one of her arms around his shoulders, and dragged her upright. Her head lolled but her breathing was picking up. Ivan got her balanced against him and looked around them again, and saw the shape lying in front of the Town Hall steps.

At first glance it was just a heavy bundle of dark blue, bright red, gold braid. The Governor-General lay face down, arms limp by his sides, legs crooked and crossed. Ivan's nerves sang as he noticed that the flagstones now curved down in a shallow, circular saucer with the body at its center. He couldn't tell if the Viceroy were moving or if it were just a trick of the firelight.

Firelight? He looked up. Flames were spilling from the upper windows of the town hall, and smoke was pluming into the sky to blot out the last of the sunset. Ivan heard a crash from inside as a floor collapsed.

That couldn't have been from the march. Ivan had seen no firebombs. The hall must have started burning during the duel of manifestations. As if something in there had been enchanted the way his wards had been. Ivan's eyes narrowed. He was thinking of the elaborate seals that were being presented in every town the *Majestic* passed through.

His thoughts were broken by a gunshot from the next street, and then another one. Concentrating now, he could hear a chilling mosaic of sounds from around him in the gloom: shots, screams, breaking glass, crunching wood, crackling flames. Ivan had heard its like before. In Wells Station when the rail crews' riot he had so carefully planned out had slipped the leash into open, bloody warfare. In Malifaux's *Segundo Milagro* district when the rattletrap ethanol distillery had exploded and fire and miasma spread through the streets. In Kelso's Gulch the night some idiot had lit the furnaces of the relic engine Ivan had been sent there to retrieve, and conjured flapping monstrosities down from the night sky. It was the sound of a town eating itself alive.

No time to waste. Mei Feng mumbled something as they started moving laboriously away from the square, but English Ivan didn't answer her. He was already planning his report to Victor Ramos. A report that would start very simply, with:

"Everything you predicted."



Vol. VI

The Voice of Truth

NO. 503

"Truth must e'er be free from chains"

Published by the Malifaux independent free press

Sunday May the Third

Work to begin on the Quarantine Zone Reclamation—The Recklessness and Malice of the Guild—WHERE is the Governor-General?—The brutality of our so-called Masters

Weren't we supposed to make sure this one was tracked and disposed of in the Knotwoods, whatever his real name was?

By your City Correspondent
"C.B.G. Blunt, Esq."

As The Voice of Truth prepares to go to press tonight, it is our understanding that the final preparations are under way to break down the Quarantine Zone barricades on Scrivener Street to begin the so-called New Reclamation. Again and again we are told that this new push will clear, enclose and reclaim a tract of the Zone large enough to increase by one-third the habitable areas of Malifaux by the year's end. And yet again this week, the Guild has promised that soon it will disclose the successful bidders for the Scrivener Street Pumping Station, the keystone project of the Reclamation and a venture whose difficult and corrupt origins your correspondent has worked hard to document for you. This great work, perhaps Malifaux's largest civic project since the construction of the air-car lines, only serves to throw into sharp relief the dark suspicions that settle ever deeper over the project's inception and indeed the entire governance and legitimacy of the Guild itself.

Surely all right-minded citizens of the city must join with this newspaper in asking the following questions, the answers to which we shall endeavor to bring you in this and future editions.

It's the damned Record that's allowing this stuff to leak out, I swear it. Tell them if they don't tighten up they'll get a visit from our Guards. Scratch that, from our lawyers. Let's see them laugh that off.



WHERE is the Governor-General while his city and colony suffer under such stringent, even despotic conditions?

WHY has there been no public appearance nor word of his whereabouts since catastrophe overtook the town of Sunbeam while the Viceroy himself was present there?

HOW LONG will the current regime (water rationing, banning of travel through the Breach, Guild Guard harassment and oppression of innocent citizens et alia) be maintained before the people of Malifaux are allowed respite?

WHAT explanation will be given the people of Malifaux as to why such measures had to be so brutally and arbitrarily introduced?

HOW can the Guild insist to us that the City is in such danger as to warrant its new harshness toward its citizenry, when at the same time it is exposing us to a far greater danger by demolishing the barricade walls to the Quarantine Zone?

WHEN will the people of Malifaux be given representation and a proper voice in the governance of their own lives and affairs, as is their right under every principle of human liberty and dignity?

Our position is that this was a Neverborn attack on a town weakened by reckless Arcanist extremists. NO contradictory accounts are to be tolerated WHATSOEVER.

Honestly, do they even believe their own drivel?

Crowds had been massing along Scrivener Street since breakfast-time. Dawn had been invisible behind an oppressive overcast, but the early, gloomy mood lightened as the day did and by midmorning the commotion was actually cheerful. Street-traders were collecting scrip hand over fist for sausages, dumplings, songs, roasted chestnuts, noodles, juggling, tumbling, trinkets or whatever else they could sell. One brave young soul had even been spotted trying to sell no less than three different banned ragsheets, and a high point of the morning had been the lady hitching up her skirts and sprinting away down Pirie Lane with her coat flying out behind her and three Guild Guards barely behind that. The crowd had cheered—for the young woman, the Guards, just the spectacle generally—and had gone back to waiting feeling rather invigorated. Even when yet more Guards had pushed the crowd back and set up brightly-painted red and yellow barricades to keep them there, the mob moved amiably enough. Things had been bad enough in Malifaux for so long. People wanted an outing and a spectacle on a sunny day; that was all.

The excitement level ticked up noticeably when the brass band came marching past under a fluttering Guild flag. By now the overcast had lifted and the crowd was positively merry, made merrier still by cheap bottles fetched from the groggeries along Dead Georgie Lane. If, in all the clamor, anyone thought of the stories that had come down the trails from Sunbeam about the last big civic function the Guild had tried to hold, nobody paid it any thought. What was one more strange, dark story in a city that had lived through so many of them recently? So they clapped along, improvised obscene lyrics, and kept their laughter mostly good-natured when the band muffed a note or got tangled up in itself attempting a turn.

Best of all, the wooden rostrum at the river end of the street remained empty. Apparently there would be no speeches that day, a policy the spectators could certainly get behind. Demolition, according to the previous day's *Record*, was set for noon sharp, and by a quarter to the hour the crowd was chanting "Dy-na-mite! Dy-na-mite!" in boisterous lack of unison.

They were not, it turned out, going to use dynamite.

At eleven fifty-one the barge ramp clanked down against the Scrivener Street wharf, and the crowd fell silent at the alien wail of the Guild's newfangled electric sirens, its ebullience hushed in an instant.

The great ironclad *Majestic* rolled off the reinforced river-barge that had brought it up from the Construction Zone docks. Its flag masts flew the Guild banner higher than the chimney-stacks of the houses, and its great metal flanks eclipsed top-story windows. It moved to the squeal of metal against the pavement; the front rank of the crowd shuddered and cried out as chips of stone flew at them. The sirens blared again.

The cow-catcher grille that Perdita Ortega had climbed up days before had been removed. In its place was an enormous wedge-shaped bulldozer blade, curving up the ironclad's front like the prow of a trireme. As the *Majestic* rolled into the third block up from the river it started to bear to the left, the edge of the blade biting into the hotchpotch brick and stone of the Quarantine Zone wall. The crowd forgot its trepidation and started to cheer the machine on as, with a teeth-grinding scrape of steel on stone it moved into the turn.

Implacable as a glacier the ironclad pushed on, shattering meter after meter of wall, then swinging hard to aim itself directly into the Zone, ploughing through block after block, pivoting on clashing, sparking treads and wrecking its way back toward the barricade line. It scythed through a cluster of high, gabled towers, sending stonework slumping into rubble and roof slates shattering on the street like bombs. It scraped the side off an oddly-angled construction that looked like a factory building with enormous cathedral windows, exposing the maze of rotting interior walls. It drove straight down a row of sunken-roofed terrace houses which collapsed at the kiss of the blade, their dirt-smeared windows and discolored brickwork ground to powder under the *Majestic's* bulk.

Finally the ironclad halted in the center of the great canyon it had carved, a looming metal ghost behind veils of gray-brown dust. Its sirens whooped again, the challenge echoing away through the empty Zone. And then from its gunports came the cough of heavy mortar shots. The shells were filled with dye powders that burst in spectacular blooms overhead, checkering the air in vivid red and yellow. The cheers drowned out the final echoes of the cannonade.

And that, it appeared, was that. The sirens fell silent, the color-bursts overhead began to drift and break up. The Guild Guards formed up along the broken stretch of

wall, and convict chain-gangs came marching past to start hauling the rubble away. It was when the brass band came by again, instruments in cases, jackets undone and ties half off, looking for a pub, that the event was generally held to be over. Bleary and a little hoarse but content, the crowd began to trickle away.

And the Governor-General had not once shown his face.

The great machine was many streets distant, the crowds of humans too far away to hear, but still the death-throes of the buildings came through the earth. The traitor's inhuman ears heard the glass tinkling ever so softly in the mosaic windows. His inhuman eyes saw the tiny vibrations shivering the reflections on the still water that flooded the chamber. He did not pause in his work.

Had it all gone as he had once dared to dream it might, those buildings would still be standing. His kind had little use for this brick and stone maze full of ghosts and evil memories, but, really, that did not matter. Useful or not, it was theirs. Their city in their world. It was not there to be wrecked by manic, reeking, loose-fleshed intruders from beyond the Breach. Yet here they were, trampling walls that had stood beneath the constellations for centuries, cheering at what they did. To the traitor, that summed them up perfectly.

He held up the dead human's head, and tilted it this way and that, watching the way the watery gray eyes moved to keep looking into his. He had been right to come to the city. Simply picking apart the dead things that wandered the tunnels had taught him as much in a week as in months of poring over half-ruined texts in his lairs in the hills. He had finally been able to produce the serum that the books had only hinted at, that had recrystallized the brainstem in a way that let the rotting head remember how to command a body. And now to give it a body to command. He surveyed the litter of metal and carrion around him and began to select limbs to piece together.

Yes, had it all gone as he had wished he would be making this army in league with his blood-tribe in the beautiful wilds, under the approving eye of Mother Lilith, ready to drive the invaders to extinction before a wave of their own vindictive dead. He had known what he was contemplating, had understood the violation and the guilt he was taking upon his head, but he had not been able to persuade them. Couldn't convince them there was no other choice than to accept the pollution of necromancy, martyr themselves to it, to make this world theirs again.

