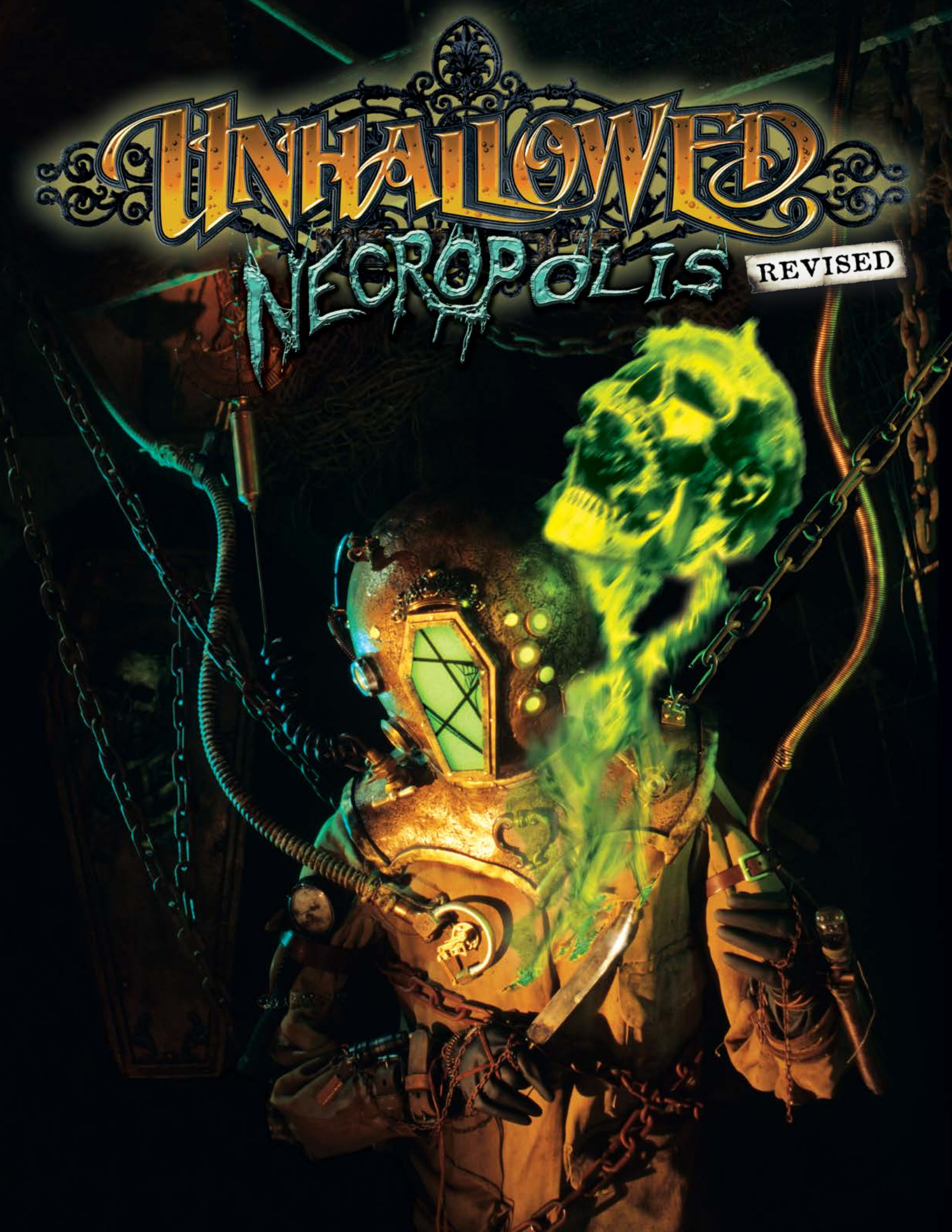


# UNHALLOWED

## NECROPOLIS

REVISED





UNHALLOWED  
NEROPOLIS

The image features a highly stylized, gothic-themed logo. The word "UNHALLOWED" is rendered in a large, bold, blackletter font with a metallic, riveted texture. It is flanked by intricate, symmetrical scrollwork flourishes. Below "UNHALLOWED", the word "NEROPOLIS" is written in a smaller, similar gothic font, also with a metallic texture. The entire logo is centered on a light, textured background.

# UNHALLOWED NECROPOLIS

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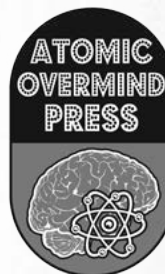
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This book is dedicated to our friends too soon departed.

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The New Dark Age is Jason Soles and Nicole Vega.

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# CHAPTER ONE: VISIONS & REVELATIONS

## The Origins of Parapsychology

From E.B. Argos' introduction to  
*Parapsychology: A Modern Science*, 2083

*Psychical studies began in Britain as a reaction to the emergence of modern Spiritualism. Many historians consider the Fox sisters' entrance into the public eye in the late 1840s as marking the beginning of the Spiritualist movement, and it spread rapidly throughout the world in the ensuing years. By 1870, Spiritualism had some estimated eleven million followers, mainly in Britain and the Americas.*

*Perhaps Spiritualism gained such popularity so quickly because it provided a natural backlash against the secularization brought by the ascent of science that characterized the mid-nineteenth century. As H.E. Goodwin and others have shown, Britain at this time was a nation shaken by change. The traditional English idea that man held a privileged place in the centre of a cosmos created for him was being replaced with a conception of an incomprehensible world in which mankind was merely an interesting kind of mammal. For example, emerging theories of physics painted the universe as a negative-sum game where disorder was the rule. For a society accustomed to the reassuring notion of a world supervised by a paternal intelligence, the implications of this science were unacceptable.*

*Spiritualism and parapsychology offered two disparate but kindred means of reconciliation. Spiritualism provides a method of confirming a life after death and a reality beyond the physical by way of observable and even tangible phenomena. The manifestations of Spiritualism occurred not to a select few or at odd intervals but regularly, in ways immediately perceptible by the average person, at the demand of spiritual adepts during the séance. The immediacy and accessibility of spiritual phenomena suggested a means by which the much-revered science of the day could be made to serve the spiritual needs of the world.*

*Parapsychology, on the other hand, was an extension of the Victorians' confidence in science's potential for improving the lot of mankind. For example, the developing science of electricity, made possible only a few decades earlier by the pioneering work of Faraday and others, revolutionized every aspect of life from industry to the home. Anaesthesia, vaccination, and the widespread acceptance of antiseptic principles improved the quality of medical care, lowered infant mortality, and promised extensions of the human lifespan. There was wild talk of mechanical men and of great vessels designed to carry passengers to the depths of the ocean and the heights of the sky. Nothing seemed beyond the reach of science, and the majority of Victorians embraced it eagerly, even coming to venerate the scientific method itself as the likeliest route to attaining indisputable truth.*

*Parapsychology makes a laboratory of the worlds beyond, subjects the manifestations from that world to analysis and interpretation, and makes a natural philosophy of Spiritualism. The discipline's early practitioners hoped that, by subjecting*

*psychical phenomena to the rigors of experimental validation, they would confirm the human experience of the supernormal to a scientific standard while proving the existence of a life beyond the merely physical. This was quite a challenge, for in the years prior to the Plague, supernormal phenomenon was comparably rare and the manifestations generally weak and unpredictable. Despite these hindrances, Victorian scientists laid the foundations for scientific parapsychology as we know it.*

*Though in later years parapsychology would come into its own right as a science, the early years of the discipline were heavily handicapped by a lack of formalization, a need for sound theory, and a vulnerability to the machinations of fraud. The progression of the study of the mind from philosophy to empirical science was hamstrung by a widespread reluctance to embrace mechanistic theories of the brain. Instead, this experimental vacuum became a no-man's-land of vague terminology: the perfect nursery for pseudo-sciences purporting to connect the observable function of the human brain to the existence of universal higher powers and a life beyond the grave. At this time, there existed no body of authority and no experimental standards for the field. Most investigation into psychical phenomena was conducted informally or under the auspices of religious or philosophical organizations. Many investigators were adherents of spiritual philosophies seeking some rationalization for their faith, and standards for evidence were accordingly low. Spiritual philosophers and individual researchers left records dominated by wild, heavily biased speculations often containing little to no actual data on experiments performed or observations made. Many simply lacked an understanding of scientific methodology, while others were handicapped by an impatient temperament ill-suited to rigorous investigations. While the enthusiasm of these energetic amateurs was undoubtedly helpful in spreading awareness of Spiritualism, historians of the field state unanimously that the uncoordinated, naïve efforts of these would-be investigators caused significant damage to the credibility of parapsychology as a science.*

*Frauds, shamans, and evangelists took hold of the machinery of supernormal investigation, proclaiming themselves unifiers of faith and reason. They used their purported knowledge of life after death as an excuse for the maintenance of primitive and comforting fantasies of a universe designed for the benefit of man. If the appeal of this type of rationalization had been limited to the simpleminded, the science might have recovered sooner; however, the emotional allure of the philosophy drew in a number of brilliant minds who lent their considerable energies to the elaboration and promotion of the fraud. Worse, perhaps, the vast appeal of this cultish approach to supernormal investigation provided a fertile breeding ground for charismatics, individuals who were capable of carrying off the most blatant frauds by sheer magnetism of personality. The inevitable discovery of the outrages perpetrated by this last class of villain, though rarely before their rise to prominence and their endorsement by any number of scientific investigators and other persons of renown, served time and again to cast serious doubt on the integrity of supernormal investigation as a field.*

*The situation was much improved with the foundation of the Society for Psychical Research in 1882. The Society was*

created to be an expert body to encourage scientific research into psychical and spiritual events. This organization and its publications, particularly the peer-reviewed journal, provided an official forum in which researchers could present their work for critical review. This forum encouraged the rigour of scientific method and required researchers to pursue means of making their work absolutely airtight—beyond the criticisms of the Society's most rigorous reviewers—in order to permit its publication.

The appearance of the Society was met with condemnation by many mediums and those vocal within Spiritualist organizations. It was widely held in these circles that the Society was a hostile agency set on disproving spiritual phenomena rather than conducting balanced scientific analysis. Though there may have been some truth to these accusations, the high standards set by Society research were invaluable in shaping modern parapsychology.

The records from the pre-Plague years, however distorted and poorly informed, provided valuable information during the post-Plague establishment of parapsychology as a legitimate science. The thousands of years of spiritual folklore, despite their varied and frequently fanciful nature, laid down a series of verifiable characteristics for the manifestations of a "haunting," which were matched against the more powerful manifestations of the post-Plague era. Scientists evaluated the speculations and pretensions of earlier Spiritualist writings in the light of new evidence, searching for consistencies in the varied accounts, gathering hints as to the nature of spiritual phenomena, and making use of the observations of their predecessors to initiate the construction of anatomies and taxonomies for the inhabitants of the aetheric world.

As a field of inquiry, parapsychology has become a respected installation in the Neo-Victorian scientific pantheon. The types of aetheric manifestation have been enumerated and described, and research continues into their properties and interrelationships. Monitors allow precise observations of disruptions in the local aether resulting from spiritual events; even events that fall below the perceptual threshold of normal humans can be observed and quantified, giving researchers valuable insight into the types and properties of aetheric entities. More powerful hauntings can also be observed in this manner, warning researchers and engineers in the event of a manifestation and allowing observation of the number and strength of entities perpetrating a haunting without relying on the subjective analysis performed by a sensitive or medium. Spirits can be contained or dispelled with modern aethertech, allowing the resolution or at least the amelioration of hauntings that might have destroyed the mind of a human sensitive attempting the same task.

The implications of parapsychology, however, go far beyond the simple existence of spirits. The science is developing faster than the philosophies can adapt, spawning cults and protest movements trying to forestall the death of myth. Despite these objections, there is a real chance that science will someday know the fate of a human being after death.

## The Plague Years: Dawn of a New Aeon

*At the door of life, by the gate of breath, There are worse things waiting for men than death...*

—Algernon Charles Swinburne,  
*"The Triumph of Time," 1866*

The Plague Years were a time of chaos and utter hopelessness in the refugee camps. Death was an ever-present companion, and there was no one who had not been touched by it. In addition to sporadic animate attacks, refugees faced starvation, overcrowding, and natural epidemics. Many camps lacked reliable sources of food or fresh water. Medicine was scarce, and need far outstripped available resources. Waves of epidemics claimed untold lives. Those who fell would join the ranks of the unliving, further spreading the Plague, and so bonfires burned day and night, consuming the endless tide of dead.

Though the military camps fared reasonably well, few civilian encampments managed to hold out against the horrors of the wastes without and the epidemics that swept through the population within. Those that did survive relied upon strict laws intended to ensure the safety of its inhabitants as a whole; individual lives could not be given priority in a time and place in which the survival of the entire encampment was in question. Those who broke the rules were dealt with harshly, driven into exile in the wastelands or, more mercifully, executed.

The burden of living under these conditions of want and misery was simply too great for many survivors. Suicide rates in the early encampments were astronomical. Untold numbers were driven into insanity by the sudden and total loss of friends, family, and loved ones. As a result of this morass of pain and squalor, many survivors went mad, completely disassociating themselves from life.

A small number became so dangerously unhinged that their minds began to unravel reality itself.

## Early Psychical Phenomena

*[Parapsychology is] a science, however, which does not illogically stop short at the physical or intellectual, ignoring the spiritual portion of man's being, but applies its rigorous analysis to the domain of revelation hitherto disposed of in the wide category of the supernatural...."*

—Rev. C.M. Davies, *Heterodox London: or, Phrases of Free Thought in the Metropolis, 1874*

Throughout the Plague Years, unconfirmed rumours of impossible physical and mental feats circulated among the camps. Though later research would begin to cast light on the mysteries of psychical phenomena, the scientists, theologians, and spiritualists of the era had little ability to explain the events that occurred around them. Researchers and physicians in the camps threw their energy into



documenting the manifestations of the supernormal, recording the events in the hopes of accumulating sufficient data to crack this new and dangerous puzzle. Researchers found the language of psychical phenomenon to be the only appropriate terminology to describe the events they witnessed.

The psychics who emerged during the Plague Years were not the first to demonstrate supernormal abilities. Psychical phenomena had been documented, but never satisfactorily proven, throughout the Victorian era. However, these new psychics displayed abilities far beyond anything observed before. Unhinged but wildly powerful, many represented the terrible potential of the human mind.

At the same time, ghostly manifestations of incredible intensity were recorded with increasing and terrifying frequency. The camps, where so many suffered and died, became sites of supernormal events on a scale unimaginable in the years before the New Dark Age. Most spectral activity took the form of harmless tapping or visitations from departed loved ones. However, incidents of a less benign nature were known. In the worst hauntings, aggressive supernormal entities spawned from the intolerable horrors of the plague camps preyed upon the survivors as they struggled to reclaim a foothold in the world.

For reasons never entirely understood, accounts show that camps bordering the wastelands reported a greater number of hauntings than those less touched by the blight. Furthermore, accounts from the Plague Years show major surges of spiritual activity in the hours preceding major animate attacks, as if the spirits themselves were agitated by the promise of impending slaughter.

The simplest spectral entities are manifestations of fear: mindless entities almost always limited to manifesting in a small area and capable only of repeating a single set of phenomena over and over until they fade from existence. The most powerful hauntings represent active agents for malevolence that are able to plan and adapt, showing cunning and intelligence in their ability to terrorize their victims. Then as now, many survivors of invasive supernormal manifestations were driven to madness or suicide, or on rare occasions, killed outright.

One of the earliest accounts of a verifiable haunting took place during the first year of the Plague at a refugee camp outside Leeds. Robert Helms, a physician attending the sick and injured, was confronted by the translucent figure of a young woman. Several dozen patients and colleagues in the pest tent readily recognized the figure as Ellen Hartley, one of the first victims of the cholera outbreak currently threatening the camp's population. The spectre gesticulated wildly and aggressively at the physician, her features contorted with rage, and made the motions of speech, but no sound was heard. After several minutes, the doctor managed to overcome his terror sufficiently to approach the figure and attempt to take hold of her hands. Witnesses report his hands passed through the ghostly form, trailing faint wisps of ectoplasm. The figure started at the touch and appeared to stop speaking. Then, several of the nearest trays loaded with medical equipment began to rattle and jump; the instruments flew through the air, some directed at the doctor but most striking at random. After this last display, the spirit appeared to dissipate. Six patients and two nurses were injured in the psychokinetic manifestation, one patient dying



within minutes from a severed artery incurred from a scalpel strike. The manifestation was repeated on an almost daily basis until the tent was moved. The camp fell to an overwhelming animate

assault in 1910; accounts of this and innumerable subsequent malevolent hauntings were recovered from the camp's records by reclamation teams in 1918.

The surge in reports of dangerous spiritual activity during the Plague Years and the powerful manifestations of psychical activity observed during that time, led to a revival in parapsychological research. Investigations were initially informal and survival oriented; they focused on preserving human lives threatened by aetheric activity rather than on unlocking the occult secrets of the phenomenon. However, the records from these years are rich in empirical detail, unfettered by the prejudices of any established science, and represent the earliest attempt at achieving a practical, goal-oriented understanding of aetheric phenomena in the post-Plague world.

The first widely recognized instance of a "haunting" where evidence gathered was sufficient to remove any doubt of the legitimate supernatural nature of the event took place in 1909. The episode was documented by Dr. Miriam Verdain, an alienist in the employ of His Majesty's Government. Verdain and her assistant, Michael Meriwether, were stationed at a large military base outside Ebbw Vale, South Wales, the centre of post-Plague coal-mining operations. During their deployment, there was an incident in which an officer was shot and killed due to an improperly maintained weapon. The individual responsible, Sgt. Abram Morris, took his own life shortly after being detained for an inquiry into the shooting.

Within weeks, the night and early morning patrols began reporting disturbances in the tunnels beneath the base. Soon the occurrences grew more dangerous in character, and soldiers began to suffer tragic accidents. Verdain and Meriwether began an investigation, accompanying soldiers on the troublesome patrols. In the tunnels, the investigators observed unexplained temperature changes, odd noises, and sensations of "pressing through" the air as through a much denser medium. Convinced that there was some physical phenomenon at work, the team sealed off the tunnels for several nights to make observations without the complicating presence of military personnel. Records of the ensuing events indicate that the first two nights passed without unusual incident, but on the third night, a form bearing an unmistakable resemblance to the late Serjeant Morris materialized. The materialization marked the beginning of several harrowing hours of increasingly powerful manifestations, which culminated in a cave-in that cost Meriwether his life.

With the death of Meriwether and the collapse of the tunnels, the haunting came to an end. No satisfactory explanation for this sudden cessation of activity was ever found. At Verdain's request, the collapsed section of the mine was never excavated.

Verdain went on to publish *The Catalogue of Spiritual Phenomena* in 1929. The book was the first post-Plague attempt at a system of classifying spirits. Though the categorization as presented was far from complete, it was a significant milestone in the study of parapsychology.

The first well-documented case of post-Plague psychical activity occurred in 1907 at a refugee camp outside Shrewsbury. Three

miles outside the settlement, a young girl named Patience Devine is said to have mentally communicated a desperate message to her twin sister just before Patience and her companions were overtaken by a horde of animates. Her sister, Violet, was able to warn her community before the animates reached the encampment's fortifications. The event was recorded without fanfare, only to be rediscovered years later by researchers investigating the swell of psychical activity in the camps. Violet Devine eventually entered public service, lending her burgeoning gifts to His Majesty's Government during the Reclamation.

Dr. Roland Westmoore, a former member of the Society for Psychical Research, was the first scientist to systematically record evidence of psychical activity among Plague survivors. As the military began organized efforts to clear the countryside of animates, Westmoore travelled from camp to camp, lending his talents to those in need.

While visiting a fortified camp outside Bristol in 1914, Westmoore witnessed a terrifying telekinetic outburst. Westmoore and several of the camp's physicians were walking through a main thoroughfare en route to the largest camp infirmary when, according to records of the event, an altercation began between an agitated young fellow known for mental disturbance and a passerby. At a gesture, the disturbed man tore the other fellow apart, separating head from body without physically touching him. Pandemonium followed in the crowded street, the screams of the panicked mingling with those of the injured and dying. When the air cleared, three grown men lay dead in the street, two decapitated and the third twisted and broken with bones protruding from his flesh. Several dozen in the crowd suffered minor injuries while trying to flee the scene, and some of these individuals were later able to give detailed descriptions of the incident.

Word spread quickly through the encampment, and a manhunt for the apparent perpetrator, Jacob Finn, began. Finn was ultimately cornered and killed by an armed mob but not before he murdered or maimed another twelve of the camp's inhabitants.

The Bristol incident marked the beginning of Westmoore's career in psychical research. He continued his work with the military forces, tracking rumours of psychical activity from camp to camp. By 1916, Westmoore was ready to present his findings. He had painstakingly catalogued hundreds of instances of supernatural activity all of which varied widely in type and magnitude. His notes and recordings left no room to doubt the veracity of the phenomena documented therein. These results caused an upheaval in the scientific and medical thinking of the day, causing an immediate shift in the debate on psychics from discussion of their existence to the practical application of their talents.

This era also saw the beginning of the career of one of Britain's most famous mediums, Mrs. Amber Meredith. In 1915, an encampment outside Aberystwyth, Wales experienced a large-scale outbreak of Plague due to a cholera epidemic. Fatalities were extraordinary: over half the camp's population died over the course of three gruelling months.

In the wake of the tragedy, a wave of psychical violence swept over the devastated community. It began with apparitions of the dead and screams in the night. Entire areas of the compound were abandoned and barricaded by the living fleeing the loci of manifestations.

## Timeline

1774 Franz Mesmer begins his first experiments in animal magnetism.

1779 Franz Mesmer publishes *Mémoire sur la dé couverte du magnétisme animal*.

1848 The Fox Sisters first claim to have made contact with the entity who had been disturbing their family. Modern spiritualism is born.

1849 Margaret Fox gives the first public demonstration of mediumship in the Corinthian Hall in Rochester, New York.

1851 William Gregory publishes *Letters to a Candid Enquirer on Animal Magnetism*.

1852 Spiritualism arrives in England.

1871 Sir William Crookes presents his report on spiritualism to the Royal Society.

1873 The British National Association of Spiritualists is founded.

1875 Madame Blavatsky founds the Theosophical Society.

1876 Emma Hardinge Britten (editor) publishes *Ghostland; or, Researches into the Mysteries of Occultism*.

1882 The Society for Psychical Research is founded.

1885 The American Society for Psychical Research is founded.

1888 Madame Blavatsky publishes *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy*. Dr. Gottlieb Burckhardt performs the first partial lobotomies.