And so here he was, caught and tried, sentenced and cursed, turned loose into exile to crouch in this half-flooded conservatory in the sunken and rancid streets of the Zone. And he would not let it stop him. He would show them that he had been right. Let them call him Traitor; he would make sure they still must call him Warrior, too.

The water lapped about him, and the little army of remade corpses floating in the water or hanging from the ceiling stirred and wheezed. There were hours until nightfall, and more to do. His violet-skinned face serene in the dimness, Hayreddin of the Nephilim worked on.

The sunset was a scarlet smear over the western peaks, but the work continued. The convict gangs labored like machines, hauling rubble out to the edges of the field that the *Majestic* had so brutally cleared, piling it into timber forms to make a rough new barricade. The ironclad itself sat silhouetted against the bloody sky, windows glowing. Standing on a stub of stone wall, Captain Dashel Barker watched its searchlights sweep up and down the perimeters.

“Admiring the Vice-Regal transport?” Dashel looked round. Master Queeg, the Guild's new Superintendent of Prisons and Corrections, was standing behind him. “What a creation it is! I trust, Captain, that you do not put any faith in these malcontent stories about His Excellency?”

“Which stories?” Dashel asked, tilting his great hairless crag of a head. “There's stories say this and stories say that. I just go with what I feel in my water. If he could be here, for this, then he would be.”

“It's appropriate for a man of his station to be seen upholding his office,” Queeg said primly. “I am sure that his absence, if absent he is, is unavoidable. And unfortunate.” He frowned and tapped his toe in the dust.

The Superintendent’s tall, thin body swayed at the shoulders when he walked, like a spring-legged tin toy. His bony, horsey face was shaved so closely it gleamed, except for a waxed black moustache as slick and trim as the rest of him. No official uniform for his position had yet been devised, so he was wearing an expensive-looking morning-suit with a sash and badge to mark his office. His top hat

was shrouded in gauzy silk to keep the dust off it. The long plaited whip coiled in his hand gave off a cloying smell of harness-oil that had rapidly got on Dashel's nerves.

As the afternoon had worn on, Dashel had taken to making his rounds in an unpredictable zigzag, ostensibly to catch malingerers but mainly aimed at evading Queeg. Quite why the man had decided Dashel was some sort of kindred spirit was a mystery, but the more he listened to the Superintendent's nasal voice the more uncomfortable he became.

"You will observe, Captain, the uniforms," Queeg would declare. "Proper dress of the convict is essential to achieving the iron discipline that the lawless temperament requires. No more of this business of penning them up in whatever they were wearing when they were arrested, no! It is indulgent. Every one of them is now in my ledgers by their uniform number, not by name."

Or:

"You will have noted, Captain, that the whip has remained almost unused. I find that after administering a proper course of initial correction, the whip is barely necessary but for particular direction. I count myself in the fore of scientific thought on the subject. The newest studies show that over-regular flogging stimulates the humors in unpredictable ways, and predictability must ever be our watchword."

Or:

"It is long overdue, do you not agree, Captain, to bring the rationality of science to this calling? That in an era of such advances in the natural philosophies, we should realize that a permanent scientific cure for criminality might be within our grasp? I myself have been developing my techniques ever since my days as a schoolmaster, and I say with all modesty that these criminals are no harder to break than the most spirited of my classroom charges. What an opportunity there is in Malifaux, to improve and perfect my methods! Behavioral, chemical, even surgical treatments! I have heard excellent reports of your Doctors Smedley and McMourning, whose knowledge I am sure will complement my work invaluably. No more will the criminal classes roam the streets, wanton, dissipated and a threat to respectable citizens! Mark my words, Captain, His Excellency brought me to Malifaux just in time!"

All that was bad enough, but the convicts themselves were worse. Dashel had been dismayed to see that the convicts were unshackled and barely guarded. But even without a single restraint to be seen, they shuffled along in formation as though their ankles were weighted and their bodies chained together. None of them spoke; they didn't even grunt or moan when they hefted chunks of stone or swung sledgehammers. And they never stopped. Dashel hadn't seen a single one of them pause in their work for food, or drink, or even to stretch their back or mop their brow. He saw several of the more sickly-looking ones visibly quaking from exhaustion, but they kept on through the motions of their tasks as though they were being dragged through them. Dashel remembered Queeg's exclamations about Smedley and McMourning, and wished he hadn't.

Dashel enjoyed his promotion and his special little errands for Secretary Mattheson because he was hard to rattle and he didn't ask questions, but this was a whole different kind of unpleasant, one that had managed to seep through even his thick hide. He just wanted the night to be over.



AFTER-ACTION REPORT

THE GUILD
Est. 1798
Malifaux Division
City of Malifaux

CONFIDENTIAL

MATTER OF NEW RECLAMATION ZONE WORKSITE -- Cpl F. Wilkerson - Feb. 3 -

SUBJECT: Where are they, anyhow?

Q: To whom do you refer, Corporal?

SUBJECT: Captain Barker. Or Lieutenant Santos. I got the habit of reporting to my commanding officers. Chain of command is this thing we got along with the uniform, see? Maybe you want to tell me why I'm giving my report to one of Mattheson's lawyers instead of the Captain his own self?

Q: Oh, now, Corporal, why fret so? Captain Barker will be reading this report. I give you my word as a scholar and gentleman. Perhaps you can even ask him to read it back to you so you can be sure I have relayed your words just so.

SUBJECT: Don't think I don't hear you giggling there, you fancy-assed -expletive redacted-.

Q: I'm just happy that we understand one another, Corporal. I assure you that your Guard colleagues are fully co-operating with us.

SUBJECT: How can you even know that? You been with me the whole night. How can you know what they're saying to whichever of you masked -expletive redacted- they're sitting across a table from? And there you go with the gigglin' again. You're a piece of work, aren't you?

Q: Let the record show that the Corporal has remained silent for two minutes at this point.

SUBJECT: Please yourselves, then. Write it down, wrap it all up in a nice bow. Give it to your boss, give it to Mattheson. Hell, take it up to the Manor and give it to the G-G and tell him the bad old days are back again. What? What's funny?

Q: Never mind, Corporal. Speak. Speak now. Omit nothing. Speak.

SUBJECT: We were standing watch while the labor gangs were still going on the new Zone. Captain Barker, he came around irregular-like to check up on us, make sure nobody loafed, but we was all on edge. Just empty streets in front of us, it looked like, but it was the Zone. Even empty streets had something wrong to them.

Q: What was the first thing you saw?

SUBJECT: The Austringers on the rooftops were bringing their birds in, it was getting too dark for them by the time the watch was due to change, but the last one off the barricades said his bird had spent a lot of time circling over one street, south-south-east of the cleared zone corner. That street came in on an angle so the ironclad's searchlights couldn't shine down it. I was carrying my patrol's flare gun and the Lieutenant called me over. He and I stepped down off the barricade and walked out to where we could see down the street and I lit a flare up over it where he said.

Q: And?

SUBJECT: And what...what do you think...

Q: Omit nothing! Speak!

SUBJECT: Two directly ahead of us, could only see the rough shape of them but they were dead, right enough. At least eight more strung back along the road. Was, is, a broad road, they could walk in wide formation. I saw metal on them but I couldn't identify it as weapons or...parts. I saw him fly in under the flare as it fell, as I was loading another one.

Q: Describe "him".

SUBJECT: The monster. But...

Q: Continue.

SUBJECT: But it was what came after him that I didn't understand...

Only a wheeze of panic escaped Wilkerson's open mouth as the great winged shape swooped on them beneath the flare-light, but his body was already moving, dropping him to one knee so that the tip of its staff whooped through the air above him in an arc that would have shattered his skull.

His finger tightened on the trigger and the gun's other barrel fired. The second flare streaked away on a lower arc, illuminating the street full of oncoming dead before it buried itself in the face of a corpulent rotting thing that stood head and shoulders over its companions on three rusting girder-stilts. It thrashed its arms, skittered and fell, the flare guttering out. Still running on raw reflex, Wilkerson made to reload before Lieutenant Santos clouted his shoulder.

"Fall back, you idiot! Back behind the barricades! You men, all Guard, here they come! Dead on the ground, one high! Rifles up! High!"

Scrambling back over the barricade, Wilkerson looked up to see the broad violet wings of an enormous adult Nephilim flicker through the *Majestic's* searchlight beams as it circled the great machine. Muzzle flashes began sparking from the ironclad's portholes, and a moment later a matching fusillade began around him as the Guards at the barricade opened up on the horde of Resurrected creations on the darkened road. But even as his hands ran on, breaking the flare gun and pulling new shells from his belt, Wilkerson was staring up at the frantically-waving searchlight beams.

"There's two of them," he said out loud. "Two of them! Pissing hell, there's...three...another one, another, five!" He swung the gun up toward the *Majestic.* "Overhead! They're overhead!"

"They're right bloody in front of us too!" someone shouted at him. "Get another flare up before they're on us!"

Wilkerson sent another flare over the barricade, kicking off a roar of gunfire around him as the Guards opened up into the shifting play of shadows. A swarm of bat-like, chittering things swooped into the barricade line, bringing cries and curses from the men; as they swirled upward again another Nephilim ploughed through them out of the dark, smashing and clawing them from the air before it vanished back into the high shadows. In a searchlight beam over the *Majestic* he heard a doubled scream of rage, male and female voices, as two hurtling Nephilim clashed in mid-air and broke apart again. The cries mingled with echoing heavy-caliber reports as the ironclad's riflemen tried to bring the beasts down.

"They're fighting each other..." Wilkerson breathed, but that was all the thought he would have time to give it for many hours. He realized that his nostrils were clogged with the stink of rot, and the space just beyond the barricade was filling with lurching, snarling shapes. The light from the guttering flare glistened on rotting flesh and gleamed on tarnished metal as it faded out.

Grim-faced in the dark, Wilkerson broke the gun open and fumbled for another flare.

The manor's heavy oak-and-iron double doors boomed open as if a cannon-round had hit them, almost knocking the night footmen off their feet. The Governor-General strode into his house without a backward look as the doors slammed themselves shut again behind him. He bore down on the cluster of servants and officers in his entrance hall the way that his ironclad had borne down on Perdita Ortega out in the badlands.

He no longer moved like anything natural. One moment he was gliding forward with the smooth momentum of an iceberg, the next his body was jerking and stuttering through the air, freezing and then advancing several steps in an eye-blink, as if he were a poorly-run projection in a moving-picture hall. For a moment he seemed about to physically crash into his flinching staff, but then a moment later he was standing on the great stair behind them, glaring down.

"Well?"