1890 Emma Hardinge Britten founds the Spiritualist's National Union.

1891 Madam Blavatsky dies.

1903 *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death* by Frederic W.H. Myers is published.

1904 Prof. Baron von Schrenck-Notzing founds *Gesellschaft für Metapsychische Forschung* to study telekinetic phenomena.

1905 The start of the Plague.

1906 The British Society for Psychical Research disbands after its membership is decimated while fighting the Plague.

1907 The first documented instance of telepathy.

Then, seemingly as the spirits gathered strength, the hauntings began in earnest. Objects would be thrown and broken by unseen hands; the touch of invisible forms became commonplace.

A number of self-proclaimed “sensitives” publicly attempted to bring their talents to bear on the problem, but to no avail. Three would-be mediums were reduced to catatonia, and one was outright killed in the attempt. Meredith, a camp labourer, attracted public interest (and considerable sneering) by announcing her intent to walk into the barricaded areas and resolve the problem within. To the amazement of many, Meredith carried out her plan, climbing the barricades and vanishing

into the ruined slums at twilight on 15 March 1916. At dawn on the 16th, Meredith climbed back over the barricades, severely shaken and weakened, and collapsed into a fugue from which she would not emerge for two days. The severity of manifestations in the area was noticeably reduced after Meredith’s excursion, a fact she attributed to her “sending to rest” a handful of the most malevolent spirits plaguing the encampment. Meredith made several more journeys into the barricaded areas, ultimately succeeding in ending the worst of the camp’s manifestations.

The encampment survived the Plague Years, and Meredith moved to London after its reclamation to begin a career as a spiritualist and medium. Over the years, her services were sought by royalty and captains of industry, and her expertise in the spiritual arena was unchallenged for decades.

## Witch Hunts

The Plague Years were a time when men were governed more by superstition than by reason. Supernormal phenomena were poorly understood, and spiritual activity was seen as a religious matter rather than a scientific one. Spirits and psychics were often seen as harbingers of misfortune presaging outbreaks of diseases from cholera to the Plague.

The trepidation surrounding psychical events was not arbitrary; psychical ability correlates strongly to disturbance of the mind. Even the most well-balanced of psychics possess some level of mental disturbance, and the abnormalities tended to grow rather than diminish with time. Deranged and powerful psychics can cause incredible damage. Entire camps were consumed in pyrokinetic conflagrations or blown apart by telekinetic tirades.

Priests and self-styled exorcists arose among the population to deal with malevolent hauntings and psychical threats.



In this atmosphere of fear, the psychically gifted regularly found themselves wrongfully blamed for the predations of dangerous spirits. Many psychics were seized and hung by desperate mobs. Even in the military encampments, where the force of law could be brought against suspected psychical criminals, mob action was distressingly common.

The services of Anglican exorcists and witch finders were in high demand throughout the Plague Years. The presence of the frocked and sigil-marked witch finder provided a sense of authority and even of safety to some segments of the populous, staying the hand of panic for a time. However, an agent who failed to identify a culprit or to purge a non-living infestation might easily become subject to accusations of fraud or even of complicity, and many inexperienced witch finders became themselves the victims of an informal justice. Others learned to find scapegoats when the true source of an infestation was not located quickly enough to stay the fury of the crowd.

The true number of these events and the sum of innocent dead, particularly in the civilian camps, will never be known.

## Genesis of a Science

*There is no credulity more blind, no ignorance more childish, than that of the sage who tries to measure 'heaven and earth and the things under the earth,' with the small two-foot rule of his own brains. Dare we presume to argue concerning any mystery of the universe, 'It is inexplicable, and therefore impossible'?*

—Dinah Maria Mulock Craik,  
“The Last House in C— Street,” 1856

During the years following the outbreak of the Plague, a drive for reason was growing. The work done by pioneering researchers such as Dr. Miriam Verdain and Dr. Roland Westmoore had provided the first glimpse of the prospect of scientifically observing, classifying, and

ultimately controlling the various psychical manifestations. The first of the notable post-Plague parapsychological experiments was conducted in 1917. Dr. Ashleigh Cummington, head of medical operations in a military encampment outside of London, began studies into supernormal phenomena following a surge in psychical activity associated with an influx of refugees from outlying civilian camps. Cummington's primary concerns were pragmatic. The destruction and chaos caused by these unpredictable events interfered with rescue efforts and consumed considerable military resources to little apparent effect. It was desirable to find some means of containing or preventing psychical and spiritual manifestations.

Cummington turned to the investigation of the psychically active mind in the hopes of training individuals capable of combating dangerous supernormal manifestations. Those claiming to be psychics or mediums, as well as persons confined for mental disturbance or criminal activity but showing potential signs of psychical activity, were screened and held for observation and experimentation. Many test subjects died during the investigations, sometimes in the course of an experiment, sometimes self-destructively. Other subjects were reduced to idiocy or babbling insanity as a result of the relentless testing.

The process revealed an interesting correlation: even among the traumatized refugee population, psychically active individuals demonstrated high levels of mental disturbance. Moreover, the degree of mental illness appeared to correlate strongly to the relative power of the psychical talent. At this early stage, the correlation was of note mainly due to the difficulties presented in training and controlling the stronger talents.

After several generations of testing, the remaining subjects were assigned on a limited basis to internal police units for use in addressing psychical threats among the refugee populations. Careful records were kept of successes and failures, determining the types of talent most useful in addressing events of varying kinds and working out combinations of psychical talent that would be of maximum civic and military application. These experiments would provide the basis for the later expansion of the role of psychics as military assets during the Reclamation.

As improvements were made in the taxonomy of psychical manifestations, this information was incorporated into ongoing research. Clearer distinctions were made between apparent "psychics" and "mediums," and the first observation made was the tendency of the talents to be largely exclusive. Some overlap was noted, most significantly in mediums also presenting a weak empathic gift. Cummington was the first to make the observation that the mental disturbance so highly correlated to psychical activities such as telepathy or psychokinesis was not nearly so prevalent in those exhibiting only spiritual talents. Mediums, in fact, presented significant mental disturbance no more often than the populace as a whole.

These successes paved the way for a revolution in parapsychological engineering that began as a subdiscipline of psychology, then developed into a medical field, and finally became recognized as a physical science. During this time, the utility of psychical talents was explored and the understanding of the nature of and variation within these talents increased enormously. It would be years, however, before public awareness of psychical phenomena was

1909 Dr. Miriam Verdain first scientifically documents a spiritual visitation.

1914 Dr. Roland Westmoore first documents evidence of psychical phenomena among refugee-camp survivors.

1916 Dr. Westmoore presents his findings on psychical phenomena.

1917 Dr. Ashleigh Cummington conducts the first modern parapsychological experiments.

1922 Operation Valkyrie initiated.

1924 Operation Valkyrie expands to include non-precogs.

1926 Special Strategic Branch of Operation Valkyrie established.

1929 Dr. Verdain publishes *The Catalogue of Spiritual Phenomena*.

1935 The London Stock Exchange reopens. A team lead by Dr. Elspeth Vreemd develops the first aetheric monitor.

1937 Reclamation forces seal off a plague pit in Berkeley Square to contain a mysterious haunting entity.

1947 Operation Archangel instituted.

1952 Dr. Amethyst Rawleigh proposes a scale for measuring psychical manifestations.

1953 Operation Archangel disbanded.

1955 Prof. Octavian Rutherford's first experiments in artificially containing spirits lead to the invention of the shadow matrix.

1959 Following the Reclamation of London, Project Valkyrie is disbanded.

1962 Dr. Thomasse Sebastiaan Jansen begins psychosurgery experimentations on psychics.

1964 Telepathic killer Oliver Howell Holmes commits his first murder.

1965 Crispin Virgil Carter aids the police in the capture of the Rotherhithe Butcher.

1966 Dr. Tennyson Boulstridge coins the phrase "psychical devotion" in a lecture at St. George's Medical School. Boulstridge dies in a fire later the same year.

1967 Telepathic killer Oliver Howell Holmes is sentenced to life in prison.

1970 Parapsychology first taught at Cambridge.

1972 Dr. Byron James Alcott invents the Alcott jar.

raised sufficiently to slow the tide of mob violence, and decades passed before advances in technology allowed a more complete understanding of the nature of the medium's ability and the psychic's gift.

## Shadows of the Reclamation: Project Valkyrie

*We are not interested in the possibilities of defeat; they do not exist.*

—Queen Victoria I, Letter to A.J. Balfour, 1899

Five years after Dr. Ashleigh Cummington began her experiments, His Majesty's Government initiated a daring program to utilize psychics in expanding reclamation operations across the kingdom. Codenamed Project Valkyrie, the program took effect in the winter of 1922. The original concept behind the project was to assemble a group of individuals possessing precognitive psychical talents who could warn the government of potential Plague outbreaks, thus enabling reclamation forces to strike animate populations proactively while offering greater protection to civilian survivors.

Despite limited success with small, heavily monitored trial units, the shortcomings of Valkyrie became evident almost immediately after the project was brought into full service. The warnings provided by Valkyrie precogs were often contradictory or so vague as to be useless. False alarms were disturbingly common, and the

psychics failed to predict many of the worst attacks. Not only were psychics dangerously unreliable by military standards, but their numbers were insufficient to serve as effective support for reclamation forces. Psychical talents were not common even during the worst days of the Plague Years when madness and sorrow produced individuals possessing psychical talents at unprecedented rates. Though the promise of military protection, regular meals, and the opportunity to serve their nation convinced many precogs to join Valkyrie, their numbers were always woefully below the projections set by the program architects.

Recruitment efforts were focused on precognitive talents. However, psychics of every type were ushered into the program. At first, these psychics were processed and held at special government training facilities. Later, as the tactical weaknesses of the precog units became obvious, these diverse talents would be aggressively studied, catalogued, and finally assembled into teams of their own.

Despite its failings, the potential of the program was undeniable. Some researchers continued to refine the precognitive warning process, while others moved to expand the scope of the program. Visionaries such as Col. Hathcyn Montmouth and Dr. Samuel Keller foresaw a day when psychical powers could be bent to a variety of tasks, greatly aiding human progress. Montmouth was a career military man who commanded Camp Sebald, the largest of the psychic containment facilities. Keller was a civilian researcher assigned to Montmouth's staff. Having witnessed firsthand the potential of telepaths, clairvoyants, and especially psychokinetics, the pair lobbied tirelessly to create new divisions of Project Valkyrie. By 1926, their hard work was rewarded.



In that year, Parliament approved funds to initiate the Special Strategic Branch (SSB) of Project Valkyrie. By that time, the countryside had nearly been cleared of roving animate hordes and the British were turning their attention back to their fallen cities. With the Reclamation about to begin, no potential weapon or resource could be overlooked. Unlike the clearly defined purpose of Project Valkyrie, the objectives of the SSB were murky at best. Volunteer psychics were subjected to batteries of tests designed not only to learn the extent of individual powers but to discover the secrets of the psychical mind itself.

It was during his service with the SSB that Dr. Tennyson Boulstridge first began his experiments into psychical phenomena. Boulstridge's work provided the clearest insight into the differing forms of the psychical gift. Subtypes of psychical ability, later identified as "devotions," were identified and characterized, mainly according to traditional lines. This work confirmed the earlier observation relating psychical ability to mental disturbance and solidified the relationship between intensity of illness and strength of the psychical gift. His team began the development of the "concentration technique," a set of meditations in which psychics train in order to mitigate the effect of the mental disturbances which accompany their talents. Initial trials of the technique were promising, and it quickly spread into use by healthy individuals seeking to improve mental fortitude and the mind-body balance. It remains the cornerstone of psychical training.

It was not long before the military demanded results from the SSB. In response, psychics possessing like talents were grouped together in small teams. Those that could be made to respond to discipline were given basic military training, but the unique psychological makeup of the psychic mind made most conventional training impossible. These squads were integrated into existing military forces under the joint command of reclamation officers and civilian medical "handlers" trained in dealing with psychical talents. Clairvoyants psychically scouted ahead of military units. Psychokinetics acted as living machines of war, pouring their mental energy into the destruction of animates wherever they were found.

SSB tactical squads operated throughout the Reclamation. Sometimes these squads would succeed admirably, performing well above and beyond the call of duty. At other times, they would fail catastrophically under the stress of military discipline. The casualty rates among SSB psychics were alarmingly high. Many psychics fell in the field after becoming confused by the chaotic conditions of combat and straying away from the protection of regular military forces. Others experienced devastating psychological reactions to battle and had to be eliminated after becoming a danger to their mission and to the men around them.

Following the Reclamation of London in 1959, Project Valkyrie was quietly disbanded. Many of the doctors, alienists, and scientists who worked on the program continued their research in the private sector, helping to establish parapsychology as a true science.

## The Neo-Victorian Era

In the aftermath of the Reclamation, the Neo-Victorians busied themselves restoring their shattered world. In the great upheaval that followed, there was little organized effort made to integrate

1976 Parliament passes the **Psychical Vigilance Act**. Prussian *Totenfresser* secret police founded.

1978 The **Psychical Development Bureau** is founded. During a test of an experimental psychic suppression drug, 90 people are killed at the **Lochlorian Asylum**.

1979 Crispin Virgil Carter aids police in finding **Alice Fisher**.

1981 Dr. **Byron James Alcott** patents a man-portable version of the **Alcott jar**.

1982 Telepathic killer **Oliver Howell Holmes** dies.

1983 A poltergeist kills 86 in **Harrow** before being contained. The dead include parapsychologist-inventor **Byron James Alcott**.

1986 Psychosurgery pioneer Dr. **Thomasse Sebastiaan Jansen** dies.

1988 Dr. **Agatha Reve** and Mr. **Lowell Affam** conduct experiments intended to hypnotically induce psychical powers in sleepers.

1993 Dr. **A.B. Hartley** of **Guy's Hospital** begins his first experiments in psychic induction.

1994 Alchemical aetherplate photography first developed.

1998 The **New Society for Psychical Research** is founded.

2004 **Edna Steibal** invents the oscillating aether field.

2010 The government begins to sponsor programs to genetically engineer psychics.

2012 Medium **Crispin Virgil Carter** dies.

2014 Professor **Erich von Ranke** assassinated.

2016 The government officially halts psychic induction programs.

2017 Equipment failure causes a **Tower Hamlets** spectral containment facility to be flooded with spirits.

2020 Parliament passes the **Ghost Industries Act**.

2033 Dr. **Calvin Mathers** develops the **Uniform Psychic Grading Scale**.

2037 Parliament passes the **Psychical Securities Act**.

2041 **Anarchists** bomb the **London Stock Exchange**, killing 43 people.

2046 **Lincoln Jowett** foils an assassination attempt on **City financier Dominicus Strathmore**.



psychics into the new social order. Psychics were generally met with prejudice, hatred, and fear by the sleeper population. The memories of mad psychics threatening whole communities of survivors left an indelible mark on the reputation of the gifted. Psychics dwelling in the slums of the metropolis were sometimes murdered by rioting mobs fearful of their powers. The popular images of psychics at the time were of sadistic lunatics and inhuman monsters dominating and corrupting the hearts and minds of decent Britons.

If the situation was tense on the streets, it was worse within the halls of power. For some, psychics represented an intolerable threat to the fabric of society. Their powers, the result of chaos and mental dysfunction, defied the legal and social order. Often, the most dangerous psychics awakened amongst the lowest classes, prompting many to ruminate on the possibility of anarchists bending psychics to their own purposes. Even the least bombastic lawmakers had to concede that psychokinetic talents represented a dire threat to public health. In these early years, every week a fire threatened to burn out of control or the night skies were illuminated by explosive electrokinetic displays.

### Psychic Ministrations

As the Reclamation drew to a close, hundreds of former Valkyrie operatives suffering from severe post-traumatic stress disorders spent the rest of their lives confined to asylums and psychiatric-care facilities. As the asylums and mental institutions of the metropolis filled, the conditions degenerated into a state so deplorable that suicides among patients and staff rose steadily. Before the advent of psychic inhibitors, most institutions sedated psychics around the clock. Considered a necessary evil to maintain order, the practice resulted in a great number of patients dying of accidental overdoses. Even sedation was not always sufficient to protect workers and patients from psychical outbursts.

Beginning in 1962, Dr. Thomasse Sebastiaan Jansen, a privately funded researcher, began experimenting with psychosurgery as a method of treating psychical abnormalities. Though crude lobotomies had been performed throughout the Reclamation, Jansen had a more surgical approach. Familiar with the work of Dr. Gottlieb Burckhardt, the Swiss physician who performed the first partial lobotomies in 1888, Jansen drilled holes into his patients' heads and made incisions into their frontal lobes. Jansen's earliest experiments resulted in the deaths of his patients, but he soon refined his technique. Known as the "Father of Modern Psychosurgery," Jansen pioneered a number of procedures that remain in use to this day. Jansen is believed to have performed over four thousand lobotomies before his death in 1986.

Despite the unquestionable success of psychosurgery in neutralizing psychical threats, critics have long pointed to the unpredictable side effects of the procedure. Most commonly, patients suffer from reduced mental capacity or the disintegration of personality. Despite the risks, however, lobotomies remain a popular Neo-Victorian method of modifying behaviour and treating mental disorders.

At the same time Jansen was perfecting his craft, St. George's University of London was becoming the leading centre for psychical research under Dr. Tennyson Boulstridge, a veteran of the Special Strategic Branch of Project Valkyrie. Best remembered for his work in codifying psychical abilities, Boulstridge coined the phrase "psychical devotion" during a lecture at St. George's in the spring of 1966. His team focused on careful observation, documentation, and analysis of psychical abilities. Boulstridge adamantly maintained that regardless

of perceived success, reclamation-era programs abandoned scientific discipline in favour of immediate results often accompanied by tragic consequences. Ironically, Boulstridge's experimental methods soon lead to his own death.

Boulstridge was killed in a conflagration that burned much of St. George's to the ground. A surviving research assistant informed the authorities that the doctor had been attempting to assess the extent of a young pyrokinetic's powers when fire spontaneously consumed the room. In the aftermath, neither the remains of Boulstridge nor the psychic could be identified.

Investigators blamed the fire on Boulstridge's antiquated methods of controlling his subjects and unanimously recommended improved methods of restricting a psychic's abilities during experimentation. Boulstridge's death focused public scrutiny on the threat posed by unstable psychics.

Seeing the potential for profit, a number of burgeoning alchemical laboratories began research into the first generation of psychic inhibitors. Unlike psychosurgery, psychic inhibitors promised a means of temporarily neutralizing the threat posed by a dangerous psychic while keeping the mind and psychical capabilities intact. Initial product offerings were simple variations on powerful sedatives that did little more than render a subject insensate for extended periods of time.

In the pursuit of a true inhibitor, labs sought partnerships with private sanatoriums and asylums to gain access to psychically gifted patients for experimentation. In the often ill-conceived experiments that followed, hundreds of test subjects perished or entered permanent catatonic states. Frequently, a subject would lose his psychical gifts only to take his own life soon after.

An experiment at the Lochlorian Asylum in 1978 mistakenly amplified a subject's empathic talents with disastrous results. Though the experiment seemed to proceed without incident, the next morning asylum employees returning to work were horrified to discover all seventy-two residents, the overnight staff of twelve, and six researchers dead. Each was horribly contorted, many having ripped out their own eyes, chewed their fingers to the palm, and torn at their own throats. The only survivor was the subject herself, who was found unconscious but intact.

The first true inhibitor reached the market in 1980. The drug effectively restricted a psychic's ability to use his gifts for a time without otherwise diminishing cerebral performance. While a small number of users proved to be resistant to the drug and others experienced severe headaches, nausea, and hallucinations, such side effects were rare and the drug was deemed safe for production.

Over the years, dozens of psi-inhibitors of various strengths and durations have been produced, each aimed at a different segment of the population. The strongest are used to manage the destructive talents of criminally insane psychokinetics permanently held in the asylums of the metropolis. Less potent inhibitors used to shut out the psychical static of the surrounding world can be purchased at apothecaries throughout the metropolis. Many untrained psychics become addicted to inhibitors and are unable to function without them. These individuals have been known to do serious harm to themselves and others when the substances they rely on so desperately become unavailable.

2048 Michael Allen Hall performs his first experiment in psychosurgical containment of a spirit.

2053 The Psychic Branch of the Metropolitan Police is founded.

2054 Michael Allen Hall succeeds in psychosurgically containing a spirit.

2055 The Southwark Fire kills 700 people in South London. The Psychical Development Bureau is disbanded.

2061 Psychic Branch ceases employing empaths after Detective Nancy Sinclair kills herself and Sergeant Walter Whitmore.

2062 Parliament places a moratorium on experiments in psychical apotheosis.

2067 Michael Allen Hall kills his wife, freeing the possessing spirit contained within her.

2069 Michael Allen Hall is lobotomised.

2072 The Dominion story breaks. Journalist Jackson Chambers is murdered and the Times offices are burned to the ground.

2073 Alienist Michael Allen Hall dies.

2076 Psychic Branch begins recruiting mediums.

2083 E.B. Argos publishes *Parapsychology: A Modern Science*.

2085 Following the retirement of Lincoln Jowett, Gavin Parfitt takes command of the Psychic Branch.

2087 Gavin Parfitt recruits dozens of precogs as part of his Oracle project.

2089 Following the retirement of Gavin Parfitt, Johnathan Rathley takes command of the Psychic Branch.

2090 Prussian newspapers accuse the British of using psychics to conduct espionage.

2098 Evelyn Perish and Grainne McGregor uncover the Stepney Horror.

2100 Lighting destroys the Prussian airship *Widersacher* outside London.

2102 Psychic detective Lincoln Jowett dies.

## Strangers in a Strange Land

For years following the Reclamation, Parliament attempted to legislate psychical powers but to no avail. Many called for the psychological evaluation and testing of all citizens. Ultimately, pragmatism prevailed: it would simply have been too expensive and time consuming to subject the entire population to such scrutiny. Conservatives in Parliament went on to call for the complete proscription of psychics. It was suggested the gifted be exiled to the wastelands, permanently locked in asylums, or made to submit to invasive psychosurgeries. These elements were emboldened by negative public opinion bordering on hysteria. However, the Liberals managed successful and eloquent counterarguments highlighting the accomplishments of psychics throughout the Reclamation.

Matters were not helped by a series of high-profile murders that dominated London headlines throughout the mid-1960s. A telepathic killer claimed the lives of dozens of young women before being apprehended in 1967. Though the trial of self-declared tempestarius Oliver Howell Holmes confirmed his guilt with great haste, it was not resolved before an angry mob rampaged through the streets, leaving at least four known psychics dead in its wake. Order was only restored through the threat of military intervention. Holmes quietly spent the rest of his life in the isolation of a padded cell until his death in 1982.

In 1972, the Liberal government of PM Thomas Lynch commissioned a panel to make recommendations for the full integration of psychics into Neo-Victorian society. In 1973, the panel called for wide-sweeping legislation, including but not limited to the national registration of all psychics, the institution

of psychical training facilities, the codification of psychical law, and a vast expansion of public sanatoriums to care for an expanding mentally ill but psychically powerful population. The leading conservative dailies immediately seized hold of the idea of mandatory registration, and for a time, the concept had widespread approval.

Parliament remained inactive on the issue of psychical reform until the tragic events of 1976. That year, an angry mob led by a self-proclaimed exorcist and witch finder set an East End tenement alight and burned alive a pair of young girls rumoured to possess psychical powers. The resulting public furor gave the Liberal government the mandate it needed to pass the Psychic Vigilance act. Though his party lost power by the end of the year, Lynch claimed the act was his finest achievement during his tenure as Prime Minister.

The Psychic Vigilance Act was intended to protect the rights of ordinary citizens as well as to define the role of psychics in society. A gamut of psychical criminal activities were defined, including the use of psychical powers to spy on citizens of the British Empire, the use of psychical powers in the commission of a crime, and the application of psychical powers to compromise the primacy of a native intelligence. The law also gave sweeping rights to mental health officials to govern their facilities as required, effectively granting them total authority to determine the fates of their patients, and mandated regular psychical evaluation of mental patients.

The act also instituted a limited psychic registry that relied upon civic responsibility rather than legal authority. Potential psychics were encouraged to come forward and register their powers to receive publicly funded training and acknowledged legal status. Those who did so were accepted as a new class of professionals.



The act also severely restricted the authority of the self-proclaimed exorcists and witch hunters who operated throughout the slums of the metropolis. The practice of hunting psychics was outright abolished, and the Anglican Church was exclusively charged with authorizing the licensing of ecclesiastical investigators. Members of this specially licensed body would hold both civil and religious authority to hunt down those responsible for malevolent supernormal occurrences and take measures to protect public safety. Under the act, exorcists are held responsible for any death or destruction of property that occurs in the fulfilment of their duties.

Though notoriously difficult to enforce, the Psychic Vigilance Act represented a milestone toward the acceptance of psychics into Neo-Victorian society. It would be decades until Parliament once more took up psychological legislation, this time in response to City financiers rather than social reformers.

## The Auguries of Industry

The London Stock Exchange is the largest market in the world and the financial heart of the Neo-Victorian empire. Founded in 1801, the roots of the exchange can be traced back to the stock markets of the seventeenth century when the East India Company sold shares to merchants to help finance its voyages. Following the Plague Years, the Exchange has operated continuously since reclamation forces first entered the City in 1935. Even as efforts to reclaim the metropolis continued, City financiers raised the vast sums of capital required to fuel reconstruction efforts despite the tremendous burden imposed by the Nationalization Measure of 1906. Their success stands as a testament to the indomitability of the national spirit and the enduring power of the Exchange.

During the decades preceding the reopening of the Exchange, the economy ground to a standstill. Though heavily devalued currency was accepted throughout the Plague Years and early Reclamation, barter became the most common means of trade. Even after the Exchange returned to operation, it was years until the economy had righted itself.

There were a number of factors limiting the growth of the Exchange throughout the Reclamation. Situated at Chapel Court, the Exchange was frequently interrupted by ongoing reclamation efforts and the predations of animates still wandering the Greater London area. It was not until the streets were virtually cleared of animates in the late 1950s that accessibility to the City could be assured. Until businesses were re-privatised following the repeal of the Nationalization Measure in 1960, the market focused on bonds sold to finance the massive public works projects required to secure the city and rebuild its shattered infrastructure. Even after the Measure was repealed, it took years for the courts of law to return businesses and property to their rightful owners.

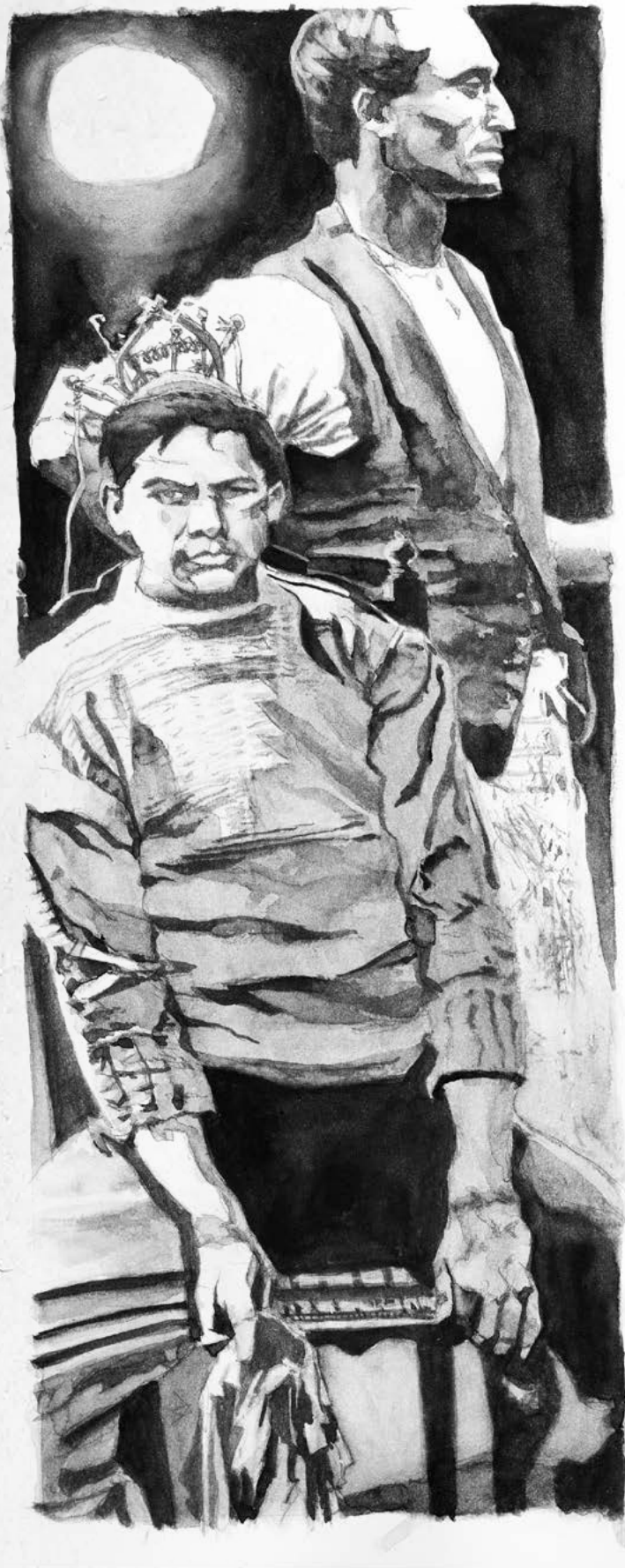
The appearance of psychically endowed individuals within the population further destabilized the market. Though psychics and astrologers had been consulted by eccentric investors for centuries, their talents were questionable at best and their impact insignificant. However, the appearance of truly gifted psychics following the outbreak of the Plague was another matter. By the time the Exchange reopened, the existence of psychics and their extraordinary powers was a matter of public record. While other areas of society shunned the psychically



talented refugees of the Reclamation, the financial institutions of the City embraced them. Major brokerage houses immediately began protracted bidding wars to hire the most talented precogs to gird themselves against fluctuations in the volatile market. Insurance companies sought to employ psychic consultants to assess risks and set rates. The banks hired them to mystically watch over their assets and mind the intentions of their employees. Overnight, hundreds of psychic consulting offices sprouted up throughout the City. Though most represented the enterprises of charlatans, those that built their reputations based on integrity, diligence, discretion, and reliable prognostication rose to become as powerful as the financial houses they serve.

The analysis of prescient visions has improved markedly over the years. However, the effectiveness of psychic consultants has always been questioned by the sceptically minded. The largest firms employ impressive stables of precogs to avoid relying on the prognostications of a single psychic. Manufacturers, industrialists, and aristocratic merchant houses hire precogs in an attempt to navigate the uncertain future. Those who cannot afford to directly employ their own psychics will often hire consulting psychics on occasions where direct insight into the future of a prospect is necessary. Less honourable firms have been known to employ rogue clairvoyants and telepaths to eavesdrop on their competitors to gather industrial secrets.

For decades, the market tried unsuccessfully to come to terms with the changes wrought by supernormal intervention. Though the



Psychic Vigilance Act of 1976 went a long way toward defining psychical crime and protecting the rights of the individual, typical Neo-Victorian *laissez-faire* sentiments left the markets to regulate themselves. In response, the firms of the City employed the best available psychical counter-measures to protect their secrets and assets from supernormal tampering. Some corporations, then as now, turned to the latest developments in aethertech, while others hired teams of clairvoyants to conduct round-the-clock counter-surveillance.

In this climate of uncertainty, it became evident that some form of legislation was required to regulate the psychic consulting industry. For years, firms utilized false prophecies and careful obfuscations to plunder millions of pounds in meticulous stock manipulation schemes. City financiers began to talk of a looming crisis on the horizon. Following several high-profile scandals during the 2030s, Parliament passed the Psychological Securities act in 2037. The act expanded the powers of the police to prosecute psychical crimes, required all registered psychics to undergo a full evaluation for their powers, and introduced licensing procedures for psychical professionals. Psychics could now be held to a code of ethics much like the legal tradition. A psychic who acted unlawfully could expect to have his license revoked, resulting in the total loss of his livelihood. Not even the smallest firms are willing to risk the scandal resulting from hiring an unlicensed psychic.

Since the passage of the Psychological Securities Act, the London Stock Exchange has continued to expand and prosper, making London the financial capital of the world. Not even the anarchist bombing that left forty-three dead in 2041 could curb the stellar market growth. Refusing to allow the attack to diminish the prospects of the future, traders returned to see the Exchange open the very next day.

## Supernormal Engineering

*The higher intellect, the imagination, the spirit, and even the heart might all find their congenial aliment in pursuits which, as some of their ardent votaries believed, would ascend from one step of powerful intelligence to another, until the philosopher should lay his hand on the secret of creative force and perhaps make new worlds for himself.*

—Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Birthmark,” 1843

Though the abilities of psychics and mediums had been utilized by government, industry, and private interests since before the Plague Years and significant progress had been made during the Plague Years in understanding the varieties of psychical talent and their properties, little was truly understood about the nature of psychical or spiritual phenomena until the Neo-Victorian era. The entities called “spirits,” though convincingly associated with events of death or, more rarely, significant emotional distress, were inexplicable within the working physical paradigm. The thoroughly documented abilities of psychics remained largely mysterious in mechanism.

1934 marked a significant breakthrough in the understanding of the nature of psychical phenomena. While working as a technological adjunct to Project Valkyrie, Dr. Elspeth Vreemd and her research and engineering team had been labouring to produce a

device that would detect and quantify psychical activity. This device was intended to allow rapid location and recruitment of psychics possessing strong gifts. For several years, little progress was made on the detector until, while exploring applications of Tesla-field devices in an unrelated psychological-engineering experiment, a junior technician mistuned a monitoring device. Using the miscalibrated reader, Vreemd noticed “blips” in the field properties during experimentation on psychically active subjects. She was able to confirm, based on this and subsequent targeted observations, that the exercise of psychical ability showed effects in the low-frequency aetherspace and that these effects could be measured.

The development of the first aetheric monitor followed closely on this discovery. In 1935, Vreemd and her team presented a field-ready aetheric monitor which could read the intensity of psychical events within a narrow radius. The monitor detected only psychical activity, and later testing would prove the monitor’s ineffectiveness to detect psychics whose gifts were not in use. However, the erratic signal put out by an untrained psychic proved sufficient to allow the isolation of the psychic from a crowd of thousands. The device proved effective in locating qualified psychics and was extensively used in the SSB’s later recruiting operations.

Further experiments in aetheric monitoring generated devices that could be used to detect emerging spiritual phenomena. These devices were functionally similar to those used to detect psychical emanations, which confirmed theories that both psychical phenomena and spiritual events were at least partially aetheric in nature and that the disparate phenomena shared some characteristics.

During the renaissance of biological engineering that followed the Reclamation, serious effort was put into decoding the mystery of the psychically active physiology. Countless tissue screens and dissections were performed in the hope of isolating the physical features that predisposed an individual to psychical or spiritual talent, but no distinguishing features could be confirmed. Phrenology enjoyed a brief resurgence in connection with this research, but theories of proportion failed to provide useful tools for diagnosis of psychical individuals as well, and the pseudoscience faded from popularity once more. Later, as science developed, genetic screenings took the place of tissue examinations but with no greater success; a number of apparently promising leads failed to provide a conclusive answer to the puzzle upon increasing the sample size.

Researchers began to focus on epigenetic and developmental theories of psychical manifestation. By 2010, scientists in government labs were tampering with embryonic material in the hopes of producing psychically capable individuals. This research, begun as an attempt to isolate factors responsible for the development of psychical potential, was quickly co-opted by military interests searching—however improbably—for a means of developing tailor-made psychics. The program failed to produce psychics at a significantly increased rate or potency, and the project was disbanded in 2035.

Meanwhile, medical psychologists and parapsychologists at work in the clinical arena had made progress on alternate avenues of investigation. Since before the Plague Years, it had been known that unusual mental activity, including manifestations usually characterized as psychical, could be brought forth in some mentally

normal subjects who were in a hypnotic trance. In 1988, Dr. Agatha Reve, staff physician at the Hanwell Asylum in Middlesex, and Mr. Lowell Affam, a hypnotist with a favourable reputation in the London salons, collaborated in an effort to produce evidence of psychical abilities in individuals showing no evidence of talent. The subjects ranged from the acute ward’s working-class patients, who suffered more from malnutrition and exhaustion than any nervous complaint, to the few hopeless cases of the chronic wards who maintained sufficient lucidity to respond to the hypnotist’s workings.

Repeated experiments with the hypnotic state yielded some encouraging results but failed to produce the magnitude of psychical response for which the researchers had hoped. Some of those subjects sufficiently susceptible to suggestion as to be brought to the deep trance state could be induced to manifest limited psychical powers. Regardless of the talent produced, these induced psychical states were erratic, difficult to control or maintain, and invariably of low potency.

Hoping to induce a more powerful and permanent psychical condition, researchers’ attention turned to other forms of altered states. It had been observed during the Plague Years and the Reclamation that mental disturbance was positively correlated with the psychical gift and that the degree of illness likewise correlated strongly with the strength of that gift. Furthermore, spontaneous manifestation of psychical powers had been previously noted in chronic-ward patients subjected to a medieval standard of inpatient care. In 1993, Dr. A.B. Hartley of London Hospital began a series of experiments designed to study this phenomenon under more controlled conditions.

Hartley theorized that the manifestation of psychical ability was associated with a breakdown in the fundamental structures of the mind such that the normal primacy of the conscious mind over the unconscious was disrupted and the full potential of the mind was permitted to manifest. The “break” necessary for psychical awakening, however, represented a rift in the “normal” functioning of the mind, leading invariably to disorders in function and mood as compared with individuals possessing a more conventional psychological architecture.

Hartley designed his experiments to induce the mental “break” and subsequent psychical response. Patients drawn from the chronic wards were subjected to mental and physical stressors in hopes of inducing psychical breakthroughs. Sensory deprivation and psychotropic drug treatments were the standard experimental modalities. These treatments, especially in conjunction, were capable of inducing considerable mental stress in the already unstable patients while minimizing organic damage. Test subjects were exposed to repeated treatments until either a psychical manifestation was observed or the subject ceased to show response to further stimulus. The experiments were successful. An array of psychical talents was produced, with a total response rate of approximately two to five per cent. Talents were verifiable but usually of low magnitude. Psychical induction varied notably in frequency: telepaths and empathes were produced most commonly, with only one psychokinetic being produced over the entire course of the study. Due in part to the low functionality of the subjects prior to the experiment, few of the psychics could be trained to control their abilities in any way. Dr. Thomasse Jansen’s methods for prophylactic lobotomy were used to control the more intractable

subjects once their utility as test subjects had ended. Notably, and in accordance with prevailing theory, no mediums were produced by this method. Hartley's experiment was terminated prematurely in 1999 when the first successful production of a psychokinetic resulted in the deaths of nearly the entire experimental team, including Hartley, and the destruction of part of Guys Hospital's subterranean South Ward.

Hartley's results were used as the jumping-off point for an ambitious government program, under the aegis of the SSB, intended to produce psychics for military use. Of this program, entitled Emergence, little is known. While the doctor's results were encouraging, the psychics created in this manner were more behaviourally unstable than naturally occurring psychics and self-control over their abilities was low, particularly in the time period immediately following manifestation. Due to the low utility of these artificial psychics and the dangers posed in their creation, military research into artificial induction of the psychical gift was officially terminated in 2016, and psychical induction largely slipped from public memory for a time. However, private commercial and academic research intended to unearth the secrets of the psychical mind continued.

Despite mixed results concerning the biology of the psychic question, psychical technology developed rapidly over the intervening years. By 2000, technology allowed for the detailed detection of psychical events and the containment of spirits. In every respect, the spirit had become a research animal. Researchers made bold statements concerning the future of the science. It was theorized that by the turn of the next century, man would know with scientific certainty the ultimate fate of his essence after the death of his body. Fundamental questions on the nature of mankind and his place in the universe were to be answered after millennia of waiting. Faith would become outmoded, replaced with an absolute and carefully quantified certainty.

## The Secrets of Dominion

In June 2070, Jackson Chambers, a reporter for the *Times*, began an investigation into an obscure government organization that would lead to the greatest scandal in modern history. Though by

the time the story broke in September 2072 Chambers had already lost his life and the offices of the *Times* had burned to the ground, his efforts were lauded as a milestone in journalistic investigation. As a direct result of Chambers' investigation, the Conservative government of Prime Minister Sir Robert James Tremaine was brought down as Parliament raced to push through reform.

Originally researching a lead pertaining to the Southwark Fire of 2055 and the subsequent police crackdown on anarchists in the late 50s, Chambers unwittingly stumbled across a vast government conspiracy with its roots in the chaos of the Plague Years. The Dominion story, as it is now known, revolved around the activities of a clandestine government agency. The Psychological Development Bureau (PDB), or Dominion, was supposedly charged with nothing less than the psychical security of the nation.

Once based out of a tall, nondescript, grey-black building overlooking Regent's Park, the PDB was said to be the first and last line of defence against psychical threats to the UK. Despite Chambers' best efforts and papers of the day making much of "Her Majesty's witch finders," little information pertaining to the day-to-day operations of the PDB has ever come to light.

Chambers' investigation led him to the discovery of a Psychic Branch report on the Southwark Fire written by an unnamed detective. From the start, it seemed to Chambers that the report had been intentionally buried by the Home Office immediately after it had been written. Though the official report of the incident, filed weeks later, found that the fire had been ignited by an incendiary explosive set by anarchists, the Psychic Branch report suggested an alternative cause for the blaze that claimed over seven hundred lives. The report stated flatly, "*An exceptionally powerful psychokinetic manifestation was the most likely cause of the fire.*"

Furthermore, the Psychic Branch report contradicted the official report's findings concerning the fire's point of origin. The official report claimed that the fire had started at the Briarcliff Tower building before spreading through Southwark. The Psychic Branch report stated that the fire had started at a private medical facility known as the Malkham Institute. Knowing a good lead when he saw one, Chambers did his best to follow up on his findings but met with little initial success.

Despite his best efforts to locate the author of the Psychic Branch report, he found nothing. When shown a copy of the report, official Psychic Branch sources questioned its validity. Reliable sources within the Metropolitan Police flatly refused to look into the matter or were stone-walled in their attempts.



The Malkham Institute seemed to be yet another dead end. The facility was not only unaccredited, it was entirely unknown, a complete mystery even to lifelong inhabitants of South London. The location Chambers could best ascribe to the Institute had been abandoned for years, and no one saw anyone come or go from the site. The buildings that had once stood on the lot had been reduced to charred ruins by the fire. Later, the site was purchased by a shipbuilding firm that constructed a large warehouse at the location before going bankrupt. By the time of Chambers' investigation, the place was once more abandoned. He is known to have visited the site on several occasions, and while he discovered no concrete evidence, he did report an inexplicable sense of dread emanating from the place as well as a reticence on the part of locals to speak of it.

Chambers, his investigation stymied by lack of evidence, returned to research that would pay his bills. Months went by before he received a telephone call from a friend at the Metropolitan Police in November 2070. A senior police officer wanted to meet with him in secret but only at a time and place of the officer's choosing. Chambers agreed.

The two met on a deserted dock in the early hours of the morning. Chambers' new contact was retiring police superintendent Elliot Scott Reeves, a man with nearly thirty years on the force. Reeves had been a serjeant with the Southwark Division the night of the fire. While he had not read the Psychic Branch report, he could confirm its findings. The conflagration originated at a private hospital, and from there it spread throughout the borough. Reeves was among the first to arrive at the scene, and his account of the events that night clearly troubled him in the telling.

The place had been gutted by fire so hot it cracked concrete and instantly reduced men to charred remains. The only survivor who retained the wherewithal to speak described "one of them escaping from the basement, sowing fire and death in his wake." The apocalyptic tenor of the man's words had remained with Reeves for fifteen years. Soon after, he was called away to assist in crowd control. He remembers seeing a large number of CID detectives arriving at the site as he was leaving. With them were Psychic Branch sniffers, clairvoyant detectives unmistakable in their slow movements and application of their gloved hands to any promising surface. The next morning, Reeves told Chambers, it had been made clear to Reeves' superior that the matter of the fire was now in the hands of Special Branch and he was to say nothing unless ordered to speak. Reeves, a man known for his tight lips and stern adherence to the chain of command, did as he was told and quickly ascended through the ranks of the Metropolitan Police.