The little knot of uniformed Guard officers, masked and gowned lawyers and manor clerks, stayed motionless. After a moment, Lucius Mattheson stepped forward.

As ever, the Secretary wore a blank metal mask that somehow seemed as expressive as a living face with whatever demeanor his body language projected onto it. Tonight it was silver, a color he tended to wear for legal business. Bronze was for mundane administration, gold for special occasions, pewter for outings. More and more often, lately, the Governor-General had fantasized about tearing the mask away and dragging Mattheson down Old

Spire Road by his hair, giving everyone a good long look. *There,* he would roar into the Secretary's naked face. *There, now everyone knows! How clever did you think you were really being? Did you think I didn't realize?*

He watched the light from his own skin and eyes reflect in that curving silver visage between the mask's luminous green eyes, and then flicked the thought away. No time for daydreaming now.

"We had been concerned for your whereabouts, Your Excellency," Lucius said. He didn't sound it. His voice was as silky and unruffled as if he were remarking on a moderately pretty sunrise. "There is trouble abroad in Malifaux tonight, and the city streets are dangerous."

"The city is dangerous to faithless cowards in need of rulership," the Governor-General told him. "Not to me. Nor should it be to any of you."

"On that note, I guess," said Lucas McCabe, "we've been at work." He straightened up from his insolent slouch against the bannister post and held up a little leather satchel. "That Resurrectioner lair was just where you said it'd be, northern Zone right against the Crewe Street rookeries. Practically under their noses, 'cept the folk living up there all look half-dead and smell worse anyway." A little diffidently, he stepped forward and offered it to the Governor-General, who simply stared at the bag.

"Just as per spec, sir. The items you described, wrapped in the page of the book that was sitting open next to them. We left some spring-snares set up there to say hello to whichever grave-worm owns the place. I'll send a couple of my boys back around there in a day or three to see if they've come home and had a surprise. If the city's safe to travel across by then," he couldn't help adding as the Governor-General yanked the satchel away from him, but the glowing giant didn't pay him any further attention.

"Sir?" said Captain Mitreski. Her Guild Mounted Corps uniform was spattered with ichor from the things she had had to kill on the way across the river to the manor. Something had left a fresh and bloody scratch across her cheek and down the side of her neck. Before she could say more Lucius Mattheson stepped easily in front of her with a sheaf of papers in one kid-gloved hand.

"The star charts from Lady Duffield's observatory on the North Bank," he said. "Both the originals you gifted her, and her own modified versions. I took the liberty of reading them in the carriage. She was rather excited about the recent changes in the constellations, although I do not believe she understands what they mean. And of course, now she will have to begin charting them from scratch." He sounded amused.

The papers tore in one or two places as they darted out of Lucius' hands and through the air into the Governor-General's.

"Furthermore," Mattheson went on, "I took refreshments with two senior partners in the Katanaka Trading House this morning. I came away with the components our designs require." There was a scrupulously-modulated emphasis on the *our.* He held up an unmarked envelope between two fingers. A moment later it was ten feet away, crumpled in the Governor-General's hand, bathed in the pearly aura of the man's skin.

"Tell me."

"The inventory of tokens is complete, now," Mattheson said. "The works we discussed will be ready to-"

"*Damn* the tokens!" the Governor-General roared back at him. In that instant he blurred and shifted, for a moment standing between two flickering replicas of himself. A little shockwave of acrid power made the visitors' eyes water and their exposed skin tingle and itch. "The tokens no longer matter. I'm no slave to works and rituals any more. I am above them now." The air around his brow shimmered. "So shut your mouth, Lucius, if that's even what you have under there anymore, and get out of the way of my officer. Captain. Tell me what is happening in my city."

Lucius stood frozen for a moment, and then gave a bow that was over-elaborate to the point of insolence. Mitrevski stepped around him, a Guard trooper behind her.

"Sir, the New Reclamation site has been under attack since sunset and we believe it is now overwhelmed. The fighting has pushed back along Scrivener Street and now into the Curtains. The Rifle Corps are holding the bridge and a dozen Guardians are en route to relieve them. Lieutenant Demir is moving three Peacekeepers by barge to the Scrivener Street wharf with infantry reinforcements to try and re-form the original barricade line. Most of the sanctioned casters are standing in reserve on the Downtown riverfronts under Lieutenant Dinh. Some locals in the area have locked themselves indoors but there are large numbers

fleeing the district. The northwestern streets and the Knotgate Bridge are-"

"Where..." The Governor-General's eyes closed, and for a moment he rocked in place as though he were about to fall. Colors swam and swirled in the carpet under him, and an odd, angular pattern burned itself into the polished wood of the bannister. "No. What are we fighting? And where?"

"Reports are unclear, sir. Initial contact was with Resurrected creations at the worksite. A message came from the aethervox in the *Majestic* that Neverborn were following on the heels of the dead things..."

"Neverborn do not consort with Resurrectionists," the Governor-General rumbled. "No matter how much they hate us, they hate the dead things more."

"I am repeating the reports as they came to me, sir," the Captain answered, not entirely managing to keep the shake out of her voice. "Dead things and Neverborn. Phantasms and shadows are moving in among the houses with full dark. That was the last message we had from the ironclad. The aethervox began to receive some, uh, strange transmissions, sir, and we shut it down."

The shape on the landing shuddered and gave off a grating wheeze that was barely recognizable as laughter.

"And where are my loyal agents? My companions in history?"

"Lady Justice has been sighted at the wharf fighting with dead men coming up out of the water. Mister Hoffman is at the construct hangars making a second squadron of Peacekeepers battle-ready. We have no reports on the whereabouts of Sonnia Criid."

"No." The Governor-General laughed again. "No, I don't suppose you do."

He turned and climbed the second flight to the Long Gallery, and not one of the men and women at the foot of the stairs was game to follow him.

The explosion bowled over any unfortunate Guards who hadn't already thrown themselves prone, riddled the air with fragments of rock and brick, and shattered scores of windows inward, pelting the rooms inside with splintered shutters and flying glass.

Dashel Barker didn't give a fart for any of that. He'd done the Guards the favor of roaring a warning as he threw the bomb, and as for these tenement houses, well, anyone who'd decided to put their feet up at home on a night like this could go crying to the G-G if they didn't like what their stupidity ended up doing for them.

What did bother him, though, was that was the last of the dynamite sticks he had grabbed from the construction crews' stash at the New Reclamation Zone. And despite his best efforts to pick his targets and not to pull the trigger until he saw the whites of their eyes (or at least the filthy, rheumy yellow-gray) he was unnervingly aware of how low his ammo was getting. This hellish night was furnishing him with plenty of dead comrades whose bandoliers and pouches were helping a little, but the Guild lines were being pushed back through the city at a brisk pace and the thought of lingering to reclaim more rounds while the night closed in on him...no.

"Up!" he bellowed. "My face is too damned pretty to be clawed off me for want of a trooper who'll stay awake after bedtime!" A shadow whickered toward him at head-height down the street; running on pure adrenaline-driven reflex he pivoted out of its way and swung his baton up as it passed him. There was an animal shriek and something furry and musty-smelling flopped to the pavement ten feet behind him. "See how easy it is? On your feet, you lazy sods!"

The New Reclamation and the beleaguered ironclad in the middle of it were long gone behind them, and for that matter so were the demolished barricades on Scrivener Street. He had started to try bearing north whenever possible, wanting to get to the riverbank and to a bridge or barge back to Downtown and the Guild enclave, but he was having trouble telling which way that was. The streetlamps hadn't been lit and the tenements were high enough to block any attempt to spot landmarks. It was horribly easy to get turned around. He suspected he'd led his little impromptu platoon in at least one circle already.

He suspected he wouldn't be blessed with the time to do that again. The streets had been in a panic when they spilled back through the barricades, and then a running battle for what had felt like hours, a whirling, blurring omnidirectional cat-and-mouse murder spree. They had met up with other Guards, squads of troopers, formations of clanking Guardian constructs or roaming Peacekeepers that had acquired entourages of terrified hangers-on taking comfort from the big machines. But then they would be split again, by some pack of monsters, laughing contorted shadows or just strange lights and dizzy disorientation.

As he led them out of the narrow street and through a little triangular plaza scattered with wrecked wooden barrows, Dashel tilted his head this way and that, watching for flares, listening for gunfire or whistles. He couldn't begin to piece together how the battle was unfolding. Was he lost in a tiny pocket of no man's land, just needing to hold on until help came a-marching? Or was the whole of Malifaux being overrun?

There was a crash of wood on stone from somewhere on his left and a scream from one of the Guards as half a heavy grocer's barrow came scything out of the dark and smashed him off his feet. Dashel looked around to see a slab-shouldered shape racing toward them on all fours like some bestial primate, giving a groan that did not pause for any intake of breath. Another dead thing.

Then came the hard crack of a Peacebringer and a yellow muzzle flash. The thing's groan hitched and stopped, and the slapping sound of its limbs petered out as it fell, one hind leg shot in two.

"Do you happen to need assistance, Captain?" There was enough moonlight in the plaza for Dashel to make out Master Queeg, not a hair or a button out of place, posing atop a wrecked cart with his whip uncoiled and his Peacebringer pistol drawn. *Oh, are you kidding me?* was Dashel's ungrateful thought as he watched the Superintendent step down, walk to the scrabbling four-armed corpse and drive the Peacebringer's cleaving blade



down. “Now, now, Captain, up and about! No lollygagging!” Queeg's laugh was a nasal monotone, as unpleasant as the rest of him.

“Where-” Dashel began. “No, never mind. Get in with us! And save your rounds if you can! We don't know how much longer we'll be- bloody hell.”

Queeg was pointing to two convicts behind him, visibly loaded down with ammunition pouches.

“How did- *'Ware behind!”* Dashel surged forward with his Collier up. The convict that had been picking up the crushed trooper's ammo pouch did not look up as a pack of little shapes came scurrying around an upended cart. They giggled and squealed like children who'd just had presents placed in front of them, and threw themselves on the man's back.

“Who's got a shot?” Dashel shouted, trying to aim, thinking of the bullets as much as the man. In a matter of heartbeats they had borne him down and started dragging him away. Dashel could see slick dark blood puddling in the moonlight. The man had not cried out, but he was still moving...

He was still trying to reach back and pick up the ammo pouch.

“What a magnificent field test tonight has been, Captain!” Behind him, Queeg had holstered his pistol and was *clapping his hands.* “Do you see? Even in their final extremity they still attempt to carry out their orders! We have expunged even fundamental self-preservation and replaced it with total obedience! Such a feat as can only yet be carried out here in Malifaux, but, my dear Captain, I fully bel-” He broke off as Dashel rounded on him.