At the precipice of retirement, Reeves decided that he had been silent long enough. A week later he was dead, accidentally killed in the line of duty. Though the investigation into Reeves' death was closed quickly, the notes that survived clearly called the facts of the death into question.



When Chambers asked Reeves about Malkham Institute, Reeves said he had never heard the name before, but he confirmed that the site of the private hospital he described was now occupied by an abandoned warehouse. Before Chambers and Reeves parted that night, Reeves gave him a casebook dated 11 August 2055, the night of the Southwark Fire, and suggested he look into the names of surviving eye witnesses who were not called to trial. There were three. Henri Guiscard was an adolescent patient of the hospital. Dr. Courtney Ives was a senior staff member who had sustained burns over forty per cent of her body. Conrad Ferris had been visiting the hospital on undisclosed business at the time the fire broke out, and it was to Ferris that Reeves attributed the apocalyptic quotation.

Young Guiscard disappeared immediately following the fire. Despite exhaustive research, Chambers could find nothing of him. Like the Institute itself, it seemed as though all trace of young Henri had simply vanished.

Of the woman known as Dr. Ives, there is little known. It is apparent that she survived her wounds after undergoing extensive reconstructive surgery but disappeared soon after. Medical records pertaining to Ives' employment at the hospital were lost in the fire. By February 2071, Chambers had found Ferris at Bethlem Royal Hospital. The man had resided at the psychiatric hospital since suffering a complete nervous breakdown at the end of 2064. Overjoyed at the prospect of a lead that was not a dead end, Chambers made his way to the hospital with all haste. Of course,

the hospital staff absolutely refused to arrange an audience for Chambers without the consent of Ferris' family. Chambers returned a month later with a letter from Ferris' mother permitting him to meet with her son.

Ferris was a broken man prone to melancholy and fits of rage. He was also paranoid in the extreme, demanding they meet in a dark room and refusing to speak above a whisper. When first they spoke, Ferris informed Chambers that he had best make the interview count. Chambers would get no second chance, Ferris asserted, because Ferris would be dead within the week. With a smile, he then suggested Chambers put his own affairs in order.

Then he spoke of Dominion.

Ferris had been a lieutenant-commander in the Royal Navy. At the end of his military service, he was recruited to join a secret government organization known as the Psychological Development Bureau. The Bureau was an extension of a reclamation-era program initiated to explore and unlock the potential power of the human mind through extreme physical and psychological experimentation, to literally induce psychical activity in stable minds.

Chambers would later learn that the program Ferris referred to was Operation Archangel. Instituted in 1947 for the purpose of triggering psychical talents in sleepers, command of Archangel was given to Dr. Samuel Keller, the same man who had played a pivotal role in revolutionizing Project Valkyrie. Following several spectacular and highly destructive failures, Archangel was disbanded in 1953. Officially, all test subjects were destroyed at that time and the government ceased further psychical experimentation until 1978. That year, Parliament quietly passed funding for an organization identified only as the PDB.

For over a hundred years, the Bureau operated out of the basements of private asylums, sanatoriums, and lock hospitals throughout the Britain. Some facilities, like the Malkham Institute, were established expressly for the purpose of conducting Bureau experiments. The subjects of these experiments were the workhouse poor and the insane of the lower classes who were supposedly in the care of public or charitable institutions.

Over the years, the Bureau's techniques grew more sophisticated. Greater numbers of test subjects exhibited the spontaneous manifestation of psychical powers than ever before.

Building on reclamation-era research, the PDB took no chances with its subjects. The organization employed heavily armed strike teams intended to eliminate uncontrollable test subjects before they could inflict substantial damage on Bureau property or personnel. Ferris had been employed to lead one such team. The night of the Southwark Fire, Ferris' team had been dispatched to eliminate a subject at the Malkham Institute. The subject was an unstable pyrokinetic who had killed two orderlies earlier in the day and escaped into the basement of the facility. After most of the staff had been evacuated, Ferris led his men into the basement. Within minutes, his team was annihilated as erupting flames lit the South London skies.

In response to the fire, the PDB and allied government agencies initiated a scorched-earth cover-up effort. Bureau facilities were closed across the UK, test subjects destroyed wholesale,

and researchers with questionable loyalty purged. Hundreds are believed to have lost their lives in the aftermath. Despite the thoroughness of this campaign, the government placed a moratorium on experiments in psychical apotheosis in 2062.

Within the PDB, Ferris was personally blamed for the incident, and with his career ruined, he attempted to take his own life. He survived and was remanded to the care of the hospital in which Chambers found him.

As predicted, within two days of meeting with Chambers, Ferris was dead. He reportedly choked on his own tongue and died in his hospital room.

Chambers was left to come to terms with the enormity of the story he had uncovered. His surviving notes reflect a pervasive fear that he would carry with him for his remaining days. Though he now had a clear picture of the events that had transpired, he lacked substantiating evidence. Chambers spent his every waking hour researching the case, poring over files dating back to the Reclamation, and meeting with any witness who might corroborate a portion of Ferris' story.

By May 2072, Chambers was certain he was being followed. Witnesses began to miss meetings or simply disappeared altogether. Several died under mysterious circumstances. Then, on 2 June 2072, the offices of the *Times* burned. No one was ever charged with the crime, which claimed thirty-four lives. Following the fire, Chambers went into hiding but did not halt his investigation.

On the morning of 12 September 2072, the body of Jackson Chambers was found floating face down in the Thames. He died of a single bullet wound to his right temple that occurred before he was thrown into the river. The Dominion story broke two days later in every major newspaper in London. Before his murder, Chambers sent a copy of his story along with eye-witness accounts and other corroborating evidence to the largest newspapers in the city.

Even more damning than the cover-up of the Southwark Fire was Chambers' post-mortem accusation that the experiments of the Psychological Development Bureau were ongoing in defiance of Parliament. Within the year, the ruling party suffered a devastating defeat that placed the Liberals in power for the next eight years.

## Ghost Werks

*Show me the manner in which a nation cares for its dead, and I will measure with mathematical exactness the tender mercies of its people, their respect for the laws of the land, and their loyalty to high ideals.*

—William Ewart Gladstone

For two thousand years, the teeming population of London has lived alongside its dead. Beneath the streets, parks, and churchyards are countless forgotten plague pits and burial sites. Some places are so choked with human remains that construction on the land is all but impossible. The very foundation of the city retains the memory of great fires and deadly plagues of centuries past. Those with the gift to see across the threshold of death claim that to live within the walls of the metropolis is to never be alone, always surrounded by legions of discarnate dead.



Though old romantic notions of spiritualism persist, the prevalence of serious hauntings since the Plague has led to a shift in public attitudes. Mediums continue to do a brisk business conveying platitudes across the veil to those who have lost loved ones, and spiritualism as a faith remains extremely active in Britain. However, spirits present a considerable hazard, particularly in the crowded urban areas. Due to the concern for public health and a concerted campaign by private interests, hauntings have come to be regarded as an epidemic and spirits as an infestation.

Since the Plague Years, Britain has struggled to deal with the threat posed by malevolent hauntings. Exorcists, operating with and without recognized legal authority, are too few in number to combat the threat posed by dangerous spectral predators. Amber Meredith's success in resolving the dangerous haunting of 1916 paved the way for use of mediums as a tool for elimination of spiritual threats. However, not all hauntings can be resolved by this method, and mediums sufficiently powerful and strong-willed to operate in this capacity are rare. In recent decades, improvements in technology have made it possible to seriously consider artificial spirit removal as a permanent solution, but this technology is not yet perfected, and a number of practical difficulties remain. In many cases, the best method for dealing with powerful malignant entities remains containment and avoidance.

Beneath London, there are dozens of sealed chambers that were ceded to the restless dead during the Reclamation. In one case in 1937, forces securing the West End residential enclave of Berkeley

Square encountered a still unidentified spectral horror of dreadful proportions. The soldiers described the entity that appeared in the basement of a blasted Victorian mansion as a "shapeless, slithering mass" that drove men gazing upon it into terrified flight. Having determined the site rested upon an ancient plague pit dating back to the Great Plague of 1665, researchers speculated that the abomination was a manifestation of conjoined plague victims disturbed during the chaos of the Plague Years. Though the massive spirit lacked the ability to lash out at the living, its appearances were marked by episodes of heightened animate activity, as if the mournful thing attracted the hungry dead. Once all known methods of dealing with the spirit had failed to put it to rest, military command determined that the thing should be contained. Within a guarded perimeter maintained by hundreds of heavily armed soldiers, fearless labourers levelled the remnants of the house and filled in its foundation with dirt, concrete, and rubble. There, beneath a solemn and melancholic park, the thing has rested ever since.

Though the use of containment is a natural psychological reaction, parapsychologists were initially surprised at the efficacy of these measures. When confronted with a sudden manifestation, an individual's initial reaction is typically to run, hide, and impose some physical barrier between himself and the oncoming supernatural entity. The idea of closing a door on a ghost is instinctual, though hardly logical, given the non-material nature of the threat. However, the imposition of a physical barrier, when raised with intent, is startlingly effective.

Inquiry into the nature of aetherspace has helped to clarify why this is the case. Physical objects are known to have “echoes” in the low-aetheric frequencies; mediums describe the “other side” as resembling the world “on this side of the veil” in many ways: retaining shapes, structures, and basic architecture, though all of this is confused and overlaid with things no longer physically present. Moreover, it is known that mental events can influence the lower aetheric frequencies. Emotional relics can appear in aetherspace as “ghosts” of a sort, for example. It is suspected that the creation of an intentional barrier in some way creates a more aetherically “solid” structure than would have existed had the physical barrier been placed there incidentally: a door shut to block the attack of a poltergeist is a much more efficient barrier against that entity than the same door would have been before the victim was aware of his assailant.

By the end of the Reclamation, researchers in the fledgling field of parapsychology had begun experiments to develop a means of artificially confining a spirit. At Oxford in 1955, Prof. Octavian Rutherford’s team held an apparition in a low-frequency aetheric field generated by an ingenious electromechanical device called the shadow matrix.



Though the device only held the spirit for seventy-two seconds before its generator overheated and burst into flames, Rutherford’s experiment had shown awe-inspiring potential. For years afterward, parapsychologists and inventors attempted to replicate the experiment with varying degrees of success. It was not until 1972 that Dr. Byron James Alcott, a member of Rutherford’s original team, developed a device capable of confining a spirit indefinitely (though the Alcott jar was the size of a small house and required a vast supply of power to remain operational). Alcott continued to refine his machine for the rest of his life. Within ten years, he held forty-six patents and had designed a man-portable version of the Alcott jar that could be sufficiently powered by London’s Tesla array. Alcott, now in his seventies, was ready to profit on his lifetime of work. All he needed was a sufficiently dramatic demonstration of his device in preparation for an initial public offering of his company, Alcott & Sons Industries, on the London Stock Exchange.

He got his chance in the spring of 1983, following a rash of mass suicides in the Harrow on the Hill district of Middlesex. This area had been known for hauntings since the rookery near Parish Church burned to the ground in 1968; twenty-two lives were lost in that fire, which was later blamed on arson. The supposed perpetrators, members of a gang of local ruffians, were said to have spontaneously burst into flames weeks later. The area remained abandoned until a speculation firm purchased the site in 1981. The initial task of clearing the rubble went smoothly enough, though locals reported a marked increase in spiritual activity in the area. The real trouble started 12 April 1983, when construction workers began to excavate the foundation of old buildings that once made up the rookery. In the lowest portion, they discovered a chamber filled with the remains of dozens of murdered victims, the work of an unknown killer believed to have perished in the fire. Soon after this grim discovery, accidents among construction workers increased at a frightful rate. By the end of May, fifteen labourers had lost their lives, including two who had combusted spontaneously while working at the site.

The local inhabitants began to complain of sleeplessness brought about by terrifying nightmares. As the days passed, the situation worsened and weariness took its toll on the residents of Harrow. The first suicides were reported 12 May 1983. Eight people had taken their own lives by the end of the first week, followed by thirty more the next. Dozens of alienists and mediums rushed to the area in an attempt to aid the desperate inhabitants. Most stayed less than a day, their professional curiosity supplanted by irrepressible terror. The few who remained were soon swept up in the epidemic of mass suicides that gripped the local population. One young medium who survived a self-inflicted gunshot wound would later recall the ceaseless screams of spectral victims that accompanied him constantly during his stay in Harrow.

By June, the situation had degenerated further. Survivors fled in a mass exodus from the district. The death toll had reached eighty-five, including those claimed by accidents. The press ran lurid tales of life within Harrow, though few reporters dared enter the stricken area. Deciding the moment of truth had come, Alcott petitioned the Harrow Urban District Council for permission to conduct an experiment intended to rid Harrow of its murderous spirit. His request was immediately approved.

Dr. Alcott, his son Ryan, and freelance reporter D.F. Gately entered Harrow on the morning of 4 June 1983. The ruins had already been surrounded by a hastily built brick wall, pending permanent containment of the spirit within. The three men were able to assemble Dr. Alcott's machine without incident, though they were left with the daunting task of carrying the unwieldy device into the ruins in hopes of reaching the epicentre of the haunting in the chambers below. During the descent, Ryan Alcott suffered a broken ankle when the stairs crumbled beneath his feet, sending him into the darkness below. By the time the senior Alcott and Gately arrived, Ryan was mute with fear. Having moved the machine into position, Byron James Alcott opened the door to the accursed lower room. Instantly he was consumed in flames. Coming to his senses, Ryan Alcott activated the device, which sprang to life with crackling light and the smell of ozone. As the moments passed, the silence was undisturbed except for the electrical hum of the Alcott jar. The containment field held, sealing the spectre harmlessly within its aetheric tomb, an area a tenth the size required for conventional containment. A month later, Dr. Alcott's company went public, making millionaires of his surviving family.

For a time, Alcott & Sons Industries maintained a monopoly on spectral containment technology. In addition to manufacturing, the company made a fortune maintaining its products; large and sophisticated machines, Alcott jars require a great deal of specialized knowledge to keep in running order. If not maintained, these machines often failed without warning, leading to great loss of life and property. Over the years, various improvements to the design of the jar have made these devices more reliable, but even under optimal circumstances fragile components must be replaced every few years due to the wear caused by continuous operation. These qualities have ensured a steady stream of revenue for Alcott & Sons, but the cost of goods and services is staggering and can only be paid by large companies or government agencies.

A brilliant young engineer named Edna Steibal introduced a less expensive alternative in 2004: the oscillating aether field. Steibal's contribution to spectral containment generates concentric fields of overlapping containment. Unlike the Alcott jar, the oscillating aether field does not rely on maintaining a constant field. Instead it creates alternating aetheric waves that are more than sufficient to contain less powerful spirits. Unfortunately, they simply agitate more powerful spirits. Oscillating aether fields are not only inexpensive compared to Alcott jars but also far simpler and can be manufactured at much lower cost. Investors, seeing the potential in Steibal's invention, initiated a deluge of patents in a race to create an affordable means of spectral containment.

These new companies competed for a virtually untapped market. Since the Reclamation, the wonder and fear implicit in spectral visitation has gradually begun to fade with continued exposure and growing familiarity. Though spiritual phenomena have continued to be a source of interest, especially among theologians and Spiritualists, the majority of the population has come to see hauntings as an almost mundane nuisance. Capitalizing on these sentiments, the spiritual containment industry spends vast sums of money to advertise their products, framing spirits as an invasive pest species that can, and should, be exterminated wherever they encroach on the lives of decent folk.

Private ghost hunting agencies promising to rid homes of infesting spirits sprang up across the metropolis. By 2009, it was estimated

that nearly one hundred unregulated ghost hunting firms were operating within London, containing nearly eight thousand spirits annually. Most of these enterprises were started by inexperienced proprietors looking to make fast money, and few agencies bothered to hire trained parapsychologists, mediums, or professional staff members of any kind. Due to their poor understanding of the entities they hunted or the capabilities of their equipment, many would-be ghost hunters perished or were driven insane.

Though the editorial pages of the dailies were filled with letters from knowledgeable citizens seeking reform of the industry, it took years for Parliament to act. Some newspapers went so far as to suggest that a possible reason for the delay in regulation was that a number of MPs had invested heavily in the new industry and reform would cost them a great deal of money. Action was only taken after an unfortunate series of accidents brought the problem to the forefront of the public's attention.

In February 2014, a poltergeist inhabiting a Bloomsbury estate killed six members of a ghost hunting team after their aether field failed to contain the spirit. When the agency sent out another team to complete the job, the ghost murdered them too. The sole survivor of the second expedition returned to the house alone on a third attempt, this time succeeding only through the detonation of a sizable explosive charge, destroying himself and much of the estate in the process.

Three years later, following the development of transportable aether fields, one Stepney containment facility was overrun with hundreds of spirits following an equipment failure. The resulting haunting required weeks of clean up and the permanent containment of the site, all at government expense.

Parliament was finally forced to act in 2020 after a series of articles in the *News Chronicle* revealed that Spectral Eliminations Expeditions, a seemingly respectable firm catering to the spectral confinement needs of the metropolis' middle class, had been quietly containing spirits at the homes of their clients only to release them in the slums of South London. Though no laws were broken and the spirits were said to have caused little damage, the resulting firestorm of public outrage forced the government to action. By the end of the year, the Ghost Industries Act had passed, mandating the licensing of all ghost containment agencies. The act also stipulated that each licensed company keep a trained parapsychologist on call around the clock, employees pass a certification, and all equipment be regularly inspected and maintained at the cost of the company. Since the institution of this act, the number of ghost hunting firms has only increased.

Despite ongoing containment efforts, the metropolis continues to be inundated with the incorporeal dead. The most dangerous spirits are far too powerful for exorcism or conventional containment methods and must be confined within their haunting grounds. Though Alcott jars offer one means of containment, great cost and equipment failure make it an imperfect method at best. The surest method of containment remains quarantine, which may restrict the living from using a locality for decades. The most severe manifestations merit containment in perpetuity. Dozens of metropolitan structures remain empty behind imposing walls, waiting for reoccupation by the living in generations to come.

## A Crisis of Faith

The Church of England, having never fully recovered from the existential blow dealt by the Plague, had been further weakened over the intervening decades by the rise of spiritualism, and the development of a coherent aetherphysics threatened to further erode the mystery of belief among the masses. Scientific spiritualism gained in popularity in the church's stead. For the most faithful, however, the development of aetheric containment and monitoring technologies confirmed an existence beyond the body and strengthened their conviction. The properties of the spirit in the realms nearest to life were known in increasing detail. However, how the human essence dissipated after it passed beyond the reach of the mediums and the aetheric monitors was not yet known with certainty, and traditional and Theosophical ideas of heaven and hell still vied for popularity among the faithful.

The implications of psychical research had been decried by anti-materialists and religious activists since the emergence of parapsychology. As attempts to extend the range of empirical observation became more coherent, the faiths of Britain began to feel their beliefs had come under attack. Alongside the rising philosophical resistance, scientific parapsychology was making ever more ambitious attempts to determine the fate of the human essence after death.

The leading sophist in the public arena was Dr. Henry Stolz, then Chair of Philosophy at Oxford. Stolz had been a pre-eminent psychical researcher in his earlier career and had published extensively on the activities and social functions of mediums in modern British society. In 2009, Stolz delivered a famous public address titled "The Future of Existential Knowledge and the Impotence of Faith." The resulting public outrage accelerated into demonstrations that closed the offices at Oxford University for three days before police could restore order.

Currently, the divorce between faith-based and scientific psychical investigations is a touchy but understated subject. Despite the Church's official stance against psychical reductionism, many Anglican exorcists regularly retain the services of parapsychological technicians in diagnosing and monitoring spiritual events and will work in cooperation with parapsychological research units on difficult cases. Formally, however, the Anglican Church and other anti-materialist organizations continue to reject the idea that the fate of the human essence after bodily death will ever be fully known to science, declaring that the realms beyond the reach of human clairvoyants and mediums will remain inaccessible to the prying eyes of the experimentalists and that the ultimate dispensation of the soul is not and will never be a matter for science to understand.

## Psychical Societies

The Society of Psychical Research was originally founded in London in 1882, to investigate "that large body of debatable phenomena designated by such terms as mesmeric, psychical and 'spiritualistic,' [...] in the same spirit of exact and unimpassioned enquiry which has enabled Science to solve so many problems." The Society flourished in the Victorian and early Edwardian eras. Then came the Plague.

During the earliest days of the epidemic, Arthur Balfour, a former president of the Society and the recently resigned Prime Minister, called upon the organization to lend its specialized knowledge to aid in finding a cure for the Plague. Despite the Society's selfless efforts, the scope of the contagion was simply too great and the organization's resources too limited. By spring of 1906, the membership of the Society had been decimated. The organization effectively ceased to exist as its members were forced to see to their own survival, though many carried on their research in the years to come.

It would take nearly a hundred years for the Society to rise again. In 1998, as a response to the growing need for a professional society of peers in the discipline of parapsychology, the New Society of Psychical Research was established in London. The American branch was formally re-established several years later, in 2003, with headquarters in Boston.

Currently, the Society publishes *The Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, a peer-reviewed quarterly that is the most influential periodical in the field. The Society's annual meeting draws researchers from all corners of Europe—even researchers from the civilized Americas will occasionally brave the long and dangerous journey—and remains for that reason the most significant annual event in parapsychological research.

The Society stands as England's chief psychical research organization and is among the most respected psychical institutions in the world. Additionally, a large number of smaller regional organizations exist, many of which facilitate communication between peers and publish important preliminary or specialized research.

Professional psychical organizations are considerably more numerous. Mediums, commercial psychics, ghost hunters, and parapsychologists all have access to a number of guilds and professional societies that allow them to network, find employers, locate collaborators, and share information. Many of these organizations therefore act as a sort of certification service: membership is a mark of quality, a guarantee of capability on the part of the member. Many would-be employers make use of these professional organizations when searching for talent of a particular calibre.

Outside the purview of the regular professional societies lie less formal societies of another order. Supernormal workers who find the requirements of the ordinary societies excessively restrictive will often choose, voluntarily or otherwise, to forego the usual guild associations in favour of more informal brotherhoods. Though most are small, a few of these underground psychical organizations have grown large and effective enough to come to the attention of the police.

## Wars of Shadow

Since the Reclamation, there has been a proliferation of secret societies devoted to all aspects of the supernormal. Most of these groups are dedicated to the peaceful pursuit of occult knowledge but have chosen to operate *sub rosa* to protect their membership and traditions from outside scrutiny. After all, while the Neo-Victorians are generally accepting of the realities of the post-Plague world, there are some beliefs and areas of supernormal

research that remain outside polite society and could result in discrimination and scandal.