“How many of them have you sent to their deaths like that?”

“I started with two hundred, but I only left the worksite with about half that, there wasn't time for an accurate-”

“You've said enough.” There couldn't be more than a dozen sagging, exhausted shapes behind Queeg. It was a minor miracle that he had that many left. Dashel motioned to them.

“Get them in among my Guards. We're going to try finding a way to the river, and then, well, we're gonna see. But you make one more speech at me tonight, Queeg, and I'll ram this baton so far down your throat McMourning will have to roll you face-down on the slab so he can pick your teeth out of your fundament. Clear?”

“As the proverbial day, Captain, and there's no need to shout.”

“Right. You lot! Don't stand and gawp! Load up now, fast's you can!” Inhuman cries were echoing over the rooftops, and childish laughter was still floating across the plaza. The windows of the trading-house overlooking the plaza's north end were filling with sobbing clouds of green light. Something whose proportions were all wrong was standing beneath the arch to the lane on their east, silently watching them.

Dashel Barker looked around as his Guards reloaded and took positions among the timber wreckage. He nodded. Dashel was not a good man, nor a kind one, nor an honest one. But he was a soldier. And when you were in a fight together, then you were *in* it. Carefully, deliberately, he loaded his Collier.

“Coming in from the road there,” he called. “Who's closest? Right. Hold, everyone. Hold...aim...*FIRE!”*

The private room—the Governor-General had given it no other name, not even in his own mind—filled a quarter of the manor's third floor. When he had first seen it he had thought nothing of it beyond a vague irritation at this big, inconvenient, oddly windowless empty space with no apparent use. Once the Event had shaken the world and he had grasped the nature of his great work, he had found a use, and it was perfect.

He did not remember walking into the room, or closing the doors, although they were now closed, locked and bolted behind him. Sometimes, when he had drawn a great breath of power into himself, his attention drifted so far away into the strange, invisible landscapes that overlay Malifaux that the physical ephemera around his actual body became hard to focus on. More than once he had found himself in a strange corner of the manor, having passed through a wall or floor without realizing it. Twice he had found himself standing in mid-air.

He supposed Lucius would have an explanation of what it was, some windy, minutes-long lecture, placing ancient books in front of him and pointing to things on the pages.

He had grown sick of Lucius' explanations. He knew what it was.

He was out of alignment, that was all. He had been turning Malifaux's tidal, unshaped energy into a great machine of flesh, law, symbol and power. He simply had to add the final component, fit himself into place in the machine's heart. Once it was complete, there would be no more of this. No more of any of it.

He looked around him. To the ignorant blunderer (and one or two of those had found their way in here at the start, before he had had his household staff ruthlessly culled of the disobedient and the over-curious) it would look like the private museum of an eccentric with a bizarrely eclectic taste and a nonexistent attention span. Tokens sat on blocks of painted plaster, or in little glass dishes on the floor. Some had lines and patterns joining them, drawn in chalk, paint, red blood or black. Some of the sigils had burned themselves into the floor. This was his work. His engine in miniature, or at least the most sophisticated model of it that it was possible to create with symbolic representations, basic matter and three crude dimensions

His gaze roamed over the banner that had hung behind him when he had cast his work on All Hallows' Eve. Below it was the heap of rusted, bloody manacles bundled in a prison uniform that anchored the control spells he had created with Queeg. In front of that was a fine metal collar sitting across the blank pages of an open book. When that work was done, the Guild's sanctioned casters would be no more capable of self-will than the convicts were now.

Token after token, in perfect array. Machine parts from the factories and railroads; bones or vials of blood taken from their laborers. An aethergyre compass from the rooms of the Malifaux Exploration Society, bringing an added mystical weight because the man it had been taken from had later died deep in the Quarantine Zone directly for want of it. A ball of earth and corpse-fat collected from among the roots of the Hanging Tree.

The Governor-General held up his hands. He glowered at the satchel McCabe had brought him and it vanished, leaving its contents hanging in the air: a crowfeather talisman and a collection of hand bones from the Resurrectionist's workroom. He did the same with the silken bag Lucius had given him: a bundle of silvery spindles and gears wrenched free of some cleverly-built device. He gave a quick, savage grin. He was impressed that Lucius had managed to steal these. If the Katanaka had any idea what they were, he suspected they would have made it far more difficult. And if Lucius had known, he might have refused to hand them over. Might have tried.

He gave a noncommittal grunt and the tokens fell to the floor in a clatter. The remains of Duffield's star charts landed on top of them. The charts rustled and shifted, although there was no breeze in the room. Had he looked down, he might have observed the constellations they mapped shivering and whirling on the paper as though his own gravity were distorting even their depictions.

He knew that already. He had been standing in the manor's gardens, face upturned to the sky, when he had seen everything move above as he could feel it moving below. That had been what decided him. The work, and this world, was ready. His city needed him. It was time.

He stepped over the pile without looking at it and walked into the center of the room.

So much had become clear to him since the disaster at Sunbeam. All these labors, building the tower to Avatarhood stone by stone, had rewarded him. And then it had broken, the tower had crumbled under him, and he had fallen.

Humiliation. But he had risen back from it. Would rise further.

He held out his hand.

His banner crackled, writhed as though it were alive, and fell to the floor in burning shreds. The plinth that held up the cog from the Construct works exploded like a sugar-glass shell around a dynamite stick, and the cog crashed to the floor. The aethergyre flew apart into scraps of steel and brass. The star charts at his feet became ash in an eyeblink and blew away in a breeze that vanished as abruptly as it had started.

A ruler could not depend on any but himself. He had allowed himself to sag down onto the rituals and tokens like crutches, and forgotten that he must learn to walk without them. At Sunbeam the town seals had exploded and burned, and he had fallen to the ground.

The Governor-General was wrapped in a cloud of fizzing purple-white light now, spilling from his eyes and mouth and coalescing out of the air. It was a light that many in

Malifaux would find familiar: it was the same hue as the shockwave that had rolled across Malifaux after the comet had fallen into the Bayou. It was the light of the Event.

He breathed it in, gripped it in his fists, hooked it with his mind and *willed* it to wrap him tighter, sink into his flesh through his very pores. Actinic flashes burst from his eyes, ears, nostrils and mouth, and each time a power flare wracked him his convulsions drew the whirling cloud in tighter. He began to groan with the pain and the effort as his boots scraped along the floor and parted with it—now he hung in the air, arms outstretched, head thrown back.

Manifestation through artifice alone was impossible. Will was the key. The other fools who'd had the great gift just fall into their laps, none of them would ever grasp what he had to do to claw his ascension out of the very stuff of this world.

He let his breath out in a roar, and dragged still more power into himself. Now he was surrounded by the shadows that English Ivan had seen over the square in Sunbeam, the shapes of thrones, chariots, scepters and mantles. The Governor-General grew, his shoulders becoming even broader, his head rising toward the roof. His uniform re-spun itself into a dazzling creation grand enough for a monarch. And with a flexing of his will he dragged still more power in.

This would be no short-term manifestation, to rage briefly then drain away like a flash-flood. Let the other so-called Avatars drift at the mercy of their energies, astonishing themselves when they manifested. He was not like them.

He would not stop, would not end this. The monsters were coming out of the night, the way they had in those first days. All of Malifaux looked to him. He would do what he had always done. What was necessary.

He would become Rulership, but he would be no mere ruler. He would be...

...the word dropped perfectly into place in his mind...

...he would be a Tyrant.

Hanging at the center of a tornado of white-hot light, he laughed. He could feel it in him, a vast mad geyser. But he was controlling it now, he was sure, he was harnessing-

The aura brightened. The remaining tokens in the room were incinerated in quick white pops of light. With a small sound like rushing wind, the aura of power collapsed into the Governor-General and imbued him utterly.

He was suspended in light and silence. All his physical senses were gone, but he could feel, he could feel...

...feel the pure crystal chill of the living blizzard over the mountains, the spark of human spirit beneath it and the frozen thing that looked out of its heart...

...feel the suffocating dark of the labyrinth and the Necropolis as it flowed like blood through strange veins of earth and stone...

...feel the wheeling motions of the moons and stars overhead, and understand the strange mirror of their movements and, yes, their *thoughts*...

...feel the bitter enmity of the life that sprang up out of sight of the sun, in the deep forests and the Bayou, and feel the wound at Kythera where that life drained out of the world again...

...feel the heat of the furnaces...

...feel the crystalline thrum of the Soulstone veins beneath the mountains, plunging down into the earth, keening like a plucked steel string with the power inside them...

...feel the great pattern, the turning of the structure he had built, another layer over all the traces and designs that the powerful had sought to carve into Malifaux over the centuries and longer, feeling his reach extend through his ley lines and symbols, his bindings and spells. Now he felt it all in his power, as sure and certain as the cold weight of a scepter gripped in a fist. At the heart of the machine, his will spread and blossomed.

His past evaporated behind him, his name vanished. In that instant, he was the Tyrant.

He had one moment to enjoy the sensation before the light filled his brain, flowed with his blood, ignited his marrow. Every scrap of his tissue was infused. The nuclei of his cells flared like match-heads, his nerves blasted into incandescence.

His uniform burned off him. The outer shell of the Avatar that was trying to form around him rippled like a mirage. His body was a blazing aetheric torch. And still more power poured in.

More.

And more.

More than he had prepared for.

Far, far too much.

The Governor-General's last living thought was:

—wait—

The walls to the private room vanished so completely there was not even dust left to ride the shockwave. For the tiniest instant, the last moment in which the burning shape on the third floor was recognizable as human, the rest of the manor was untouched by the strange excision, and then that shape was gone, and the shockwave hollowed the manor out in a second.

Hard blue-white light shone from the windows in beams bright enough to look almost solid. It shone between the roof tiles before they shattered, and around the doors before they were slammed off their hinges. The interior walls crumbled and flew apart like chaff in a hurricane. The light seemed to seep through the mortar itself so that every brick and stone of the walls was outlined in a beautiful azure halo. The glass in the windows was gone. Not blown out, or even vaporized, just...gone.

The roof erupted in blue and indigo light. Splintered beams and shattered tiles started raining onto the manor grounds. There was a grind of stonework from the walls as though the bricks and stones were trying to flex and rearrange themselves, and then the whole top floor vanished in a storm of flying debris. The terrifying light from the windows was dying and coarsening into a flickering yellow as fire took hold inside.

On the hillside facing the manor, across the great Breachside railway line, the Hanging Tree burst into furious life. Its limbs animated and thrashed like the limbs of an angry kraken, the corpses decking its boughs swinging and creaking, thudding against its trunk and each other. Several of the ropes gave way, sending bundles of dead flesh arcing through the air. Gradually, as the light faded from the manor's windows, the tree slowed, quieted and was still again.

In the prison camps scattered across the city and along the railway lines and mine trails, the quiescent convicts suddenly convulsed to life, all in the same instant. They bucked and screamed as the uniforms they had been made to wear exploded into rags and then into flames. Lost in their seizures, oblivious to the burning, they shouted one word over and over: “Wait! Wait! Wait!”

The already beleaguered Guild forces that had tried to stand in the way of the Neverborn and undead rampages began to collapse the moment the manor did. The Guards' sight began to blur. Their hearing filled with echoes and wind and their movements became weighted and lethargic or wild and jittery. Strange prismatic corposant arced from the runed blades of the Witchlings and their handlers, and from the collars and brands of the new sanctioned casters. Some were lightly touched by the backlash, some caught it full force. Along the Downtown barricades, where casters and large Witchling packs were most numerous, the Guild lines crumbled as their magical support was consumed by sapphire flames and burned to ash in the gutter.

In the corpse-littered rubble field of New Reclamation, the great ironclad *Majestic* was torn apart from within as the Soulstones in the aetheric furnaces detonated, touching off the ammunition magazines a moment later. Most of the Guards who'd tried to dig in and use the ironclad as a fortress were killed in the chain of explosions. The rest lasted no more than minutes against the Neverborn who came leaping and swooping in through the smoke, screaming in triumph and tearing the upper hatches from their hinges. By dawn the *Majestic* would be a silent, smoking tomb.

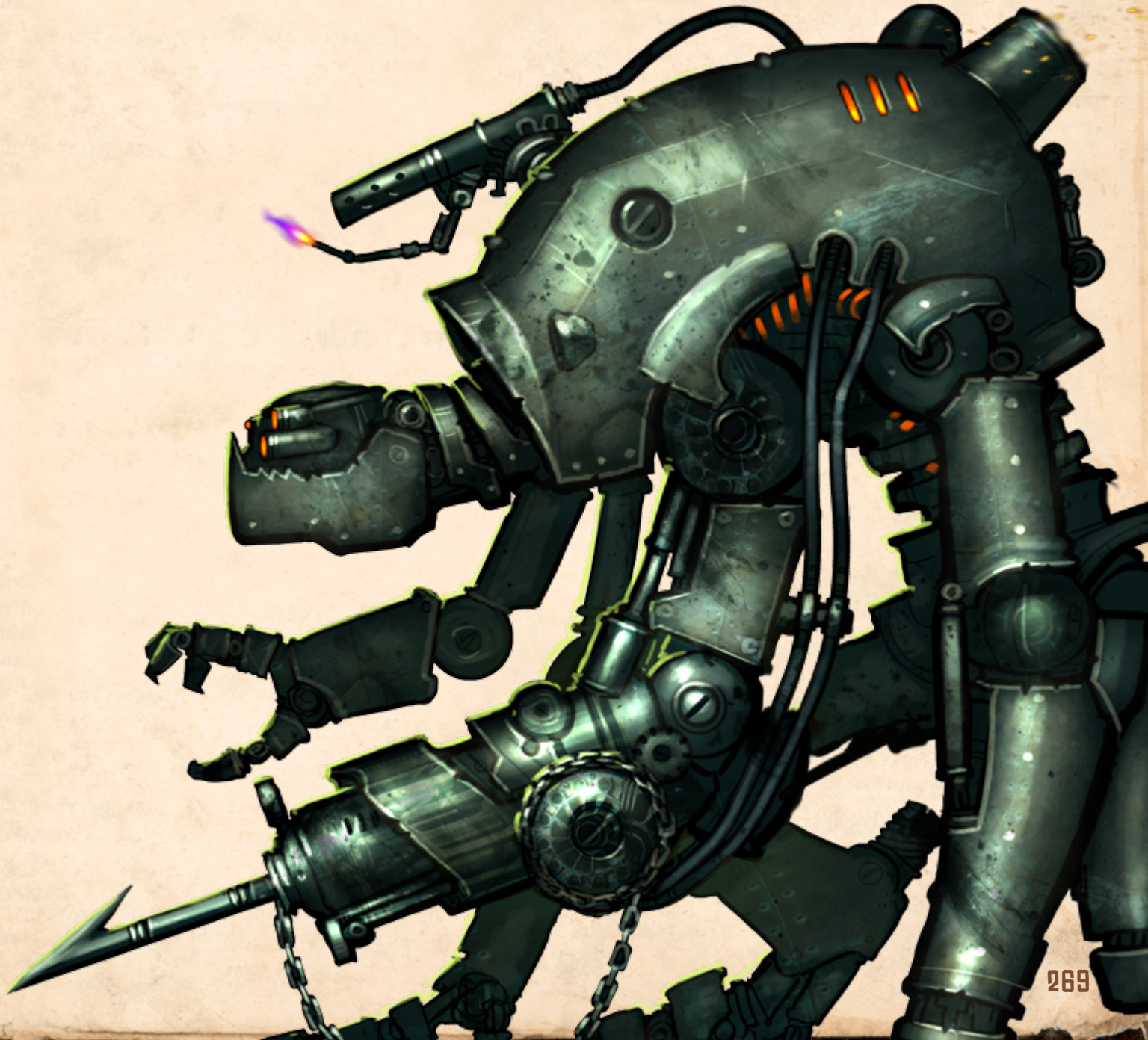
Mythic Night, they would come to call it later. Out around the Badlands borders town after town erupted into a strange delirium of fear and exhilaration. People came out onto the star- and lamp-lit streets, not knowing why they did, barely knowing why they had snapped to wakefulness. Sometimes it was not until the next morning that the townspeople discovered that the beautiful town seals the Governor-General had brought them had come apart: deformed as though in a great flash of heat, or shattered as if they had been frozen brittle and then struck with a cannon-ball. All they knew was the fear that the psychic shock had left in their minds, and the strange sensation of a burden lifted, the unfastening of a tight collar on their thoughts that they didn't realize they had even been wearing.

Those who had been able to touch the power of the Event could feel that it had been drained from the land, like blood seeping from a wound. Some were still able to draw on it from time to time, but the days of grand Manifestations were over. Every town, every settlement and family, drew together a different story about what had happened in the land that night, stories that would grow and intertwine and be passed back and forth over campfires and around smoky saloons for years to come. Mythic Night.

Lucius Mattheson stood in the front doorway of the manor. He carried no light, but he barely needed it. His eyes were exquisitely sensitive. He could see the holes in the ceiling where debris had crashed through from above, and the strange deformations in the architecture where the power of the immolation had reshaped whatever it washed over. He wondered how the idiots who would be here at first light would explain that to one another.

He stood alone. They had all run for the doors when the wrenching power buildup above them had become too agonizing to be near. Lucius was the only one who'd come back. McCabe had led most of the survivors away and into the city. Quite what they thought that would do for them, Lucius couldn't imagine. His hearing was as keen as his sight and he could hear, faintly but unmistakably, the sounds of gunfire, crackling flames, shattering glass. Screams and laughter.

What lovely music.



Lucius took a dainty step forward, his hands on his hips. His balance was perfect, his posture exemplary. He took another step, spreading his arms out, setting his hands just so. He slipped his mask from his face and dropped it to the soft carpet amid the rubble and ash.

Through the lower halls and galleries he danced a delicate gavotte, sometimes in time to the sounds of carnage filtering in from the city outside, sometimes in time to the sparks of sensation inside him as he felt the severed ends of the Governor-General's magical bindings whip-cracking away through the aether. His dance sped up, lost its mannered nature, became triumphant, athletic. As he leapt up the stairs, balancing on the rail and then vaulting to the upper gallery in a single leap, it became inhumanly ecstatic. He leapt and whirled, limbs blurring, and his fingertips scoured and gouged the walls and doorframes where they touched them, no matter how lightly. Through all the empty rooms that had once been his master's, Lucius danced.

Just how long he spent he never did know, but by the time he came to rest the sun was rising over the distant peaks, bleaching the darkness out of the eastern sky. Columns of smoke rose from all over Malifaux City, and Lucius could not see a single lit window or street lamp.

He stood there for perhaps a quarter of an hour, soaking in the scene, before he collected himself. With catlike steps he picked his way back down to the front hall. His mask lay on the carpet. Lucius bent over it, studied the distorted reflection of his real face in its polished surface, then picked it up and slipped it into place. His cane lay two paces beyond, and he plucked it up and twirled it in his hand as he walked out onto the manor's front steps.

There was a crisp morning breeze coming up off the river, bringing the scent of burning. Lucius stopped for a moment to enjoy it, and then sauntered out to greet the new day.




GOVERNMENT HOUSE
VICE-REGAL RESIDENCE
ADMITTANCE ONLY TO INVITED AND AUTHORISED PARTIES
LET HIM BURN

A MAN BURNS

BY: MATTHEW FARRER

A man burns...

...and the world softly fractures.

For a time the manor was the center of a great web whose spell-strands reached across Malifaux, taut as harp-strings. Then, for a few brief and blazing minutes, it was an engine-room, driving a great and invisible machine whose components were living men and women.

Now it is a bullet-hole shot into reality, the center of a spreading star of cracks in the face of the world. Nobody sees it. Nobody hears it. This cataclysm is too ethereal, too abstract, to be captured with mundane senses. But it is too profound for the magical to miss or to ignore. To them, this is the blast of a volcano, the fall of a comet, the shadow against the sky as a tidal wave rises.

With a slamming detonation, Lady Justice is dragged into the air, high over the battlefield streets. She struggles in the grip of two enormous radiant phantoms, swung back and forth over the river and the rooftops, helpless to break free. Every time one of her soldiers falls the crow-headed giant gripping her left arm brightens and pulls her closer; every time a walking corpse collapses back into cold meat the ram-headed figure holding her right arm drags her back. Justice's teeth are bared in agony, as she feels her body and mind both coming apart.

Perched unseen on a rooftop, a doll-like little creature in a miniature Death Marshal's coat tilts its hat back to watch her with its little stretched-cloth mask of a face.