Occult societies first came to the attention of the police in 1972 following an epidemic of murders in the Wapping area. The victims of the crimes were middle-aged males of German descent, mostly members of the city's immigrant population. Each was brutally attacked on the street by a knife-wielding assailant. Though the detail was left out of the dailies at the time, an alchemical symbol of unknown origin was carved into the flesh of each victim. The complexity of the mark, and its curious "penmanship," led police to believe they were dealing with a lone killer.

Until the time of the sixth murder, the primary suspect had been Prof. Erich von Ranke, a physician who had immigrated to London from Prussia in November 1971. At the time, Ranke was known as a kind and generous man who was struggling to set up a private medical practice. He kept to himself but paid visits to a number of homes free of charge when their infirm residents could not come to see him. In the process of making these calls, Ranke had met each of the victims and was the only discernable link between them. When police detectives learned Ranke was an expert in the esoteric arts with a specialty in alchemy, the decision was made to bring him in. Armed with only the most circumstantial of evidence, police arrested Ranke at his home on 27 March 1972.

Then the killer struck again.



The sixth murder, which occurred 3 April 1972, was witnessed by Hetta Kirsch. Though Kirsch could not positively identify the killer due to the dense fog, she was able to tell the police that he was a heavyset man of exceptional height. Despite her screams, the murderer turned and slowly staggered off into the mist as if drunk or half asleep. Ranke was released as police circulated a description of the assailant.

Ranke himself nearly became the seventh victim when he was attacked 8 April 1972 outside his home. A police detective who had been keeping Ranke under surveillance saved his life, but not before Ranke had been stabbed twice, and the attacker, a stocky sailor not fitting the description of the known killer, had begun to carve into the professor's flesh. The would-be killer refused to drop his weapon even after the detective fired his pistol in the air. The next shot dropped the attacker stone dead.

After his wounds were treated, Ranke was once more taken into custody, this time for his own protection. The professor admitted that he had been a member of the *Überseele Institut* (Overmind Institute), a Berlin-based organization of clairvoyants, mystics, and mediums dedicated to learning secrets from the dead. Ranke claimed he left the organization after it was infiltrated by agents of the Prussian government. Not desiring to see his labours turned to tyranny, Ranke fled Prussia after liberating the *Geheimnisse der Vernichtung* (*The Mysteries of Annihilation*) from the *Überseele Institut's* chained library. The *Geheimnisse der Vernichtung* contains the combined occult knowledge and rituals of the *Überseele Institut*. The professor believed he had been followed to London by agents of the organization who were employing a possessing entity to hunt him through the streets of the metropolis. A murder the night of 14 April 1972 confirmed much of Ranke's story.

Theodolf Feidler, a close friend of Ranke, had been butchered in a tiny alley off Wapping High Street. His cries for help drew a number of bystanders, some of whom were able to restrain the murderer, a teenage girl with a wild look in her eyes. Despite her slight frame, it took five grown men to hold her down, one suffering a grievous wound to the neck in the process. After the police arrived, the girl suddenly cried out and opened her eyes wide as if she had been in a trance. Questioning her proved fruitless; she remembered nothing of the attack nor any events of the previous day. An alienist's report found the girl was telling the truth and suggested consulting an exorcist. Ranke was able to identify the symbol the young attacker left on Feidler's body as the sigil of the *Überseele Institut*.

Ranke suggested a daring plan to catch the killers using himself as bait to draw them out into the open. The professor reasoned that if a possessing spirit was indeed carrying out the attacks, the medium communicating with the spirit must be nearby. To ensure *Überseele* agents would take the bait, Ranke suggested that he present a lecture on the secrets of the organization. Ranke's plan was approved, and posters announcing the lecture were displayed throughout London. Scotland Yard employed a pair of well-known mediums to add spiritual support to the proceedings.

The night of the lecture, Ranke was attacked on his way to the auditorium as anticipated. Ranke called the spirit by name the moment it made its presence known, momentarily stunning it. This delay gave the Scotland Yard mediums the opportunity to spring into action. Soon the spirit had been banished, and detectives

located its handler, who was killed in a subsequent gun battle. After Ranke provided Scotland Yard with descriptions of additional suspects, the remaining members of the *Überseele Institut* active in the UK were either captured or fled the country.

Over the years, Ranke became an important advisor to Scotland Yard and the Home Office on matters of supernormal security and was a founding member of the New Society for Psychical Research. Sadly, Ranke was assassinated at his home 21 September 2014. Though his murderer was never brought to justice, members of the Secret Intelligence Bureau believe Prussia's *Totenfresser*, an organization with ties to the now defunct *Überseele Institut*, was founded in 1976 and remains Prussia's premier intelligence agency. The *Geheimnisse der Vernichtung* disappeared at the time of Ranke's death, and its present location is unknown.

## The Psychic Detectives

There is a long history of psychics and mediums using their gifts to solve crimes. From water diviner Jacques Aymar-Vernay, who aided police in tracking down violent criminals in seventeenth-century France, to Evelyn Perish, the consulting detective who uncovered the Stepney Horror in 2098, psychics have aided police or carried out their own criminal investigations for centuries. Even before the foundation of the Psychic Branch of the Criminal Investigation Department in 2053, Scotland Yard acknowledges keeping a register of psychics who they approached for assistance in murder and missing-persons cases on a number of occasions.

During the late Victorian era, the celebrated precog and spiritualist Robert James Lees endured graphic visions of the Jack the Ripper slayings. One night in September 1888, Lees, who regularly gave consultations to Queen Victoria I, received a vivid vision of the Ripper carrying out a murder. Though Lees reported his vision to Scotland Yard, the clerk who took his statement disposed of it immediately after the psychic left the building. That night, the Ripper struck again as Lees foretold. Weeks later, Lees came face to face with the murderer on an omnibus in Shepherd's Bush. Despite an outburst from Lees, the Ripper was once again allowed to escape unhindered. Lees returned to Scotland Yard on 30 September, the night of the double killing. This time Inspector Fred Abberline and his men are said to have followed Lees through Whitechapel as he focused his psychical powers on tracking down the killer. The location where Lees led the Inspector has been deleted from police records, as have the official conclusions of the search. It is believed that the Queen herself summoned Lees and asked him to leave the country for no less than a year's time. The Ripper murders soon came to an abrupt end.

Following the Reclamation, the celebrated medium Crispin Virgil Carter made a name for himself tracking down missing children with the help of his spirit guide, Azman. Getting his start in the slums of the East End, Carter first came to the attention of Scotland Yard in 1965 when he aided in the capture of the cannibal Horace Lang, the so-called Rotherhithe Butcher. Lang was charged with the deaths of twenty-seven children but is believed to have killed three times that number. In 1970, Carter's services were sought out by CID following the abduction

of Maddison Blackburn, daughter of the second Baron Blackburn. Sadly, the case was to remain unsolved, though Carter established a lasting relationship with Scotland Yard. Carter consulted with CID detectives many times over the years, and when MP Alan Fisher's daughter Alice was kidnapped in 1979, it was Carter to whom the police turned. Carter spent his later years in the service of aristocratic families and is remembered for his famous failure to contact the departed spirit of Sir James Gray while in the employ of his widow. Carter passed away in his sleep at his West End home in December 2012.

By the turn of the century, efforts were already underway to add a psychic branch to the Criminal Investigation Department. The proposal had met with widespread approval within the government and would have been implemented if not for a secret memorandum written by Home Secretary John Morrison being leaked to the press in 2004. The document called for the creation of a new branch of CID that would employ psychics in the "proactive detection and elimination of crimes." Public outcry was sudden and deafening. Aside from an obvious distaste for the prosecution of crimes before they were committed, the citizens of the UK feared such an unprecedented expansion of police powers. Liberal PM Henry Nelson-Grey immediately distanced himself from Morrison, who was replaced within the month. The near total disdain for Morrison's proposal pushed back efforts to found Psychic Branch fifty years. If not for a legendary hero of the police force, the program might never have been initiated.

Lincoln Jowett, a telepath, was the first openly psychic police detective on CID payroll. Though psychics had served as detectives and among the uniformed branch for years, they did so without public acknowledgement. Jowett's talents became apparent to his superiors after he made serjeant due to his extraordinary gift for getting information out of suspects, one that clearly bordered on the supernatural. Detective Jowett transferred to CID in 2042 and immediately became the rising star of Scotland Yard. Though the detective first distinguished himself for his bravery, his high profile arrest record soon drew additional attention. The dailies fell over themselves to tell stories of the dashing police detective and his exploits.

It was not until Jowett foiled an assassination attempt on City financier Dominicus Strathmore in 2046 that his talents became a matter of public record. While attending a charity fundraising dinner, Jowett shocked attendees and fellow police officers alike when he pulled his revolver and shot two would-be assassins posing as wait staff. One, with his back to Jowett, had a ready pistol in hand, hidden beneath a serving tray, ready to take Strathmore's life. Jowett raced to the pair as they lay dying and telepathically interrogated them on the spot, leading the detective to a third conspirator who was waiting outside to cover the assassins' escape. Quickly apprehended by police, the man confirmed Jowett's report of the incident.



Jowett's actions and model service record went a long way towards reforming the image of psychics on the force. Soon, CID added additional psychic detectives and interrogators to its ranks without raising public ire. By the time politicians began to debate the addition of a psychic branch to CID, the concept was already receiving widespread approval in the press. Psychic Branch was officially founded in 2053, the same year Jowett made Inspector.

Initially, Jowett's new organization had just twelve members, all recruited from inside CID and the Metropolitan Police. Just seven of the nine detectives, including Jowett, possessed psychical powers. In addition to the three transfers from the plain-clothes division were two additional psychics, both department employees completely untrained in the methods of criminal detection. Soon Jowett had three teams of psychics supported by a dedicated staff of recruiters and instructors. Two teams made up of telepaths were designated as Special Interrogators and the third, made up of clairvoyants and a precog, as Psi Crime. The Special Interrogation units immediately developed a close working relationship with Special Branch. The Psi Crime unit became field operatives utilized

in support of broader CID investigations. Psi Crime was also charged with dealing with psychical threats to the metropolis.

Meanwhile, Jowett sought to bring in new recruits to expand the department. It became apparent that the nature of psychical talents made potential candidates too rare to recruit exclusively from within the ranks of the police. Acting directly contrary to the orders of his superiors, Jowett sent his recruiters to scour the city for promising candidates. Soon, a half-dozen psychically talented individuals completed police training and were admitted into Psychic Branch. Despite the objections of the police commissioner, the Home Secretary saw the necessity in Jowett's tactics. By the end of 2055, Psychic Branch had expanded to twenty-six detectives, including twenty-one psychically talented individuals. Psychic Branch would only continue to grow.

Though most of his men were fresh from training school and Psi Crime units were still largely distrusted by the uniform branch, they proved their effectiveness time and time again and their talents were in great demand. It became common practice for a team of Special Interrogators to accompany sleeper interrogators anytime a high-profile suspect was questioned. Despite the Psychic Branch's carefully cultivated aversion to public attention, the dailies ate up stories of the Blackbirds, as the men and women of the Psi Crime units came to be known. To the criminal element they hunted, they were sniffers, psychic hounds dreadfully proficient in their chosen profession.

Even as Psychic Branch surpassed all expectations, disaster struck 3 April 2061. That day empath Nancy Sinclair, a detective just six months out of training, shot and killed Sergeant Walter Whitmore during an interrogation and then took her own life. Sinclair had been part of a program, implemented in 2059, to integrate empathic recruits into Special Interrogator units. Following this tragedy, Psychic Branch placed a moratorium on recruiting empaths that remains in place to this day.

Since the foundation of Psychic Branch, Jowett had struggled to keep the program out of the public eye. He had witnessed firsthand the debilitating effects of media attention on police work. Furthermore, psychics had never been fully accepted by the sleeper population,

and are, by the nature of the phenomenon, eccentric. While Psychic Branch attempts to screen out potentially deranged or dangerous recruits, even the most seemingly normal detectives have their peculiarities. Jowett had the foresight to realize that should popular opinion change, the results would be disastrous. The deaths of Whitmore and Sinclair resulted in Psychic Branch's culture of secrecy becoming all the more repressive.

After months of inquiries during which Jowett and his officers were questioned extensively, Psychic Branch was acquitted of all wrong doing. Throughout the investigation, Jowett received a deluge of letters of support coming from the most prominent names in government. It was clear that the Conservative government of Harold

Rheese had no intention of seeing the Psychic Branch disbanded. Having weathered the storm, Jowett returned to duty, though he shunned any form of media attention for the rest of his life.

In 2076, Psychic Branch began quietly recruiting mediums in hopes of revolutionizing forensic pathology. Psychic Branch mediums have been a huge boon in solving not only cases involving violent death but also cold cases from many years past.

Jowett commanded Psychic Branch until his retirement in 2085. Afterward, he continued to serve as a consultant to CID until his death in 2102.

After Jowett's retirement from active duty, Inspector Gavin Parfitt took the reins of the Psychic Branch. Parfitt, a favourite of then Home Secretary Madison Ryan, was a sleeper transferred from CID. Though widely distrusted and never respected by the psychic detectives he commanded, Parfitt oversaw the largest expansion of the Psychic Branch in twenty years. Parfitt's intention was to create a psychic warning system reminiscent of the reclamation-era Project Valkyrie. Calling his initiative Oracle, Parfitt recruited dozens of analysts and precogs. The majority of these new recruits did not receive any police training and were never intended to serve on the streets of the metropolis. Instead, they reported to Oracle facilities throughout London where they underwent constant observation in hopes that their talents would accurately presage coming catastrophes, epidemics, and animate attacks.

Even Parfitt's harshest critics admitted Oracle was a success. Its initial accomplishments were minor at best, but the project's



potential was clear. Given time, Oracle's analysts could learn to decipher the most vague or esoteric premonitions, providing a level of national security hitherto unknown. However, before Parfitt could see his plans reach fruition, his questionable political dealings caught up with him. In 2089, the Liberals soundly defeated the Conservative government of Katherine Hartley. The new Prime Minister, Arthur Reynolds, had long disapproved of Parfitt's tactics and asked for his resignation. That year, Inspector Johnathan Rathley, a heavily decorated veteran of Psychic Branch and a favourite of Lincoln Jowett, replaced Parfitt.

While Rathley lacked Parfitt's connections and organizational know-how, he was well loved by his men. A tried and tested leader with years of experience on the job, Rathley soon raised eyebrows by proving he was his own man. Despite pressure from PM Reynold's government, Rathley made plans to expand Oracle. Rathley continually faced budget problems until the Liberals lost to the Conservatives in 2093. Rathley found the government of Prime Minister Edward Avery Foster far more sympathetic than he did the Liberals. Though his budget woes were at an end, Rathley's ambitious plans for expanding Oracle were delayed until after the animate attack of 2097. Rathley was able to prove that Oracle successfully predicted the attack thirty-seven minutes before spotters on the walls caught sight of the advancing hordes. Though not sufficient warning to allow implementation of emergency procedures, it was a clear demonstration of the potential utility of the program and the desperate need for more funding to increase the staff and to develop improved methods of analysis. The Home Office was convinced and gave Rathley authority to expand the project.

Oracle's reputation for mixed success was maintained when an Oracle precog successfully predicted the accidental destruction of the Prussian airship *Widersacher* on 23 July 2100. When the prediction came, hours ahead of the scheduled landing, Prussian and British agencies sprang into action, reviewing every aspect of the landing plan. The crew of the *Widersacher* confirmed via radio that one turbine had trouble starting on take-off but was now performing normally. The flight was eventually rerouted to an airstrip outside London in an attempt to foil any potential sabotage efforts. The flight went as planned until the *Widersacher* attempted to land. A storm had been brewing for hours and the arrival of the airship was sounded by a roar of thunder. Moments later the vessel was struck by lightning. One of the starboard turbines immediately burst into flames, and the ship began to list. A gust of wind spread the fire to the rest of the ship, and it was consumed in flames moments later. All twenty-one crewmen lost their lives in the disaster.

In the aftermath of the accident, the government of Edward Avery Foster invited the Prussian diplomat Helmut von Streiber to tour the Oracle section of New Scotland Yard. Streiber was allowed to interview the psychics who had predicted the disaster. The event marked the first time a foreign dignitary was allowed into the top secret section of CID headquarters. The irony of the situation was not missed by the Prussians: had Oracle not intervened, the *Widersacher's* course would not have been changed and the accident would never have occurred.

The precogs utilized by City financiers seem much more reliable than those employed by Oracle. In some cases, this is because the

best precogs can command much higher wages than those paid by CID, but in other cases, it reflects investors consulting with psychics unfit for Psychic Branch employment. Lacking constant psychological evaluation and support, even the most successful precogs operating in the public sector have an alarming suicide rate by Psychic Branch standards, possibly due to the cut-throat nature of the psychological consulting industry.

With the death of Lincoln Jowett in 2102, Psychic Branch moved into a new era. Critics of the department continually point to the web of secrecy it now operates behind. Rivals throughout CID and the uniformed branch of Metropolitan Police seek to limit Psychic Branch's growing influence over all aspects of police work. Likewise, the public, despite having accepted the Blackbirds in their midst, remain nervous about the psychics who watch over them.

## The Stepney Horror

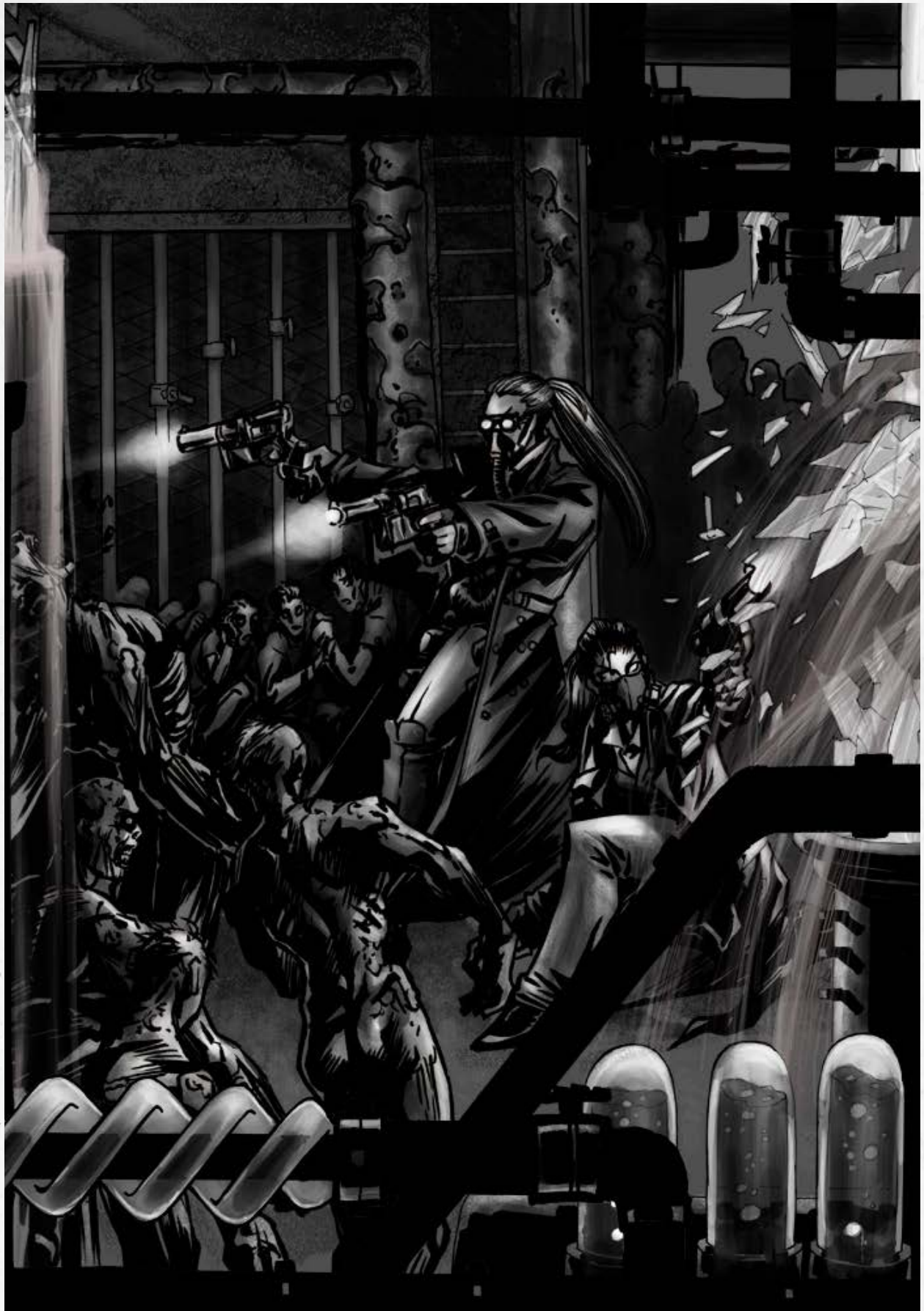
In the late 2090s, the slums of Stepney were gripped by paralytic terror. An eerie silence descended over the district as dozens vanished nightly from the streets. That these disappearances were sufficient to draw public attention to a sprawling ghetto long notorious for violent crime, Plague outbreak, and the predation of feral vampires speaks to the frightening frequency of these abductions. By May 2098, official police figures claimed nearly three hundred men, women, and children had disappeared since late 2096, though the inhabitants of Stepney reckoned the tally to be more than twice that number.

Psychic Branch Blackbirds combed Stepney. They found nothing. However, most reported horrific headaches and nausea as they psychically swept the streets. Soon after, mediums and parapsychologists noted a marked increase in violent spiritual activity in the vicinity. Mindless spirits took up residence throughout Stepney, lashing out at the living and adding to the general misery of its inhabitants. Though this phenomenon at first brought a wave of investigators, soon the palpable climate of fear took its toll. Both veteran mystics and men of science fled Stepney in irrational fear or went irrevocably insane.

Like canaries in a poisoned mine shaft, the most unstable precogs and empaths dwelling within London began to take their own lives in early July 2098. After a catastrophic breakdown amongst its own precogs, Psychic Branch was forced to suspend the operations of the Oracle project on 10 July 2098. After the Home Office declared a state of emergency, psi-inhibitors were made available free of charge at apothecaries throughout the metropolis. On 5 August 2098, Psychic Branch withdrew Psi Crime units from Stepney.