Across the city, Misaki sits alone, eyes closed, her whole body shivering violently. Splinters of wood, shards of porcelain and scraps of cloth litter the room. She is trying to meditate. It is the only way she can stop what is happening around her. When her stillness breaks, every glance and thought become lightning-flashes, and every word from her mouth or movement of her body become thunderclaps. Simply walking through this building practically demolished it.

Misaki will not shame her father or her sensei by giving in to fear. She calms herself and takes a breath, and the breath is a soft rumble of thunder that vibrates the debris across the floor. And sitting behind her, mimicking her posture exactly, a wooden puppet dressed in imitation of a Torakage regards her impassively.

It can wait forever if it has to. But it won't have to.

What a night! What sort of fellow, Seamus asks himself as he bounds along a lightless alley in the Quarantine Zone, what sort of fellow could sit at home on his arse on a night like this?

Well, McMourning, apparently, for a start, plonked mute on the tile in the middle of his mortuary floor while his ugly cobbled-together inventions (no artistry to them, Seamus thinks, one thing about the haberdashery business, it teaches you a sense of style) all careen around the place, grappling and biting, trampling the lab equipment. And McMourning just sitting there moaning through his rictus grin with his eyes pleading with Seamus to do something.

Well, that was a dull thing, and Nicodem wasn't much better. Seamus had laughed to see him at the top of a pyramid of dead folk, not posing like some high and mighty graveyard king but struggling with the angry corpses underneath him. So, with his colleagues indisposed, apparently it's up to Seamus to hit the town on his own. That's all right. He'll make his own company.

Tonight Seamus is not the whippet-lean rake who graces the Guild's most-wanted posters. He's a mass of grey-fleshed muscles, brow beetling, prognathous jaw turning his trademark smirk into a leer. Just ahead is the derelict pylon marking the mass graves of the Un-Rest. Just a mite of work and he'll have some new friends, and then they'll find some warm-blooded folks and—Seamus giggles—they'll dance the night away.

But when he comes to a shambling stop at the alley mouth, the grin drops from his face as he sees the little masked figure leaning on its staff. Its beaked face is expressionless and its eyes invisible, but Seamus knows it is looking at him. Has been waiting for him.

Seamus feels his flesh begin to rot.

In a room high in a manor built between the city lights and the Hanging Tree, a man burns...

...and deep in the Bayou, his portrait burns, but too fast, far too fast.

Zoraida has been preparing for this, ever since she first set her omens and saw that fire was coming. Her home is fenced about with hexes and amulets, hanging among the moss strands or buried in the wet earth, levees against the aetheric flood. She has persuaded the Widow Weaver to breathe her image into the dreams of three hundred and thirty-three children scattered all across Malifaux, scattering her spirit-image into a mirror-maze of tricks and shadows. And she has hung a print portrait of the Governor-General, bought at a corner store at Hollow Point, in the fork of a tree, scrawled with symbols, stuck with feathers, scraps of cloth, and notes of Guild scrip.

Zoraida was ready for it to shudder, maybe break, maybe smoulder. She was ready to hear it conduct the man's screams, or even animate to portray his final moments. All that was important was that it capture the arc of power that she knows will seek her out.

She has foreseen it. Every one of the puissant ones, the touched ones, the ones who have come up in her cards time and time again. The Mother of Monsters. The Fated Sister. The Captain of Machines. The Pugnatrix. The Hanged Man. All of them natural earthing-points for this power like tall trees on a mountaintop drawing the lightning.

The portrait in the tree is Zoraida's lightning rod. It will protect her, carry the bolt safely down, leaving Zoraida the only one to hold a fist full of lightning in a dark and broken world.

A moment ago she was smiling, licking her lips as the picture lit up, but that moment was all it took for the portrait to incinerate and the crude shrine to explode.

To the eye there is nothing more than a stir in the night fog between the little fire and the Swamp Hag, but Zoraida can feel the unleashed power leap from her broken trap and roar at her like a speeding train.

Her eyes bulge in fear. She throws up a hand in front of her. For all the good that will do.

Crouched in among a tangle of thorns behind her, the masked and spider-legged doll claps its hands as it watches its mother realize she is about to die.

Alone in his most secret room, surrounded by the wreckage of his great work, a man burns...



...and so his work burns with him. The machine he made to lock thoughts and souls into step with his will is now flying apart, and all order is flying apart with it. The delirium spreads.

At the top of the Honeypot Casino's grand stair stands an eye-searing storm of blue and purple light, bound into a human shape inside a shadow-grey frock coat. Images of cards, dice, whirling roulette numbers and mah-jong tiles flicker into visibility inside the churning blaze and vanish again.

In the deep woods the madly bucking monster, its human face barely recognizable, is setting the leaf, mold and ferns alight with its touch. Its frame boils with changes as horns, paws, hoofs, tusks, wings, scales all form and vanish.

Flames leap from the crude stoves all around the enormous cookhouse, wrapping around the whirling figure on the wreckage-strewn floor as the clan scramble for the doors and the Little Lass crouches in the corner, howling for her Mah to just please stop.

Victor Ramos groans in panic as he watches limb after limb burst out of his body, limbs he can no longer control. His fresh-grown metal claws pluck up every tool and part and piece of scrap around him, remaking them...but into what?

Colette du Bois is alone, but she fills the Star Theater nevertheless. She called on the power she has become so used to by now, ready to manifest the triptych of herself and defend what is hers from the madness in the streets. And it made her a trio, but then it made her a trio of trios, she just kept unfolding out of herself and now the crowd of Colettes is fighting itself, snarling and spitting, flinging their foulest insults and most shameful secrets in each-others' faces, and who can say whether any of them is the real woman anymore?

And above all of her hangs the Arcane Effigy, smiling in triumph. Traceries lighting the air around it echo patterns on the floor of a distant room in which a man burns. These traceries are drawn on the empty air in greasepaint, machine-oil, and animal blood, the final elements forming out of frost and flame. The Effigy spreads its arms, exultant.

At the heart of a mandala made from souls and force, a man burns...

...and the flow of force bursts out of his pathetic tracery of channels once and for all, ready to shatter the shell of this strange and ancient world.

And it changes. It falls on the world, no longer like a fire or a crack or a hammer, but like the lightning Zoraida had imagined it as, drawn and directed like electricity leaping along a new conduit.

Seven new conduits.

In less than a heartbeat, the mighty surge of power is gone. Earthed and drained away.

And in the aether's sudden dimness and calm, seven new stars silently glow.

Zoraida gives a convulsive gasp of breath and opens her eyes. She is still standing exactly between the open door of her hut and the smoking wreckage of her trap-shrine. Her hand is still out in front of her.

She blinks. Sensations rush in on her. The clammy air. The insect songs and the lapping water. The tang of smoke. All so commonplace. The juggernaut of force that filled her senses a moment ago is gone. So is the steady, nerve-twanging tension from when the Governor-General had been winching his works tighter and tighter. The aether is as calm as one of Lilith's reflecting-pools.

Zoraida realizes how frightened she still is. And so it's with her heart in her mouth a moment later that she realizes something is moving behind her. She looks around, and then up, and up. She meets its eyes. It takes her some time to coax words out of her dry mouth.

"I...know you."

The Mysterious Emissary regards her for a moment longer. Its wooden limbs creak. Strange shapes grow, twine and writhe around its legs. Then it turns its back on her, and in silence it is gone.

Blood runs from beneath Lady Justice's blindfold like tears. Her cheeks are glossy with it. The Judge's withered flesh is riven and punctured. Around them the handful of Marshals and Guard push forward, shoulder to shoulder. From the streets around them come whistles and gunshots, and the shriek of a Peacekeeper's steam-klaxon.

The enemy will go no further. They will retake their streets tonight. Every Guild soldier on the battle line knows this. They know it because a vast dark shape descended from the rooftops to stand with them, staring at them from the depthless black sockets in the skull of its face, sword upraised. And every one of them heard its voice in their minds and their bones.

Endure.

Obey.

Fight.

They fight, and the Brutal Emissary fights with them.

In the bedraggled little village's main street the mob of Gremlins surges and jostles for position around the three bosses standing in an equilateral triangle of enmity. Ophelia, Som'er and Mah stand deadly still, only their eyes moving from one to another.

It's known that every so often the big bosses will puff up, get big, get the way of doing stuff no Gremlin knows to do. And no secret either that the puffin' up went bad somehow, real messed up, and strange troubles all over. But before anyone goes starting trouble over it, they got to make out it was the other two's fault. It's custom.

Mah's eyes flick to Som'er, then Ophelia, as Ophelia's eyes go from Som'er to Mah, as Som'er's eyes cross with the effort of looking back and forth between Mah and Ophelia so fast. Their gazes hold stretch second by unbearable second...

...and then something ploughs through the wall of the drinkin' house, exploding out in a storm of smashed wood: a madly-whirling wheel barely encasing the undulating pink blur of a pig and the luckless gremlin hanging in front of it. Cawing with mirth from the top of the contraption is a pallid, maniacal Gremlin none of the mobs have ever seen before, whooping as its rolling machine scatters a woodpile, demolishes the south end of the tannery and careens away into the Bayou.

There's silence for a moment. Then Mah shrugs. Ophelia shrugs. Som'er waits for a dramatic interval, and then shrugs too.



The show must go on.

Colette isn't sure whether she's thought those words or actually managed to say them, but, well, it's true, isn't it? Something happened to her, something she can't quite remember, but the show must go on. Her girls need her.

She sits up. Her body aches and her eyes sting. Well, time to pull herself together. Or—she manages a laugh—to split herself up.

But when she reaches for that strange invisible muscle that will flex and pull the power into her, it isn't there. There is something, something subtle and rarefied, that slips silkily through her fingers, but she is still too muzzy to quite grasp it. That's when she sees the creation standing in the auditorium, light shining from it, the dazzling azure of a summer sky. It bows, and out of sheer stunned reflex Colette curtseys back to it. Then it points to the double doors. Work to do. The show must go on.

Colette twirls in place, and by the time she finishes the pirouette she is standing at the doors. She pulls them open and marches out, and the Arcane Emissary follows her.

It was once the Avatar of Dread, now it is a lumpen corpse sprawled in an alley mouth. Then suddenly its necrotizing meat heaves, bulges, and splits. An arm shoots out and reaches around to tear the split wider. Finally an exhausted Seamus, once again his gaunt little self, manages to tear free of the hulking body he used to occupy, the cobbles scraping his naked skin. He is crying.

Uonn craih, the voice says from above him. **Iash craih thuol**. Seamus wails aloud and rolls over.

The towering crow-headed shape in the musty robe leans down to him. Its voice is deep and warm. Seamus would swear he hears kindness in it.