Deathwatch reports confirmed that Stepney was at the epicentre of a rash of Plague outbreaks. The severity of outbreaks in this region forced an increase in the number of Deathwatch sweeps through the area between June and September 2098, culminating in a full lockdown of Stepney on 23 September 2098. The operation resulted in the loss of fifty-three lives, including eight Deathwatch soldiers who were reportedly torn apart by a powerful psychokinetic manifestation. From this time on, Deathwatch left Stepney in perpetual lockdown, allowing no one to enter or leave the district for any reason.

Then on 1 October 2098, Evelyn Perish, a freelance psychic detective, met with Psychic Branch Inspector Jonathan Rathley and demanded the opportunity to end the psychic miasma centred over Stepney. Reluctantly, Rathley agreed.



An empath and renowned investigator, Perish had already earned Rathley's respect. He had consulted her on dozens of cases over the years. Unlike other psychic detectives, she had a reputation for relying more on deductive reasoning and academic study than on her psychical talents. A decade earlier, she had been a short-con artist, in and out of correctional facilities throughout her young adult life. Later she dedicated herself to the study of science and criminology. Ironically, Perish's empathic talents make her ineligible for Psychic Branch employment.

On the morning of 2 October 2098, Perish and her bodyguard, Grainne McGregor, were allowed through the gate into Stepney. McGregor, an Undertaker notorious for drunken duelling and deadly skill with her automatic pistols, was hired specifically for the mission. The Undertaker would later claim that despite generous payment, no amount of money would compensate her for putting up with Perish's inhuman disposition. The two women were given twenty-four hours to return or else remain locked behind the walls of Stepney until the trouble passed.

They returned in eighteen.

A great cheer went up among the police, reporters, and Deathwatch personnel gathered along the walls when Perish's flare lit the night sky. A skeleton crew of Psychic Branch clairvoyants and precogs confirmed the worst of the trouble had passed. As the gates were opened, the crowd fell silent. Accompanying the bloodied and beaten women were dozens of starving, fear-maddened refugees, many of whom collapsed in the street before making it to aid stations.

In the confused aftermath, it took days for the true story of the Stepney Horror to be told. In the meantime, the Deathwatch swept the streets, destroying the remaining animates and bringing much needed relief to the citizens locked within the district. Though Stepney eventually recovered, if such a word can be applied to the teeming slums of that district, it would take parapsychologists, ghost hunters, mediums, and exorcists years to purge the masses of spirits wandering the streets.

An account of Perish's investigation appeared in the *London Times* on 5 October 2098. It claimed that Perish and McGregor made their way through the empty streets of Stepney relying on the psychic's talent to track the absence of emotion. Perish had determined the origin of the Stepney Horror had to be a devouring, rather than emanating, force. She simply allowed her mind to follow the tide of spiritual energy as it was being sucked into the void.

Along the way, McGregor put her ample talents to use, dispatching untold numbers of animates; a fact undisputed by Deathwatch personnel charged with containing the zombie threat a day later. The only time the duo ran into serious trouble was when the side of a building collapsed around them, which was likely caused by a haunting entity of spectacular power.

When at last Perish's powers led them to the terminus of their journey, the two looked upon a seemingly abandoned factory that had once been a bottling plant in the heart the district. Inside they found a massive apparatus of metal and glass clearly intended for the distillation of gasses. The construction itself was inwardly lit with a sickly yellow-green light that flickered at times like fire and at others like electricity. A greasy, black smokestack at the back of the machine belched an ectoplasmic smoke and sludge that stained the very essence of the structure. In the smoke, for the briefest seconds as it departed the black

iron, tortured faces appeared and then blurred and fell like ash. Operating these ghastly mechanisms were clumsy automata, roughly assembled from human remains and mechanical parts. No evidence of intelligence could be seen in their repetitive movements, and each seemed specially tailored to some aspect of the machine's operation.

After ordering McGregor to hold her fire, Perish paused to take in the scene in all its nightmarish detail. Beyond the machine, dozens of half-mad captives could be seen chained to the walls. One by one, they were force-fed into the fiery maw of the contraption by the plodding automata that operated the thing. The empath realized with a sickened sensation that caused her to vomit that she was inured to both the screams of the victims and their psychic cries. In that moment, she opened fire with her own weapon, blasting apart as much of the delicate glasswork as her supply of ammunition would allow. Keeping her wits about her, McGregor focused on the elimination of the automata that now turned their attention to the psychic and Undertaker.

The machine burst into blackened flames devoid of heat or light. Coming to her senses, Perish raced to free the captives as the demonic device began to disintegrate around her with a deafening roar of twisting metal and crashing glass. In the meantime, McGregor systematically executed the last of the cadaverous drones. The pair fled the grisly factory with as many survivors as had the will to escape. Within moments the whole structure had fallen to charred ruin, taking with it an untold number of victims.

Since issuing her initial report to Inspector Rathley, Perish has refused to discuss her role in the investigation. Today, the psychically sensitive still avoid the site once occupied by the machine. Neither the architect of the device nor its true purpose has ever been discovered.





# CHAPTER TWO: MYSTERIA IN VITRO

*“Go where we may—rest where we will,  
Eternal London haunts us still.”*

—Thomas Moore, *Rhymes on the Road*, 1819

This chapter is for players who wish to explore the mysteries of the supernormal. It is a gateway into the shadows of Neo-Victorian spiritualism, a world populated by ecstasies, visionaries, scholars, cultists, showmen, and enlightened fools. Below you will find the rules for five new Callings: Alienists, Exorcists, Mediums, Parapsychologists, and Psychics. Giving life to these Callings are a collection of new Stunts, Qualities, and Impediments.

The Alienist is a devotee of the mysteries of the human psyche, delving into the secrets of the disordered mind and the hidden roots of psychical power.

Relying on little more than the power of faith and the sheer force of will, the Exorcist is a servant of God sent to deliver the faithful from the predations of evil spirits.

Mediums see and communicate with the dead. They are respected for their mysterious gifts and wise counsel, and their influence can be felt throughout the metropolis.

The Parapsychologist devotes himself to the scientific investigation of the supernormal.

With their widely varied powers, Psychics virtually constitute a class all their own. The powers of each Psychic are determined by his Devotions: Empathy, Extrasensory Perception, Prescience, Telepathy, Electrokinesis, Pyrokinesis, or Telekinesis.

## New Callings

### Alienist

Neo-Victorian science has pursued the mysteries of life and death to extremes. However, the mind of man is still a blank map. Neo-Victorian alienists are unwilling to settle for vague definitions of consciousness; *cogito ergo sum* is no longer acceptable. Human thought may be invisible, but its effects and outcomes are certainly tangible, and alienists require nothing less than a final and total empirical understanding of the mind. None have succeeded, and many have gone mad in the pursuit.

While psychology was once neglected due to the overwhelming physical threats of the post-Plague years, the discipline has become a critical field of scientific study in the Neo-Victorian era. Psychology and psychiatry are respected courses, and all major universities can proudly cite the accomplishments of their graduated alienists. The citizens of the metropolis have suffered every psychological trauma imaginable, leading to unique mental pathologies in need of study and treatment. These wounded minds provide a vast pool of opportunities for research and experimentation by alienists whose only complaint is that, with a population so traumatized, establishing a baseline of psychological health is difficult, if not impossible.

Despite the inarguable effects of therapy and the advancement of psychiatry, the study of the mind remains a disreputable field in the

public arena. The Neo-Victorians are uncomfortable with the idea of the full disclosure of personal detail required of a patient engaged in psychotherapy. This reticence is compounded by the confusion many people have about precisely what it is an alienist studies. Their close association with the psychically gifted muddies these waters, and some ignorant beliefs have taken root. Particularly repellent is the notion that all alienists are themselves mind readers seeking to study their subjects like vivisectionists of the psyche.

Although some alienists establish quiet therapeutic practices, most seek out more active study. Searching for ever more exquisite and bizarre disorders, alienists are drawn to the new killers of the metropolis. These men and women of science know that the true monsters are neither the animate nor the vampire, but rather the deranged and depraved human predators lurking unseen among the masses. Some alienists assist the police with the study and capture of these sadists by building profiles of expected behaviour. Most professionals in this field are residents at major hospitals, sanatoriums, asylums, or universities. At these facilities, they have access to a steady stream of the mentally aberrant. Here they can probe and experiment in whatever realms of the mind interest them most.

Only the psychics of London are more fascinating to the alienist. Lifetimes of study could be devoted to even the most mundane of psychological phenomena, and every alienist wishes to observe a true master of a psychological devotion. Such investigations are not without their perils.

### Playing an Alienist

Alienists explore the outermost reaches of the human mind. Some Alienists take an interest in psychoanalytic therapy, but advances in the field of psychology are coming increasingly quickly, and most wish to be at the forefront of their field. To do so requires maintaining professional and academic connections by attending conferences, publishing independent research or case studies, and maintaining a public dialogue of letters published in the literature of the field. Such activities preclude consistent patient treatment. Most Alienists will maintain connections with a major institution but may make their livings by assisting the police. Even those Alienists who spend considerable time with a private practice or consulting for governmental institutions will maintain some kind of presence at a hospital or ward if only to maintain access to pharmaceuticals and facilities. Straitjackets, psychic inhibitors, and sterile ice picks do not come cheaply, after all. Some Alienists take to the streets. These men devote their lives to hunting human monsters and spend their careers in pursuit of the metropolis' most dangerous criminals and madmen. These Alienists maintain close connections with the Metropolitan Police as well as a number of private investigators. The most pragmatic know that some predators are too dangerous to hold in captivity and seek to eliminate rather than capture them.

Some members of this profession seek out dangerous situations to observe how the mind deals with extreme stressors. More than one Undertaker has found himself the subject of covert observation by a fascinated Alienist. Some Alienists are more overt, attaching themselves to Undertakers who are willing to tolerate their presence in exchange for cash or assistance with some subtle or complicated job. Others, unwilling to wait for opportunity to present itself, will engineer



dangers to suit their purpose, creating psychological laboratories in which they can observe the human mind in distress. Some go so far as to volunteer for service in the Deathwatch. There, they serve ostensibly as psychiatrists in aid to the traumatized minds of their fellow soldiers. In reality, many of them are conducting experiments of questionable ethical provenance. Alienists of these predilections are the most likely to be interested in the psychological disturbances underlying the emergence of psychical talents.

These Alienists must be prepared to deal with the violent manifestations of a psychic's will. Some of these investigators have developed such indomitable control of their own minds that they can subjugate the inimical and wild powers of the psychically gifted with only a penetrating gaze. This degree of determination is unusual, and most must make do with nothing more than a fine understanding of psychology and more than a little luck.

There are even some Alienists who feel a genuine duty to the Hippocratic Oath and seek to help alleviate the psychological suffering of others even if they have to administer their aid free of remuneration. However, even these philanthropists can rarely resist the urge to experiment with pet theories and therapies.

## Features

**Medical Authority** – By virtue of his profession, the Alienist possesses the legal authority to have any common person committed for psychiatric evaluation at any asylum, sanatorium, or hospital with which he is associated. The Alienist must file an official statement at the institution that authorizes the committal of the individual in question. Once the required papers are in order, the Alienist can then expect aid from several of the institution's burly orderlies to help capture and confine the subject with shackles or a straitjacket. If the subject is believed to be a danger to the public health or an even moderately powerful psychic, the police will likely provide additional manpower.

The minimum stay at an institution is three days, at the end of which time the Alienist or the person overseeing the case will determine if further observation is required and, if so, what the duration of said observation will be. Subjects of means may be able to bribe their way to freedom or call upon high-ranking associates to secure their release, but the poor are at the mercy of the institution. Although the Alienist's powers in this arena are broad, he must act with care. If he uses his authority trivially or malevolently, trouble with the courts could be the least of his concerns, as former patients sometimes seek a more psychologically satisfying justice.

**Psychologist** – Each Alienist approaches the study and observation of minds from a unique perspective. Some choose to focus on the mental aberrancies of the criminal class while others explore the mysteries of psychological phenomena. For each level of the Psychology Skill that the Alienist possesses, he can take one of the following Stunts.

- **Applied Psychology:** The Alienist has penetrating insight into the workings of the human mind. The character can reroll failed Hypnosis and Psychology Skill rolls. Each failed roll may be rerolled once as a result of Applied Psychology.
- **Calming Influence:** The character's mind is like a rock in the sea of chaotic souls around him. Like steel bearings in an iron groove, his thoughts are ordered and logical. If the character does suffer from a madness of his own, it follows an immutable internal consistency. This mental control is so strong that it exudes, calming the most

disorganized minds around him. When another character within earshot of the Alienist makes a Will – Fear roll or a control check, the character can add the Alienist's Psychology Skill to his roll. The Alienist does not gain this bonus.

- **Credentials:** The character is a well-respected man of science. He can expect to be permitted entrance to any hospital, school, library, or research facility he deigns to visit—day or night. Few men in his field would refuse to meet him in person, and his correspondence will never go unanswered. He can count on receiving advice or opinions from his peers if requested. Should the character maintain his good name, his reputation will draw wealthy patients to him. Of course if the character involves himself in scandal, his credentials will be worthless. When dealing with his peers, the Alienist can add his Psychology Skill to Charm – Credibility rolls.
- **Criminologist:** The Alienist understands the criminal mind. By studying the particulars of a crime, he is able to develop a profile of the individual or individuals responsible indicating the probable gender, age, social class, habits, and mental afflictions of the criminal. When the Alienist uses this ability, he makes a Forensic Science roll (DR determined by the Narrator, based on the amount of information present at the crime scene and the type of information desired). If the Alienist fails, the Narrator may elect either to inform him that he can discern little information from the evidence at hand or to fabricate a flawed profile for the criminal. The Narrator should slip a few pieces of accurate information into flawed profiles and let the player choose to do with the information what he will. If the Alienist succeeds, he is able to accurately profile the criminal.
- **Death Councillor:** The Alienist is an expert grief councillor. He is looked to by the bereaved for his calm disposition and assuring words. The Alienist gains +1 on Charm – Credibility rolls when dealing with other characters in their time of grief.
- **Disciplined Mind:** The Alienist has achieved an unparalleled level of self control. The Alienist automatically succeeds at Will – Fear rolls and can reroll failed contested Will rolls when a psychic targets him with his powers, a spirit attempts to possess him, or a vampire tries to affect him with Mental Control or Transfix.
- **Fortified Mind:** The Alienist's mental fortitude provides a bulwark protecting his sanity. The character treats chronic Mental Disorders as minor Mental Disorders. If the character begins with this Stunt, he cannot start the game with a chronic Mental Disorder.
- **Insight:** The Alienist is a natural judge of character. He can generally tell when people are being honest with him and when they are being deceitful. When the Alienist suspects someone of lying to him, he can make a Wit roll (DR 11 + the target's Charm). If the Alienist succeeds, he knows whether the other character was lying or telling the truth. If the Alienist fails, he cannot discern the truth. Additionally, when another character initiates a contested Charm roll against the Alienist, the Alienist can reroll failed results. Each failed roll can be rerolled only once as a result of Insight.
- **Manhunter:** Having pursued his share of fugitives overland, the Alienist has developed an aptitude for tracking. When following a human or humanoid creature, the character can reroll failed Tracking rolls. Each failed roll can be rerolled only once as a result of Manhunter.
- **Private Menagerie:** The Alienist has a small collection of the mentally aberrant in his possession. These unfortunate souls were likely captured in the slums or institutionalized by their own relatives, and the Alienist keeps them in one degree or another of imprisonment. The exact composition of this deranged collection is left to the Narrator and player to decide. It may contain a sole deranged psychic with a single Devotion at level 1. If the character is able to access these subjects while conducting research, he gains a bonus of +2 on Intellect – Research rolls related to Psychology or Medicine. This bonus is cumulative with the Private Laboratory or Private Library Qualities (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 138 – 139). These virtual prisoners are probably not well-disposed to the Alienist, and God help him if he should lose control of the collection.

- **Private Practice:** The Alienist runs a small private practice probably performing psychotherapy for the wealthy. The character begins with the Business 3 Quality (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 135). His Wealth increases by one, and he has access to a small pool of patients to observe or experiment on.
- **Psychiatrist:** In addition to a background in psychology, the character has also completed a medical degree. His hospital affiliation allows him free access to all legal (and some illegal) psychoactive chemicals and psi-inhibitors. He may prescribe these to his patients or order them for his own experimental use. The character can access up to £30 worth of drugs and alchemical solutions free of charge each month. The drugs and solutions the character can acquire from this Stunt are left to the Narrator's discretion but should be limited to substances directly related to his work. The character also has access to a small pharmaceutical lab.
- **Psychical Dampener:** The Alienist has been trained to channel his will to create a field of psychical disruption. While the Alienist is intentionally generating this field, he suffers –2 on Wit, Intellect, and Skill rolls but is completely immune to Empathy and Telepathy psychical powers. If the Alienist is maintaining this field when he is targeted by a psychical ability requiring a contested Will roll, he automatically wins the roll. Additionally, when a character uses a psychical power within 10 feet x the Alienist's Will, the psychic gains an Instability Point (see page 66).
- **Psychosurgeon:** Versed in all aspects of psychosurgery and psychic induction, the character is regarded as a luminary in the field. He has likely published extensively on the subject and has performed hundreds of operations. He may even have pioneered new techniques or theories. The character may reroll a failed Medicine, Psychology, or Torture roll in the context of Psychosurgery or Psychic Induction (see pages 112 – 121). Each failed roll may be rerolled only once due to Psychosurgeon.
- **Stone Faced:** The Alienist is an expert in the fine arts of interrogation and intimidation. Just one look is enough to break all but the most hardened criminals. The Alienist is able to reroll failed Interrogation and Charm – Intimidation rolls. Each failed roll can be rerolled only once as a result of Stone Faced. Additionally, when the Alienist initiates an Interrogation or Charm – Intimidation roll, the target character cannot add his Concentration Skill to his contested Will roll.
- **Ward Manager:** The character is a ranking Alienist at a large mental institution. The character has the authority to implement programs, hire and fire subordinates, make final assessments on any patients, and accept or decline patients for psychiatric evaluation. The character has access to a huge pool of ready candidates for observation and experiment. However, he is also responsible for the good name of the institution. The character begins with the Credentials Social Quality (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 136) and his Wealth is increased by one.

## Starting Qualities

None.

## Starting Skills

Alchemy 2, Galvanics 2, Medicine 2, Parapsychology 2, Psychology 2.

**Choose five of the following Skills:** Concentration 2, Cryptography 2, Etiquette 2, Forensic Science 2, Hypnosis 2, Interrogation 2, Pistol 2, Shadow 2, Streetwise 2, Unarmed Combat 2.

## Assets

The Alienist begins with a moderately well-appointed flat in the West End or another suitably posh quarter. His wardrobe is suitable for the highest echelons of academia. He also begins with a high-quality respirator, a maid or butler to see to his home, any specific items he may need for his special studies (lobotomy tools, psychiatric



medications, or other supplies), and a very comfortable couch.

An Alienist begins with Wealth 6, including £30 that may be spent on weapons, armour, and equipment. Up to £10 may be kept as savings.

## Exorcist

Exorcists are devoutly religious individuals who have devoted their lives to delivering humanity from the predations of the invisible world. Relying on the power of faith and their sheer force of will, exorcists cast out the spirits of the dead, forcing them to relinquish their hold on the physical world. The exorcist must be tireless, vigilant, and strong to execute his duties. Daily, he comes face to face with the worst horrors of the Neo-Victorian World and must remain ever alert lest he be overcome with human weakness and internalize the darkness about him.

Though most parapsychologists agree that exorcism is a phenomenon of will rather than a manifestation of the divine, modern science has failed to adequately explain the methods that exorcists use to combat spirits. The scientific community believes that prayer, meditation, and belief serve to reinforce the exorcist's conviction, forging his will into an instrument of such raw psychical fury that it can disquiet even the dead. Though he may read passages from the Bible or call upon the name of God, ultimately science asserts that the exorcist's ability to compel spirits is derived from his own force of personality. Faithful believers, on the other hand, maintain the unwavering belief that exorcism is an invocation of the divine, proof of God's active hand delivering His servants from evil spirits.

Most Neo-Victorian exorcists are licensed by the Church of England. These exorcists are vicars and curates who answer directly to an archdeacon. These men and women may be members of any social class, though the exorcists of the lower classes are invariably left to serve in the teeming slums of the metropolis. Upper-class exorcists are highly respected and may become quite influential within Neo-Victorian society. In the late twenty-first century, Bishop Hamilton paved the way for exorcists to gain political authority. His particular care in providing services exclusively to rich and influential clientele enabled him to not only secure his seat in the House of Lords but also to wield significant power once there. His success has encouraged others to follow his path to power. Members of the upper circles of society see many Anglican exorcists as important men to know. As such, power-hungry clergymen have been drawn to an exorcist calling to gain both social and political position.

Exorcists also come from the countless minority denominations, splinter sects, and cults active within the confines of the metropolis. When the Church of England changed its official position on the nature of "hauntings" and "possession," many traditional adherents to the faith were unhappy and split off to form their own sects, each claiming to represent the true church. These

zealots walk the streets preaching damnation of the faithless and the false believers with equal fervour. The exorcists belonging to these splinter sects lack the official recognition appreciated by the representatives of the Church of England. Yet while they do not receive any public or political sanction for their actions, many retain small but fiercely loyal congregations.

Among the minority religions of the metropolis, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Taoist, and countless other denominations of exorcists serve their people. Ranking Anglican exorcists quietly meet with their peers of other faiths to discuss mutual threats to the spiritual wellbeing of the metropolis. Anglican exorcists respect each faith for its own unique insights, rites, and lore, especially when those traditions can be directly applied to combating spectral threats to the city. However, Roman Catholic priests are seldom trusted outside their Church and are generally considered to be agents of the papacy.

Beyond the fringes of organized religion are lone exorcists who acknowledge no higher mortal authority than their own consciences. Many of these apostates are puritanical zealots who found fault in their churches of origin. Others are castaways of great faith who seek atonement for past sins. They engage their spiritual enemies wherever they are found, coming to the aid of any man, woman, or child in need of their ministrations. Among the haunted slums of the metropolis, they are regarded as eccentric heroes and holy men.

Despite the diversity of their backgrounds, exorcists tend to be grim-faced and dour individuals who are heavily burdened by the weight of their responsibilities. They generally keep in excellent physical health, yet many appear to be aged well beyond their years. It is common for exorcists to go white or grey haired seemingly overnight. Many develop dull stares that reflect a weariness of the world while others manage to emerge from the rigours of this profession utterly unscathed.

Exorcists rely on a great deal of knowledge to carry out their duties. Most have some background in psychology or parapsychology, which gives them valuable insight into the forces they seek to combat. Exorcists who belong to the larger denominations often undergo extensive training. The exorcists of the Church of England, for example, must complete theological college before being licensed. They have access to university libraries, including special collections and rare books, both of which contain vast stores of knowledge. Exorcists who belong to smaller sects must see to their own metaphysical educations. By studying the occult and supernatural, an exorcist gains insight into the world of the spirits. In practical terms, this means that he may be able to learn the origins of a spirit which, in turn, may reveal the pathos that fuels it and give the exorcist some idea of what the spirit is capable of.

Though exorcists traditionally deal with spectral agencies, many broaden their mandate to combating evil in any form. Such exorcists see little difference in confronting murderers, vampires, possessing horrors, psychokinetic poltergeists, or any who prey on the weak. It is not uncommon for these men and women to take their personal missions to fanatical extremes and to destroy anything or anyone deemed to be a threat to the moral, spiritual, psychical, or physical well-being of the metropolis. These exorcists risk becoming dangerously paranoid, seeing incorporeal and invisible threats waiting behind every corner and encased behind the most seemingly innocent and innocuous flesh. Overzealous

exorcists can easily find themselves on the wrong side of the law, wanted for actions that are, while potentially justifiable, utterly unacceptable by Neo-Victorian standards. The crimes of such exorcists are often denounced by their churches yet supported by their private congregations.

## Playing an Exorcist

The Exorcist is a religious character who deals with the believers of his faith. Not only do these characters come face to face with the spectral horrors of the metropolis, but they also interact directly with the institutions of faith. Before playing an Exorcist character, a player should consider his character's religion. Certainly a character's faith will affect his beliefs, methods, social standing, and general outlook on the world.

An Exorcist may be a stoic realist resigned to his fate, a bookish researcher compelled to risk his life to help others, a fire-and-brimstone preacher sent to rout the forces of darkness, a mad prophet butting heads with the institutions of the Church, or a power-hungry social climber seeking to make a name for himself through service to his community. Of course, this Calling may also be used to create a fanatical zealot who believes the ends always justify the means or a hypocritical monster that can only see the evil in others while remaining blind to his own inner corruption. There are also those that while touched by corruption yet possess genuine faith. Such Exorcists are not motivated by the promise of wealth, power, or fame. Instead, they are altruistic defenders of humanity, servants of God left to fight amidst hell on earth.

If a player wishes to play a secular character that deals directly with the spirit world, he should consider playing a Medium or Parapsychologist. Exorcists are primarily the products of their faith.

## Features

**Compel** – The Exorcist can force spirits to tell the truth. The Exorcist can use this ability on any spirit in his presence of which he is aware. When a character uses this power, he makes a contested Will roll against the spirit. If the spirit wins, it may or may not tell the truth as it desires. Furthermore, the Exorcist cannot attempt to use this ability again on that spirit for twenty-four hours. If the Exorcist wins, the spirit is compelled to speak the truth as long as it remains in the Exorcist's presence. Note that the player controlling the Exorcist should not be aware of whether or not he succeeded in his roll.

**Crisis of Faith** – Though it is debatable whether or not an Exorcist's powers are an extension of his own will or a manifestation of the divine working through man, faith is extremely important to the Exorcist. Though all believers sometimes struggle with their faith, such struggles can be disastrous for an Exorcist. During play, these internal struggles are represented by the character's Corruption and Will. As long as the character's highest Corruption rating is greater than his current Will, he loses the Compel, Deliverance, and Lay to Rest Features. Players playing Exorcist characters may wish to familiarize themselves with the rules for redemption (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 132 – 133).

**Deliverance** – The Exorcist is able to drive a spirit from a possessed body or physical space. An Exorcist can use this ability on any spirit in his presence of which he is aware. When he uses this power, the Exorcist focuses his will on the spirit for at least five

minutes. This exercise of will generally takes the form of prayer or silent meditation. After this time has passed, the Exorcist makes a contested Will roll against the spirit. If the spirit wins, nothing happens. If the Exorcist wins, the spirit is expelled and loses all powers of Manifestation, including secondary manifestations, for d5 hours.

Once an Exorcist expels a spirit from a person or place using Deliverance, he may spend thirty minutes blessing the location or individual. Following a blessing, the spirit cannot manifest within the area or attempt to possess the individual again for an additional d5 days.

**Familiarity: Spirit** – The character never makes a Will – Fear roll due to being in the presence of a spirit.

**Lay to Rest** – Calling upon the power of his faith and the strength of his will, the Exorcist is able to lay a spirit to rest by severing its ties to the physical world. The Exorcist can use this ability on any spirit in his presence of which he is aware. When he uses this power, the Exorcist focuses his will on the spirit for at least ten minutes. During this time, the spirit may become agitated and unleash its full wrath against the Exorcist. After this time has passed, the Exorcist makes a contested Will roll against the spirit. If the spirit wins, nothing happens. If the Exorcist wins, the spirit's Will is reduced by 1. If a spirit's Will is reduced to 0 as a result of this ability, it is laid to rest (see page 138).

**Power of Faith** – The Exorcist can call upon his faith, willpower, and endless reserves of strength in times of need. For each level of the Theology Skill the Exorcist possesses, he can take one of the following Stunts.

- **Congregation:** The Exorcist has a small but fanatical following. These loyal supporters will go to great lengths to aid the character in his work. They will shelter him in times of need, donate what they can to his ministry, carry out tasks at his request, gather information, and look out for his interests. Provided he steers clear of the greatest scandals, in the eyes of his followers, the Exorcist can do no wrong. Exorcists belonging to the Church of England cannot take this Stunt.
- **Exemplar:** The Exorcist's very presence inspires those around him. Characters that share the Exorcist's faith gain +1 on Will and Vitality rolls while in his presence. This bonus does not affect damage rolls.
- **Fire and Brimstone:** The Exorcist is a powerful orator. His sermons can sway crowds, shape ideas, and reinforce the tenets of his faith. When the character makes a Charm roll to influence those around him after giving a sermon, he can add his Theology rating to the Charm roll. Additionally, anyone who hears the character's words and shares his faith gains +1 on rolls to resist the effects of their Afflictions for one day.
- **Force of Will:** The Exorcist has boundless reserves of strength. When the character is required to make a Vitality roll, he can use his Will in place of his Vitality. If his character's Vitality is equal to or higher than his Will, add 1 to the die roll instead of using his Will. This Stunt does not affect damage rolls.
- **Inquisitor:** Having mastered the fine arts of intimidation and interrogation, the Exorcist is an expert at putting subjects to the question. The Exorcist can reroll failed Interrogation, Charm – Intimidation, and Compel rolls. Each failed roll may be rerolled only once as a result of Inquisitor.
- **Inspiration:** The Exorcist is completely fearless. In addition to maintaining his own composure at all times, he has a calming effect on those around him. The Exorcist and anyone in his

presence automatically pass Will – Fear rolls.

- **Judgment:** The Exorcist has the ability to smell sin and human weakness and can determine the Corruption of any character in his field of vision. When the Exorcist uses this ability, he makes a contested Will roll against another character in his presence. If the other character wins, nothing happens. If the Exorcist wins, he immediately learns the other character's Corruption ratings and Afflictions. The Exorcist automatically fails if he attempts to use this ability on a character whose highest Corruption rating is lower than the Exorcist's highest Corruption rating.
- **Mental Bastion:** The character has developed a formidable resistance to all manner of mental control. The Exorcist automatically wins contested Will rolls when a spirit attempts to possess him, a psychic uses an Empathy or Telepathy power on him, or a vampire attempts to affect him with Mental Control or Transfix.
- **Noctuary Agent:** The character is an established member of the Noctuary, the premiere Neo-Victorian secret society for vampire hunters (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 240 – 241). A member in good standing, the character has taken part in a number of missions and is highly regarded. In addition to beginning with the Noctuary Membership Quality, the character gains +1 on Charm – Credibility rolls when dealing with other members of the organization. This Stunt must be taken at the time the character is created.
- **Purity:** The Exorcist is blessed with physical purity. He gains the Incorruptible and Long Lived Qualities (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 143 and 145 respectively). This Stunt must be taken during character creation.
- **Revered:** The character is among the most widely respected and well-known Exorcists operating within the metropolis today. Furthermore, he is considered an exemplar of his faith, a role model for the pious to follow. He is regularly consulted on matters of importance to the church. Church elders will certainly come to the character's defence in times of need. If the character is a member of the Church of England, his authority extends beyond ecclesiastical matters, and he may be consulted on matters of public policy. When dealing with members of his faith or members of high society, the character can reroll failed Charm – Credibility rolls. Each failed roll may be rerolled only once as a result of Revered.
- **Sanctity:** When the Exorcist intentionally encloses a space to create a psychical barrier (see page 139), add the character's Concentration to his Will when determining the DR of a spirit's attempt to overcome the barrier. Additionally, the barrier lasts a number of days, rather than hours, equal to the Exorcist's Will.
- **Shield of Faith:** The Exorcist's faith literally protects him against the supernatural. When the Exorcist is attacked by a spirit or hit by a psychokinetic power that inflicts damage, he gains a number of points of armour equal to his Will to all locations of his body. When attacked by a spirit, these armour points apply to all attacks made by a spirit, whether it is attacking with a possessed body, creating pyrokinetic bursts of flame, or telekinetically dropping heavy machinery on the Exorcist.
- **Stirring Speech:** The character speaks so naturally and passionately that anyone who hears him is moved by the conviction of his words. If the character gets the chance to personally present his case, he can reroll failed Charm – Credibility rolls. Each failed roll can be rerolled only once due to Stirring Speech.
- **Sword of Righteousness:** The Exorcist is able to imbue his melee and unarmed combat attacks with the strength of his faith. When making a melee or unarmed combat damage roll against an undead creature, the character can use his Will in place of his Vitality. If the character's Vitality is equal to or higher than his Will, add 1 to the die roll instead of using his Will.
- **Theologian:** The Exorcist is among the greatest religious scholars

of his time. He is not only an expert on his own faith, but has extensively studied most of the world's religions. The character's Theology rating may exceed his Intellect by 2. This Stunt may allow the character to have a Theology Skill greater than 5. Additionally, the character can reroll failed Theology rolls. Each failed roll may be rerolled only once as a result of Theologian.

**Familiarity: Spirit** – The character never makes a Will – Fear roll due to being in the presence of a spirit.

## Starting Qualities

Exorcists begin with the Faith and Resolve Qualities.

## Starting Skills

Concentration 2, Theology 2.

Choose five of the following Skills: Etiquette 2, History 2, Melee Weapon 2, Parapsychology 2, Performance 2, Pistol 2, Psychology 2, Rifle 2, Thanatology 2, Torture 2, Unarmed Combat 2

## Assets

The Exorcist begins with the symbols and trappings of his faith, a selection of theological texts, and a sober wardrobe. This wardrobe may include a clerical collar. The character also possesses a quality respirator. Unless the Exorcist specifically seeks out private accommodations, he will have modest quarters at a rectory, manse, or boarding house. Characters belonging to the higher social classes will have far better accommodations than those from the lower classes. While an upper-class character may have a number of private chambers, a lower-class character is likely to live in a single cramped room.

Exorcists begin with Wealth 4. The Exorcist starts with £20 that may be spent on weapons, armour, and equipment. Up to £5 may be kept in savings.

## Medium

Throughout history, there have been individuals gifted with the ability to peer into the spirit world and speak directly with its inhabitants. To those lacking such talents, spirits are imperceptible and invisible unless they are actively manifesting. For the medium, however, gazing upon the spiritual landscape of the metropolis is as natural as opening her eyes and drawing breath. Indeed, it is often difficult for mediums to separate their observations of the corporeal world from the spectral.

Most mediums discover this talent, known as the Second Sight, during childhood. Others are awakened to the mediumistic gift following a personal tragedy, such as the death of a loved one. When Second Sight first develops, the medium will be limited to the ability to sense and communicate with the dead. However, over time she will learn to manipulate the threshold separating the physical and spirit worlds to make it easier or more difficult for spirits to manifest and exact their will upon the living. As her command over her talents grows, a medium will learn to call up and dismiss the restless dead at will as well as to force them to do her bidding. Even more significantly, the medium will be able to open herself up as a vessel for spectral inhabitation, allowing a spirit to speak directly through her.



Since the Reclamation, mediums have had a profound effect on Neo-Victorian society, and a whole industry of post-mortem communication has risen up around them. Neo-Victorians most commonly seek the services of a medium for one of three reasons: to reconnect with a departed loved one, to have a transcendental experience, or to learn the secrets of the dead. For many Neo-Victorians, speaking to those on the other side offers a candid look into their own deaths, effectively preparing them to face the afterlife. Many mediums develop great followings amongst the adherents of spiritualism, and some become quite influential through their networks of contacts and friends.

Mediums use their gifts to make a living in a variety of fashions. Most mediums are self-employed, meeting with their clients by appointment or performing their craft before a group of sitters at a *séance*. Some work among the general populace and offer their services to bereaved friends and family seeking to contact departed loved ones. There are also those mediums who make their living as pathologists aiding in criminal investigations. Though the testimony of spirits is not admissible in court, the expert testimony of mediums often is. There are also those who make their livelihoods in the employ of the great firms of the City. These mediums contact the spirits of departed advisors whose services are retained by the company years after death. Such work is considered to be a tedious drudgery but is respectable and pays well. The most successful mediums are those who either appreciate the patronage of an aristocratic family or make names for themselves as lecturers and stage performers by conjuring spirits before paying audiences in auditoriums and theatres throughout the metropolis. Those who make their livings as entertainers must present a blend of true talent and flashy stagecraft. The competition amongst mediums is very steep, and many employ gimmicks to stand out amongst their rivals. These mediums often take on the trappings of eastern holy men, occult magicians, divine fools, or religious zealots. Regardless of the specifics of their employment, mediums tend to be highly charismatic individuals with an unquestionable depth of personality.

## Playing a Medium

Mediums are ideal characters for players wishing to interact directly with the spirit world. While other characters are generally only able to perceive spirits that are actively manifesting, Mediums can sense and communicate with spirits at any time and on their own terms. Mediums can easily gather spectral clues that would ordinarily go unobserved by characters lacking their otherworldly talents. Such characters can also command spirits and call upon spectral allies in times of need.

Used to others hanging on their every word, Mediums tend toward a flair for the dramatic even if they do not make their livings as entertainers.

Many Mediums develop an unhealthy obsession with death. Such Mediums may lose all interest in the living world, secluding themselves in stygian chambers perpetually darkened by heavy drapes. There they commune with the dead, day and night. Even those who can contain these moribund tendencies may take on a sickly pallor from lack of natural light.

## Features

**Familiarity: Spirit** – The character never makes a Will – Fear roll due to being in the presence of a spirit.

**Second Sight** The Medium begins the game with Second Sight at level 1 (see pages 151 – 157).

A character can spend Custom Points to increase her starting level of Second Sight. Increasing a character's Second Sight level by 1 costs a number of Custom Points equal to 3 x the new level. For example, Simon wants to increase his Medium's Second Sight level to 3 at the time of character creation. He must spend 6 Custom Points to increase his character's Second Sight from its starting level of 1 to 2. Increasing his character's level from 2 to 3 costs an additional 9 Custom Points for a total of 15 Custom Points.

**Spiritualism** – The Medium's insight into death and dying can be a great boon to her work. For each level of the Thanatology Skill the Medium possesses, she can take one of the following Stunts.

- **Death Sense:** The Medium can sense the impending death of those around her. She knows when an individual in her presence is not likely to live out the night, and she always knows when an individual in her presence is suffering from an animate bite. The Narrator should inform the player controlling the character when her Death Sense is triggered.
- **Fame:** The character is a famous mediumistic entertainer who counts many friends among the rich and powerful. She is recognized everywhere she goes and can rely on preferential treatment. Often, fans of her work will beg her for an autograph when she appears in public undisguised. The Medium can reroll failed Charm rolls when dealing with those who appreciate her work but do not know her personally. Additionally, during a mediumistic performance, the character can reroll failed Acting and Performance rolls. Each failed roll may be rerolled only once as a result of Fame.
- **Influential Circle:** The Medium meets weekly with a circle of highly influential spiritualists. The sitters of her circle regard the Medium as their leader, and they will go to great lengths to aid her in her endeavours. The members of this circle may be the spouses of politicians, famous artists or entertainers, aristocrats, society mavens, industrialists, academics, or other prominent members of society. Normally, each circle has eight members including the Medium. Before the start of the game, the player and the Narrator should determine who the sitters of the character's circle are. Through this circle, the character can request favours, manipulate social events, or ruin reputations. Due to the prominence of the character's circle, the Medium must take care to avoid scandal. If there is any hint of wrongdoing on her part, her circle will abandon her without a single thought.
- **Latent Psychic:** The Medium is a latent empath or telepath. Over time, her psychical powers will only grow. The Medium can spend 5 Custom Points to begin with either one level of Empathy or one level of Telepathy (see pages 68 – 75 and 87 – 95, respectively). The Medium can spend experience points to further develop Empathy and Telepathy. However, she can neither spend experience points to develop other Devotions nor gain the Psychic Calling's Mental Discipline Stunts.
- **Living Conduit:** The character is a gifted Medium with unparalleled control over her supernormal talents. When using a Second Sight power, the Medium can reroll failed Will rolls. Each failed roll may be rerolled only once as a result of Living Conduit.
- **Mortuary Scientist:** The Medium is a peerless expert on the topic of death lore. Her writings on this topic are widely read and circulated throughout Neo-Victorian society. The character's Thanatology rating may exceed her Intellect by 2. Additionally, the character can reroll failed Thanatology rolls. Each failed roll may be rerolled only once as a result of Mortuary Scientist.
- **Powerful Medium:** The Medium's insights into the nature of death and the spirit world have had a profound effect on her

talents. The character can add her **Thanatology Skill** to her **Will** when determining the **Range** of her mediumistic powers.

- **Primacy of Will:** The Medium possesses an incredible inner strength and sense of self. When affected by a spirit's powers of **Manifestation**, the character can reroll failed contested **Will** rolls. Each failed roll may be rerolled only once as a result of **Primacy of Will**.
- **Spirit Guide:** The Medium has a longstanding association with a friendly ghost (see pages 142 – 149) that has adopted her as its **Haunt**. The spirit is loyal to the Medium and will not harm her in any way, though it may be playful or deceptive. The spirit may take action to protect or defend the Medium even against the Medium's wishes. The ghost has **Will 3**. Other details pertaining to the ghost, including its powers of **Manifestation**, should be determined before the start of the game and require the **Narrator's** approval.
- **Spirit Photographer:** The character has an uncanny ability to photograph spirits without the aid of psychoactive film and whether or not the spirits are actively manifesting. The **Narrator** determines exactly what appears in the photo, but generally, the higher the spirit's **Will**, the more distinct the image of it will be. Spirit photographs may reveal information about the spirit, such as its gender in life, what it looked like, or its psychological state at the time of death.

## Starting Qualities

None.

## Starting Skills

**Thanatology 2**.

Choose five of the following **Skills**: **Acting 2**, **Concentration 2**, **Etiquette 2**, **Parapsychology 2**, **Performance 2**, **Photography 2**, **Psychology 2**, **Streetwise 2**, **Theology 2**.

## Assets

A Medium will have a comfortable home that suits her means and is certain to include a fully decorated parlour or office for receiving clients and holding *séances*. The Medium also begins with an extensive wardrobe appropriate to her social standing and mediumistic or theatrical persona. For example, a spiritualist catering to the bereaved of the middle and upper classes will dress demurely while a Medium of the lower class may cultivate the appearance of a gypsy mystic.

Mediums begin with **Wealth 5**. The Medium starts with £20 that may be spent on weapons, armour, parts, and equipment. Up to £5 may be kept in savings.

## Parapsychologist

Relying on wits, intuition, and an array of aethertech devices, the parapsychologist is an intrepid student of the invisible world. Differing from occultists and spiritualists, the methods of the parapsychologist are scientific and rigorous. Despite being part of the same scientific discipline, the methods of parapsychologists vary greatly. Many are academics who spend the majority of their time writing research papers and teaching classes. No small number dedicate their lives to psychical research, either studying the capabilities of the awakened mind or training and grading psychics for licensing. Others are steely-eyed adventurers who walk the wastelands seeking out undocumented supernatural horrors. Some make their livings conducting spectral-forensic investigations to

solve crimes. The vast majority are employed hunting the ghosts of the metropolis.

A multidisciplinary field, parapsychology is the science of both spectral and psychical phenomena. Though its foundations were laid in the later Victorian era, Parapsychology was not formally established as a scientific discipline until after the Reclamation. Now, most Neo-Victorian universities offer degrees in the field. However, many amateur parapsychologists pursue this calling without a formal education. Most learn the fundamentals of the science by apprenticing themselves to practicing ghost hunters and psychical researchers.

Though the existence of supernormal activity is acknowledged throughout academic circles, medicine, alchemy, and galvanics remain the pillars of Neo-Victorian science while parapsychology is relegated to a lower rank in the hierarchy. Many members of the scientific community, citing inconclusive research data and unconventional methodology, view parapsychologists as loose cannons and crackpots. The association with the often criminally negligent spectral containment industry has not helped this perception.

Parapsychologists develop specialized senses and resistances due to their constant exposure to supernormal phenomena. Though most cannot actually perceive spectral phenomena without the aid of complex aethertech devices, all parapsychologists are extraordinarily aware of changes in their surrounding environs and can detect the minute changes in temperature, humidity, and quality of light and sound that often indicate aetheric activity.

In addition to these senses, parapsychologists have a wealth of specialized devices at their disposal for detecting, communicating with, and containing spirits. Many have access to technology that enables them to contact the dead or mimic the effects of psychical devotions. Some parapsychologists make their livings calibrating and repairing sensitive aetheric equipment for industrial application.

## Playing a Parapsychologist

The Parapsychologist is a fellow who relies on his intellect and gadgets to research and combat the supernatural. Though he will generally lack the physical ability to make quick work of animates and vampires, the Parapsychologist is armed with incredible insights, scientific knowledge, and highly advanced aethertech devices that can make him invaluable when facing psychical or spectral threats.