Craih denn tow. Craih chyeh Kythera dow.

The thing reaches up and takes something glistening from the corner of one of its hard corvid eyes. It holds it out to Seamus, and unthinkingly he takes it. It sends a thrumming, freezing vibration through him that he never thought he would feel again.

Lyng diehn fei. Uth gran Kythera dow.

And with a single thrumming downbeat of its wings the Carrion Emissary vanishes upward into the night. Wild-eyed, laughing now, tears streaking his face, Seamus stares after it, until the breeze on his skin brings him out of the moment. He yelps in alarm at his nakedness and hurries back to the mound of meat he escaped from. He grabs the top hat from its collapsing head and puts it on his own. Sorted.

The pack of Torakage and household guards quail in unison as Misaki points her bisento at them.

"Tell me what is going on. There has been fighting in the city, but now I hear it inside the building. Tell me what is managing to cause such upheaval in my own house," she says, calmly defying anyone to bring up the wreckage in her own room.

Before any of them can speak, she has her answer. Something comes ricocheting along the passageway, leaving a trail of smoky shadow and hyena-laughter behind it, ignoring a shearing bisento stroke that should have ended it. It stands for a moment in the narrow window at the passageway's end, a lithe and elegant shape in tauntingly familiar garb.

Misaki rushes after it as it leaps out the window, still laughing, still throwing off smoke and shadow. It turns as it falls, effortlessly acrobatic, and grows in length in shape, until it has the form of a mighty dragon.

"Alyce?" Leveticus says. His voice is scrupulously modulated, the voice of someone trying very hard not to startle an animal. "Alyce, I want you to lower the gun. And then I want you to holster your gun, and make it very clear your hands are empty. Please believe that I am as serious about this as I have ever been, about anything that I have ever said to you."

"It's the moustache, isn't it?" Rusty Alyce answers him. Her gun is still trained on the left eye of the ridiculous codger perched on his mountainously-laden donkey. "You're scared of his moustache. I bet you can't even grow one. That's why he's got you so intimidated."

Her tone is pure bored insolence, but her face betrays her nerves. She felt something, the same gut-tumbling hot flash she gets when Leveticus grows from the old man she works for into that weird horseman. But when she came running to see what was happening she found him out in the street in front of Captivating Salvage and Logistics, face to face with this thing.

Alyce blinks. She definitely just thought "thing" not "man". She wonders why.

Then she looks into the man's eyes. Her gun arm drops to her side. There's a roaring in her ears.

And then the donkey with its great pile of cargo and its deep-eyed rider is turning away, plodding down the empty street, fading into the night faster than it should with such a weary lack of speed. Alyce looks over at Leveticus, who is inspecting something in his hand.

"Where's he going? Hell with that, where'd he come from? How'd he even get here? And did he give you something, or take something?"

"A little of each, Alyce, a little of each. And as to...as to where..." Leveticus' voice trails off for a moment, and then his hand snaps shut around whatever it was holding and his expression firms. He smiles.

"Come inside, Alyce. We have a lot of work to do."

And in the windowless room in the shattered manor, a man burns...

...and burns out.



CAMPAIGN QUICK REFERENCE

DETERMINE ENCOUNTER SIZE

Each player adds up the total Soulstone cost of all models in their Arsenal (not including Upgrades). The maximum Encounter Size is equal to the lower player's total plus 5. Players may always choose to play a smaller sized game, but this is how a maximum game size is determined. Example: Jack has 27 Soulstones worth of models in his Arsenal and Lisa has 29. The max Encounter size is (27 +5) 32.

AFTERMATH PHASE

Phase 1: Draw Aftermath Hand
Phase 2: Payday (collect Scrip)
Phase 3: Barter (new Campaign Upgrades)
Phase 4: Make a Reward Flip (if a Bounty was finished)
Phase 5: Purchase Bounties
Phase 6: Determine Injuries

CALCULATING SCRIP

Each Crew earns 1 Scrip for every 2 VP they earned during the game (rounded up) and the winning Crew gains 1 additional Scrip. If a Crew has a lower Campaign Rating than the Crew it opposed, then it earns an additional amount of Scrip equal to the difference in Campaign Ratings. Additional Scrip may be earned from the Weekly Event. A Crew may not earn more than 16 Scrip per week.

CALCULATING CREW RATING

A Crew's Rating is equal to the number of non-Injury Campaign upgrades it has minus the number of Injury Upgrades it has, +3 if the Crew has an Avatar. The Crew with the lower Rating will receive a bonus number of Soulstones in its Pool and bonus Scrip equal to the difference in Ratings.

ZERO COST HENCHMEN

Some Henchmen have a Soulstone Cost of 0. For the purposes of the Campaign, these models are considered to have a Cost of 13 minus their Cache while Leading. For example, a Henchmen with a cost of 0 and 3 Cache would be considered to have a cost of (13-3) 10 while Leading.

AFTER MATH HAND

Draw 1 card for completing the game without using Strategic Withdrawal.

Draw 1 card for winning.

Draw 1 card for completing the final portion of a Bounty.

BARTER FLIPS

Make 1 Barter Flip for completing the game.

Make 1 Barter Flip for earning 3 or more VP from the Strategy.

STATION	MAX SKILLS
Peon	0
Minion	1
Enforcer	1
Henchman	2
Master	3

STATION	MAX INJURIES
Peon	1
Minion	2
Enforcer	2
Henchman	3
Master	3

NAME	BR	TYPE	CC	SS	EFFECT
Good Lead	Always	Skill	2	0	Does not affect Campaign Rating. After making a Barter flip, Annihilate this Upgrade to add or subtract 1 from the result.
Lucky Gremlin's Foot	Always	Skill	2	0	Does not affect Campaign Rating. After flipping this model's Injuries, Annihilate this Upgrade to add or subtract 1 from the result.
Change of Station	Always	Skill	1	0	This Upgrade may be attached to a Peon. If this model is a Peon, it becomes a Minion. If it is a Minion, it becomes an Enforcer. Multiple copies of this Upgrade may be attached to one model. Does not count against the maximum Skills the model may have.
Can O' Beans	1	Equipment	1	1	(0) Fire In The Hole! (**Ca** 6 / TN: 10 / Rg: (⁑)2): All models in range must pass a TN 15 **Wp** duel or suffer 2 damage.
Coffee	1	Equipment	1	0	Coffee: This model may Annihilate this Upgrade at the start of its Activation to gain **Fast**.
Arcane Background	1	Skill	4	0	This model gains +1 **Ca** to all of its **Ca** Actions, up to a Maximum **Ca** of 7.
Whiskey	2	Equipment	2	0	Whiskey: This model may Annihilate this Upgrade at the start of its Activation to gain + to all duels for the remainder of the Turn.
Helmet	2	Equipment	3	1	Hard to Kill: While this model has 2 or more **Wd** remaining when it suffers damage, it may not be reduced to below 1 **Wd**.
The Hag's Kiss	2	Skill	3	0	The Hag's Kiss: Models damaged by this model's **Ml** Attack Actions gain **Poison +2**.
Clockwork Seeker	2	Equipment	5	1	(1) Clockwork Seeker (**Sh** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐12): Target suffers 3/4/5 damage. This damage ignores **Hard to Wound**.
Expanded Palate	3	Skill	2	0	(0) Jerky Time! (**Ca** 5 / TN: 10 / Rg: (⁑)3) Discard all Corpse Markers in range. Heal up to 2 damage on this model for each Marker discarded.
Tool Kit	3	Equipment	3	1	Tool Kit: This model may take the (1) Interact Action as a (0) Action.
Fortitude of Mind	3	Skill	2	0	This model gains +1 **Wp**, up to a maximum **Wp** of 7.
Flammenwerfer	3	Equipment	4	1	(1) Flammenwerfer (**Sh** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐10): Target suffers 2/3🌪/4🌪🌪 damage. This Attack ignores cover.
Off-hand Fighting	4	Skill	4	0	Paired Melee Weapons: **Ml** Attacks this model makes gain +.
Off-hand Shot	4	Skill	4	0	Paired Range Weapons: **Sh** Attacks this model makes gain +.
Field Experience	4	Skill	2	0	Field Experience: This model is immune to **Slow** and **Paralyzed**.
Collier Pistol	4	Equipment	5	1	(1) Collier Pistol (**Sh** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐10 or ⫻ 2): Target suffers 2/3/4 damage. This Attack Action gains +.
Steady Aim	5	Skill	3	0	This model gains the following Trigger to all **Sh** Attack Actions: ***Critical Strike:*** When damaging the target, this Attack deals +1 damage for each in the final duel total.
Steady Hands	5	Skill	3	0	This model gains the following Trigger to all **Ml** Attack Actions: ***Critical Strike:*** When damaging the target, this Attack deals +1 damage for each in the final duel total.
Soulstone Ale	5	Equipment	3	0	Soulstone Ale: At the start of this model's Activation it may Annihilate this Upgrade to gain **Reactivate**.
Katanas	5	Equipment	2	1	(1) Katanas (**Ml** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 2/4/5 damage. This Action gains + to the Attack flip.

NAME	BR	TYPE	CC	SS	EFFECT
Agility	6	Skill	5	0	This model gains +1 **Wk**.
Berserk	6	Skill	4	0	(2) Flurry: This model may discard a card. If it does, this model may make 3 **Ml** Attack Actions with an AP cost of 1 against a single target.
Machete	6	Equipment	3	0	Unimpeded: This model ignores penalties for severe terrain when moving.
Ancient Scrolls	6	Equipment	4	1	(1) Ancient Words (**Ca** 5 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐10 or ⫻ 1): Target suffers 2/4/5 damage.
Duelist	7	Skill	4	0	This model gains +1 **Ml** to all of its **Ml** Actions, up to a Maximum **Ml** of 7.
Fan the Hammer	7	Skill	4	0	(2) Rapid Fire: This model may discard a card. If it does, this model may make 3 **Sh** Attack Actions with an AP cost of 1 against a single target.
Freikorps Suit	7	Equipment	2	0	Freikorps Suit: This model may ignore damage from (☠) and 🌪 effects.
Tough As Nails	7	Skill	2	0	Tough As Nails: This model is only Finished Off on a result of 11 or higher.
Quick Study	8	Skill	4	0	(2) Furious Casting: This model may discard a card. If it does, this model may make 3 **Ca** Attack Actions with an AP cost of 1 against a single target.
Sharpshooter	8	Skill	4	0	This model gains +1 **Sh** to all of its **Sh** Actions, up to a Maximum **Sh** of 7.
Metal Plate	8	Equipment	3	1	Armor +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model by +1, to a minimum of 1.
Greatsword	8	Equipment	6	2	(1) Greatsword (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 3/4/6 damage. This damage flip gains ✚ if this model did not Charge during this Activation.
Quick Reflexes	9	Skill	4	0	This model gains +1 **Df**, to a maximum **Df** of 7.
Scope	9	Equipment	3	0	Scope: This model ignores penalties for Soft Cover while Attacking.
Extended Blade	9	Equipment	5	1	Improved Reach: This model's **Ml** Attacks gain +1 Rg, to a maximum Rg of 3.
Neverborn Hide	9	Skill	3	0	Black Blood: All models without **Black Blood** within (☠)1 suffer 1 damage when this model suffers damage.
Enchanted Weapons	10	Skill	4	0	Enchanted Weapons: This model ignores the **Incorporeal** and **Armor** Abilities while Attacking.
Determination	10	Skill	5	0	Hard to Wound +1: Damage flips against this model suffer ⊟.
Aetheric Disruptor	10	Equipment	3	1	Nether Fluctuation: Enemy models within ❶4 of this model ignore any suits associated with their **Ca**, **Sh**, and **Ml** stats.
Snares	10	Equipment	2	1	Snares: Enemy models cannot end a Charge within ❶3.
Thick Hide	11	Skill	5	0	Regeneration +1: When this model Activates it heals +1 damage.
Dynamite	11	Equipment	2	0	KABOOM!: Models within (☠)3 suffer 3 damage when this model is killed, then Annihilate this Upgrade.
Pneumatic Legs	11	Skill	8	1	(0) Leap (**Ca** 5 / TN: 10🐱): This model immediately moves up to its **Cg**, ignoring intervening terrain and models during the move.
Flak Jacket	11	Equipment	5	0	Bullet Proof +1: Reduce all damage suffered by this model from **Sh** Actions by +1 to a minimum of 1.

NAME	BR	TYPE	CC	SS	EFFECT
Bond	12	Skill	3	0	Companion: After a friendly model ends its Activation within 6" of this model, this model may Activate immediately as a Chain Activation.
Hydraulics	12	Equipment	2	1	Hydraulics: This model may Annihilate this Upgrade during its Activation to make a Charge Action for 1 AP.
Instinctual	12	Skill	5	0	Instinctual: This model may take two (0) Actions during its Activation, so long as they are both different.
Grotesque Trophy	12	Equipment	3	1	Terrifying (All) 12: Enemy models must pass a TN 12 Horror Duel if they end a Walk Action within this model's engagement range or target this model with an Action.
Jetpack	13	Equipment	5	0	Flight: This model is immune to falling damage and may ignore any terrain or models while moving.
Healing Salve	13	Equipment	3	0	Healing Salve: At the start of this model's Activation, it may Annihilate this Upgrade to Annihilate an Injury on target model within 6".
Relic Hammer	13	Equipment	5	1	(1) Relic Hammer (**Ml** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 3): Target suffers 3/4/6 damage. If the target is a Construct or a Tyrant the damage flip gains ✝✝.
Gatling Gun	13	Equipment	7	2	(1) Steam Gatling Burst (**Sh** 6 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐12): Target suffers 2/5/6 damage. This Action's Attack flip gains ✝.
Fated	14	Skill	4	0	Fated: Damage flips against this model may not be cheated.
Those Who Thirst	14	Equipment	7	2	Flip a card and consult below.

THOSE WHO THIRST

Edict

(1) Edict (**Sh** 7 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⌐14): Target suffers 2/4/6 damage. If the target is killed, this Crew adds one Soulstone to its Pool.

Laws Written: After damaging an enemy, discard all Scheme Markers within (⁑)4 of the target.

Laid to Rest: After killing, the target is automatically Finished Off.

Insight

(1) Insight (**Ca** 7 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: 8): Target suffers 3/3/5 damage. If the target is killed, this Crew adds one Soulstone to its Pool.

Visions Witnessed: After damaging, look at the top five cards of either deck and replace them in any order.

Laid to Rest: After killing, the target is automatically Finished Off.

Blight

(1) Blight (**Ml** 7 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 2): Target suffers 3 damage and gains the following Condition for the rest of the game: "**Spiraling Oblivion +1:** When this model Activates, it suffers +1 damage. When this model is killed, the opposing Crew adds one Soulstone to its Pool."

A Land Tainted: After damaging, place a Scheme Marker in base contact with the target.

Laid to Rest: After killing, the target is automatically Finished Off.

Covenant

(1) Covenant (**Ml** 7 / Rst: **Df** / Rg: ⫻ 3): Target suffers 3/4/6 damage. If the target is killed, this Crew adds one Soulstone to its Pool.

Promise Kept: After damaging, draw a card.

Laid to Rest: After killing, the target is automatically Finished Off.

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PLAYER NAME:

MALIFAUX 2E | ARSENAL SHEET | WYRD

MODEL 1: LEADER

SKILLS:

INJURIES:

MODEL 2:

SKILLS:

INJURIES:

MODEL 3:

SKILLS:

INJURIES:

MODEL 4:

SKILLS:

INJURIES:

MODEL 5:

SKILLS:

INJURIES:

MODEL 6:

SKILLS:

INJURIES:

MODEL 7:

SKILLS:

INJURIES:

MODEL 8:

SKILLS:

INJURIES:

MODEL 9:

SKILLS:

INJURIES:

MODEL 10:

SKILLS:

INJURIES:

EQUIPMENT & UPGRADES:

SCRIP:

COMPLETED BOUNTIES:

CURRENT BOUNTY:

COMPETITIVE CAMPAIGN

CAMPAIGN POINTS: DIFFERENTIAL: VP:

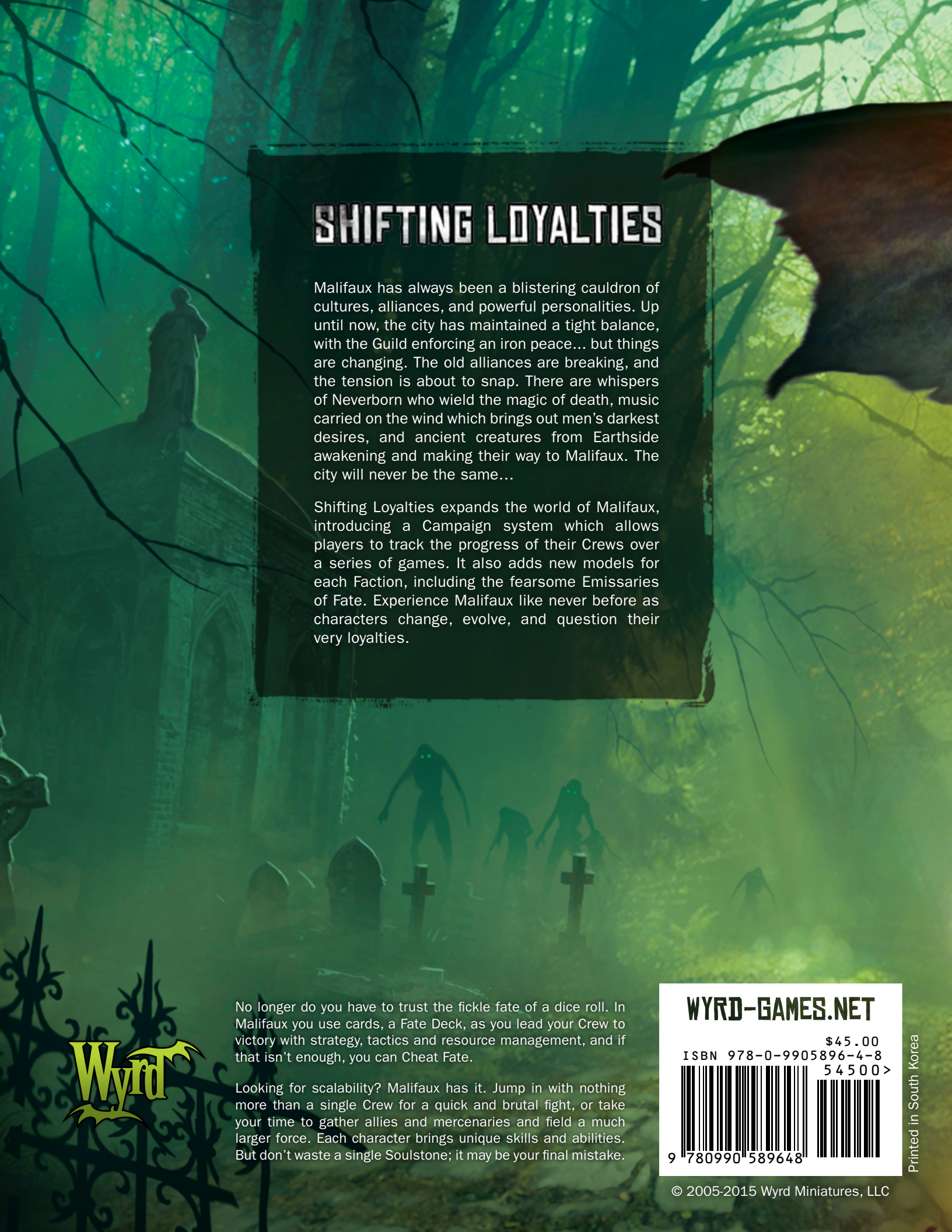
HIDE OUT: CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL:

FLAIR: FORTIFICATIONS:

SHIFTING LOYALTIES

MALIFAUX 2E

Wyrd



SHIFTING LOYALTIES

Malifaux has always been a blistering cauldron of cultures, alliances, and powerful personalities. Up until now, the city has maintained a tight balance, with the Guild enforcing an iron peace... but things are changing. The old alliances are breaking, and the tension is about to snap. There are whispers of Neverborn who wield the magic of death, music carried on the wind which brings out men's darkest desires, and ancient creatures from Earthside awakening and making their way to Malifaux. The city will never be the same...

Shifting Loyalties expands the world of Malifaux, introducing a Campaign system which allows players to track the progress of their Crews over a series of games. It also adds new models for each Faction, including the fearsome Emissaries of Fate. Experience Malifaux like never before as characters change, evolve, and question their very loyalties.

Wyrd

No longer do you have to trust the fickle fate of a dice roll. In Malifaux you use cards, a Fate Deck, as you lead your Crew to victory with strategy, tactics and resource management, and if that isn't enough, you can Cheat Fate.

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