Playing a Parapsychologist gives a player the chance to investigate the Neo-Victorian spirit world through the senses of an ordinary person, and doing so requires care and attention to detail. Remember, your character lives by his wits and observations. Seek out the details others miss. Conduct bizarre experiments. Complain constantly of "shorts in the aetheric capacitor." When the fighting starts, move to the rear and remain stoic. Do not worry if a companion should fall; you have access to unique means of saying your goodbyes.

## Features

**Familiarity: Spirit** – The character never makes a **Will – Fear** roll due to being in the presence of a spirit.

**Supernormal Investigator** – Parapsychologists are experts on the supernatural. They spend their lives researching spectral entities, physical talents, and phenomena outside the realm of physical science. For each level of the Parapsychology Skill the character possesses, he can take one of the following Stunts.

- **Aethertech Engineer:** The Parapsychologist has a knack for building and repairing aethertech devices (see Chapter 5). The character can acquire aethertech devices at half the listed price assuming he either assembles his own gear from parts or repairs damaged equipment he scavenges. The character can also reroll failed Galvanics Skill rolls pertaining to the repair, construction, or maintenance of aethertech devices. Each failed roll may be rerolled only once as a result of Aethertech Engineer.
- **Credentials:** The character is a well-respected man of science. He can expect to be permitted entrance to any school, library, or research facility he deigns to visit—day or night. Few men in his field would refuse to meet him in person, and his correspondence will never go unanswered. He can count on receiving advice or opinions from his peers if requested. Should the character maintain his good name, his reputation will draw wealthy clients to him. Of course if the character involves himself in scandal, his credentials will be worthless. When dealing with his peers, the Parapsychologist can add his Parapsychology Skill to Charm – Credibility rolls.
- **Ghost Hunter:** The character is an expert in the craft of spectral elimination. He understands the finer points of oscillating-field calibration and can account for environmental and spectral interference. When attempting to manually control an aether field, the character can reroll failed Parapsychology rolls. Each failed roll may be rerolled only once as a result of Ghost Hunter.
- **Historian:** In the pursuit of his work, the character has become a phenomenal historical researcher. The character is adept at locating even the most obscure and archaic of historical records, permits, plans, and newspaper articles. He possesses an encyclopaedic memory of historic events. The character can reroll a failed Intellect or Skill roll pertaining to history or historic research. A failed roll may be rerolled only once as a result of Historian.
- **Interns:** The Parapsychologist has attracted a small following of would-be ghost hunters who aid him in his research and investigations. These interns may be members of a junior ghost society, employees, or zealous students seeking hands-on experience. Provided they are treated with a modicum of care and professionalism, the character's interns will aid him in virtually any action pertaining to supernatural investigation and elimination. The character begins the game with three to ten assistants. The starting number may fluctuate as old assistants fall in the line of duty or move on to other areas of interest or if the character actively recruits additional members. The character's interns should be detailed before play begins.
- **Keen Eyed:** Few details escape the Parapsychologist's keen eyes. The Parapsychologist is able to reroll failed Wit – Perception rolls. Each failed roll may be rerolled only once as a result of Keen Eyed.
- **Mental Bastion:** The character has developed a formidable resistance to all manner of mental control. The Parapsychologist automatically wins contested Will rolls when a spirit attempts to possess him, a psychic uses an Empathy or Telepathy power on him, or a vampire attempts to affect him with Mental Control or Transfix.
- **Psychical Researcher:** An expert in his chosen field, the character has developed an intuitive understanding of the psychical mind. Accustomed to grading psychical potential (see page 61), the character is likely to be consulted by the authorities in times of need. He automatically knows when he is the subject of a psychical power whether it successfully affects him or not. The character can also reroll failed



Parapsychology and Psychology rolls pertaining to psychical investigations. Each failed roll may be rerolled only once as a result of Psychological Researcher.

- **Spectral Eliminations Agency:** The character begins the game in possession of an established spectral eliminations firm. The character gains the Business (3) Quality (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 135) to represent the firm. Additionally, the firm's headquarters houses an aether vault (see pages 163 – 164).
- **Spectral Investigator:** An expert on all aspects of scientific spectral investigations, the character has an extensive knowledge of spiritualism and the principles of parapsychology. The character can reroll failed Parapsychology rolls pertaining to knowledge about spirits. Each failed roll may be rerolled only once as a result of Spectral Investigator.
- **Spirit Finder:** While the character cannot truly perceive spirits in his presence, he can sense them in a limited way. When a spirit is within a range of 10 feet x the character's Wit, he will immediately sense the presence of the creature. Though the character will not know the type of spirit he is detecting, he will be able to estimate its power level. If the spirit has Will 2 or less, it is "weak." If a spirit has Will between 3 and 5, it is "strong." If a spirit has Will 6 or greater, it is "incredibly powerful."
- **Spirit Photographer:** The character has an uncanny ability to photograph spirits without the aid of psychoactive film and whether or not the spirits are actively manifesting. The Narrator determines exactly what appears in the photo, but generally, the higher the spirit's Will, the more distinct the image of it will be. Spirit photographs may reveal information about the spirit, such as its gender in life, what it looked like, or its psychological state at the time of death.

## Starting Qualities

Choose one of the following Skills: Club Membership, Noctuary Membership, Order of Reason Membership (4 point), Resolve, Secret Occult Society Membership.

## Starting Skills

Parapsychology 2.

Choose five of the following Skills: Concentration 2, Galvanics 2, History 2, Hypnosis 2, Medicine 2, Natural Science 2, Photography 2, Psychology 2, Thanatology 2.

## Assets

The Parapsychologist begins with a modest home or flat in a respectable neighbourhood. Most or all of the character's domicile will be devoted to his pursuits. Books are piled helter-skelter throughout rooms and halls, research papers and photos spread across every available space, and the strange, flickering light of spirit lamps light the junk-filled rooms. Few Parapsychologists spend much time entertaining guests.

Parapsychologists begin with Wealth 5. The character begins with £75 that may be spent on weapons, equipment, and armour. Up to £5 may be kept as savings.

## Psychic

A psychic possesses incredible supernormal mental capabilities. He may be able to levitate through the air, gaze into the future, or ignite fires with his mind. However, these powers come at a grave cost. Psychical powers are directly linked to mental imbalance: the greater the talent, the more disturbed the psychic's mind. Even the most seemingly stable psychics are afflicted with latent mental disorders that will become



more acute over time. At the height of his power, a psychic risks being driven incurably insane by the burden of his gift, and very few psychics live for long after manifesting genuinely fearsome powers. Most destroy themselves, accidentally or otherwise, long before realizing their full potential.

A psychic's powers are defined by paths of psychical development known as Devotions. A telepath reads and manipulates the minds of others. A clairvoyant projects his mind to distant locations. The empath senses and controls the emotions of others. The mind of the precog pierces time and space, receiving visions of the past and future. An electrokinetic is a living electrical generator capable of unleashing blasts of raw galvanic fury. A pyrokinetic creates conflagrations with a thought, and a telekinetic can manifest his will to move objects with his mind. Most psychics possess a single Devotion, but some develop a dizzying array of mental powers.

It is thought that the human mind inherently contains the potential for psychical manifestation though the actual occurrence of these talents is quite rare. Psychic parents are more likely to have psychic offspring, and the gift is quite strong in some family lines. While most psychics first manifest their gifts in adolescence, others unlock their gifts later in life, invariably through the survival of harrowing traumatic experiences. The scarcity of psychical talents has ensured that even the gifts of the weakest psychic are in great demand.

Despite the sensible fear mad psychics can instil in the populace, Neo-Victorian society has adapted admirably to the emergence of gifted individuals in their midst. The firms of the City utilize precognitive consultants to help navigate treacherous market fluctuations. The metropolis itself is protected by a vast psychical warning system that predicts potential calamities. Telekinetics employed in the factories do the work of great machines and hundreds of men. Psychic detectives patrol the streets, reading clues beyond the senses of their most keen-eyed peers.

Professional psychics are carefully screened for mental instability, graded to determine the strength of their gifts, trained, and finally licensed. A psychic's grade is expressed in terms of class. First-class psychics, those who have reached their full potential in at least one Devotion, are extremely rare. Second-class psychics have developed considerable psychical strength, but have not yet reached the apex of their power. Third-class psychics are the least powerful. The training a psychic receives not only aids him in refining his powers, but it also teaches him to control them, which is to the benefit of both his sanity and the safety of those around him. After licensing, a psychic must undergo frequent evaluations to determine his fitness for employment. Generally, more powerful psychics receive more frequent evaluations. Dangerous psychics are remitted to the care of mental health institutions where they can be treated, or at least the threat they pose can be mitigated.

Some psychics, especially those who have not yet developed the discipline to control their powers, find close proximity to the minds of others unbearable. Telepaths and empaths are constantly barraged by stray thoughts and emotions that can be distracting if not downright dangerous. Human touch can fill a sensitive's mind with unwanted thoughts and sensations. Many psychics become withdrawn from society and never leave their homes unless their bodies are entirely cloaked to prevent the slightest human touch. Only while entirely alone can these psychics find peace. Such psychics may seek solace in opiates or psi-inhibitors, drugs that temporarily suppress psychical

talents. Opium has a soothing effect on the psychic's mind, dulling the transmissions from the aether, and addiction is common. However, there are those who claim that opiates actually make their gifts more sensitive and use the drug to heighten their natural awareness.

Other psychics take to their Devotions with an energy bordering on the transcendent. They walk with their heads thrown upwards as if spurning the earth and seeking kindred in the stars. They speak with strange voices that reveal the chorus within their souls. Their senses are honed toward the ethereal, and they experience more in their short lives than whole generations of sleepers. The price of this transcendence is madness, and they pay it willingly.

## Playing a Psychic

Psychic characters require a great deal of care and attention to role play. As a Psychic develops his gifts, he will become increasingly unstable, accumulating mental disabilities that will be progressively more debilitating. A player who is not prepared for the challenge of role playing the complex psychology of his character's descent into madness should not take on the role of a Psychic character. On a related note, the importance of the Concentration Skill to the Psychic cannot be stressed enough. Psychics rely on Will both to keep their Mental Disorders in check and to control their powers during play. Since Concentration is added to the character's Will rolls, the Skill greatly enhances the character's control over his powers.

When creating a Psychic, choose your Devotions carefully. Each Devotion has its strengths and its pitfalls. Empaths and telepaths gain bonuses when physically touching a subject with their bare hands but also may suffer psychical backlashes. You will also want to identify the Skills and Attributes that will help you to get the most from your character. For instance, a psychokinetic may wish to have a high Wit to help aim his psychical attacks, but a telepath may benefit from putting Custom Points into his Psychology Skill.

## Features

**Latent Insanity** – The Psychic begins the game with one Mental Disorder that represents his Latent Insanity (see page 66). The character does not gain Custom Points for this Mental Disorder nor can the character select a Mental Disorder he already has to be his Latent Insanity.

**Mental Discipline** – A Psychic walks a fine line between sanity and the abyss. Often his willpower is the only tether that keeps him from plunging into utter insanity. Over time, this constant struggle for control reinforces the Psychic's natural mental defences, forging his mind into a formidable weapon. For each level of the Concentration Skill the Psychic possesses, he can take one of the following Stunts.

- **Dead Eye:** The Psychic has a natural intuition for psychical combat. When the character misses with a psychokinetic ranged attack (see pages 95 – 96), he can reroll the failed roll. A failed roll may be rerolled only once due to Dead Eye.
- **Force of Will:** Through the power of his will, the character can reroll failed psychic control checks. A failed roll may be rerolled only once due to Force of Will.
- **Fortified Mind:** The Psychic's mental fortitude provides a bulwark protecting his sanity. The character treats chronic Mental Disorders as minor Mental Disorders. If the character begins with this Stunt, he cannot start the game with a chronic Mental Disorder.

- **Gifted Mind:** The Psychic has an exceptionally gifted mind and begins the game with the Savant Quality (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 148 – 149). This Stunt must be taken at character creation.
- **Latent Medium:** The Psychic is a latent medium. Over time, his ability to perceive and speak to the dead will grow. The Psychic may spend 5 Custom Points to begin with one level of Second Sight (see pages 151 – 157). The Psychic can spend experience points to further develop Second Sight. The character cannot develop the Medium Calling's Spiritualism Stunts, and Mental Discipline Stunts do not affect Second Sight. To take this Stunt, a character must have at least one level of Empathy or Telepathy.
- **Mass Perception:** The character's mind is naturally capable of receiving and deciphering extrasensory information from a number of sources and localities simultaneously. The character automatically passes split perception control checks (see page 57).
- **Meditations:** The character is able to enter a trance (see pages 66 – 67) after one minute of meditation, without a Will roll. While in a trance, the character has limited awareness of his physical location. He can hear sounds around him and can even reply to questions. The character can come out of a trance at will without a die roll. If the character suddenly comes out of a trance, he does not gain an Instability Point.
- **Mind Shield:** The Psychic has developed a natural defence against psychokinetic effects. When the Psychic suffers a damage roll as a result of an Electrokinetic, Pyrokinetic, or Telekinetic power, reduce the damage roll by 1. If the Psychic has at least one level of the Devotion he is being damaged by, reduce the damage roll by 2.
- **Nexus:** Through the power of concentration, the Psychic is able to extend the Range of his powers. The character can add his Concentration to his Will when determining the range of his psychical powers.
- **Self Control:** Keeping himself constantly in check, the Psychic has learned to restrain his madness. The character can reroll failed Mental Disorder control checks. A failed roll may be rerolled only once due to Self Control.
- **Silence:** The Psychic is able to tune out the distractions of the outside world and to exert some level of control over his powers. Most Psychics naturally develop this Stunt out of self-preservation. A character with this Stunt never suffers the effects of empathic backlash (see page 70).
- **Sound Mind:** The character's mental state is incredibly stable for a Psychic. When he suffers Temporary Insanity (see page 66), it only lasts for one day. Additionally, the Psychic can remove 2 Instability Points after a night of sleep or after eight hours wakeful peace and quiet, provided the character does not use his psychical powers during that time.
- **Waking Mind:** The Psychic can use psychical powers that ordinarily require him to be in a trance while fully conscious. When using a trance power, a character with this Stunt will seem distant and preoccupied. He may stare blankly for long periods of time or completely ignore those around him. When maintaining such a power while not in a trance, he suffers -3 on Skill, Wit, and Charm rolls and can only take actions to activate his psychical powers though he can speak normally.
- **Wrathful:** While injured or emotionally distraught, the Psychic is able to focus his rage and pain into outbursts of psychical power. While suffering from a wound, when attacking a hated enemy, or when a loved one is threatened, the character gains +2 to Electrokinetic, Pyrokinesis, and Telekinesis damage rolls.

**Psychic Abilities** – The Psychic begins the game with one Devotion at level 1 (see pages 67–112). The character can spend 6 Custom Points to either take a second Devotion at level 1 or to

increase his starting Devotion to level 2. The character cannot start play with a level in a Devotion higher than 2.

## Starting Qualities

None.

## Starting Skills

Concentration 2

Choose any three Academic, Basic, or Criminal Skills at 2.

## Assets

Assuming he is gainfully employed and not a ward of an institution, the Psychic appreciates a comfortable middle-class lifestyle. He may have a modest house on the edge of Central London or keep a small flat in the City. If the Psychic's disposition permits, he may employ a maid to maintain his residence, though most Psychics live alone and keep to themselves.

A Psychic's Wealth depends on his Devotions and legal status. A Psychic with the Unlicensed Psychic Impediment begins with Wealth 2. A licensed Psychic with only Empathy or psychokinetic Devotions begins with Wealth 3. A licensed Psychic with Extrasensory Perception, Prescience, or Telepathy begins with Wealth 5. A player creating a professional psychical consultant may wish to consider improving his character's social and financial situation by selecting the Upper Class or Wealth Qualities (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 140). The Psychic begins with £10 that may be spent on weapons, armour, and equipment. Up to £5 may be kept as savings.

# New Qualities and Impediments

## Social Qualities

### Church of England Clergy, Variable Point Quality (2–12 Points)

The character is an ordained priest of the Church of England. As a member of the clergy, the character will have opportunities to gain great prestige but will also have a number of added responsibilities. While it is possible to come from an aristocratic background and be an ordained member of the clergy, it is not possible to hold a title and be a leader in the Church. It is permissible for all clergy to marry.

Ascendance through the ranks of the Church will lead to greater respect within society. A priest may become the close confidant of the aristocracy, especially if his parish or cathedral is prominently placed. Clergymen are certain to be treated with respect and welcomed by the upstanding members of society wherever they travel, and they will be especially well received by prominent members of the middle class. However, members of the clergy are even more susceptible to scandal than the aristocracy and the higher a character's rank in the clergy, the greater the scrutiny he must endure.

A player character cannot have a rank higher than Bishop.



Only characters with Theology 3 or greater can take this Quality. Undertakers, half-lifers, and character with the Title Quality cannot take this Quality.

- **2 Point Quality:** The character is a parish priest, commonly called a rector or a vicar. He is responsible for a small parish and is supported by either the tithes of his parish or a modest salary. A small staff of volunteers serves him. This post offers little opportunity to gain prestige and fame while requiring a great commitment of time and energy.

An Exorcist who takes this Quality is ordained by the Church and operates under the direction of an archdeacon. He has more authority than a typical parish priest when conducting investigations. The Exorcist may have his own parish to look after or may be a member of a team ministry with little individual responsibility to his parish.

The character begins with his priestly vestments, robes of office, and an extensive selection of theological texts.

- **5 Point Quality:** The character is a canon, a priest charged with assisting a dean in the administration of a cathedral. He is a member of the chapter of canons, the formal body that governs the cathedral. This honour is often awarded to priests in recognition of long and dedicated service to a diocese.

An Exorcist with this Quality serves his bishop directly, perhaps even leading a group of junior exorcists.

The character will have quarters at his cathedral and begins with priestly vestments, robes of office, and an extensive selection of theological texts. The character will also have access to any libraries or other holdings of the cathedral that pertain to his role within the chapter of canons. The character's Wealth is increased by 1.

- **7 Point Quality:** The character is a dean in charge of running a cathedral. While each cathedral is the seat of a bishop, the bishop

is in charge of the whole surrounding area (known as the diocese), and the dean is in charge of the cathedral itself. The character is also the head of the cathedral's chapter of canons and is served by a number of subordinate priests. He will have ample quarters at the cathedral and begins with priestly vestments, robes of office, and an extensive selection of theological texts. He will also have full access to any libraries or other holdings of the cathedral. The character's Wealth is increased by 2.

It is assumed that the character's cathedral is outside London. If the character is based inside the metropolis, increase the cost of this Quality by 2.

- **8 Point Quality:** The character is a suffragan bishop, a bishop charged with assisting the diocesan bishop in his ministry. The character will have ample quarters at the cathedral and begins with priestly vestments, robes of office, and an extensive selection of theological texts. He will also have full access to any libraries or other holdings of the diocese. The character's Wealth is increased by 2.

- **10 Point Quality:** The character is a diocesan bishop. He has jurisdiction over an entire diocese and the responsibility for overseeing a number of parishes therein. Diocesan bishops are allowed to vote in the House of Lords. A Bishop will have good standing within the ranks of society and will often be invited to social gatherings by members of the aristocracy who are attempting to win his favour. He has the authority to order exorcisms and will be served by a team of exorcists, and he will have met the Queen in her capacity as the head of the Church.

The character answers to the Archbishop of York, if his seat is in the North of England, or the Archbishop of Canterbury (the head priest of the Church), if he is in the South. It is not possible for a player character to become either the Archbishop of York or the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The character will have ample quarters at the cathedral and begins with priestly vestments, robes of office, and an extensive selection of theological texts. He will also have full access to any libraries or other holdings of the diocese. The character's Wealth is increased by 3.

It is assumed that the character's cathedral is outside London. If the character is based inside the metropolis, increase the cost of this Quality by 2.

### Priest, 2 Point Quality

The character is an ordained priest or leader of a denomination other than the Church of England. Though the Church of England is the largest and most powerful religious organization active in Britain, there are countless smaller denominations. A priest of one of these smaller denominations will have a small congregation and a modest place of worship.

A player is expected to research the religion to which his character belongs.

The character is assumed to be an upstanding member of the community he serves. If he fails to live up to the standards of his faith, he may find himself censured, excommunicated, or worse.

Priests and religious leaders of other denominations have less prestige and influence than priests of the Church of England. Outside their communities, such individuals will be viewed as having distorted theology and be suspect socially. Politically their religious affiliations are a hindrance rather than a boon, at least openly.

### **Psi Branch Investigator, 5 Point Quality**

The character is an investigator in the employ of Psychic Branch and has a number of privileges by virtue of his position. He is able to question and detain witnesses and suspects, as long as they are commoners. He can arrest criminals and bring them to the local police station for lockup, though he will likely spend the rest of his evening filling out paperwork. The character can call upon police backup in times of need. However, should the character abuse these privileges, he will certainly pay the price. If the character be caught acting outside the bounds of the law, he may be disciplined, demoted, discharged, or prosecuted, depending upon the severity of his crimes and weight of evidence against him. In addition to the character's starting Assets, he is issued a heavy revolver, a whistle, and a pair of handcuffs. The character's starting Wealth is 4.

This Quality can only be taken by characters with at least one level in Extrasensory Perception, Prescience, or Telepathy. The character must also have at least 2 ranks in Forensic Science, Law, and Streetwise. Characters with the Criminal Record or Wanted Impediments cannot take this Quality.

### **Secret Government Agent, 5 Point Quality**

The character is an intelligencer, a secret agent in the employ of a government. Though the character is likely to work for Her Majesty's Government, he may instead be in the employ of a foreign power, such as France, the Prussian Empire, or the Papal States. Regardless of his employer, the character will have a cover identity and will be expected to keep his true occupation a secret.

From time to time, the character will be called upon by the agency he serves to conduct secret missions and activities. What is asked of him will depend on the nature of the organization he works for and the capacity in which he serves. He could be asked to gather specific intelligence, conduct surveillance on an individual of interest, smuggle goods, eliminate enemies of the state, or perform just about any other activity that falls under the broad umbrella of covert intelligence.

The secret agent begins with a handler who is his regular contact within the organization. It is the handler's job to disseminate information to the character. The handler also pays the character, supplies him with specific equipment required for a given mission, and debriefs him at the end of the job. The character's handler may also be able to help him out in times of need, either by negotiating his release from incarceration or aiding in his flight from a hostile nation.

If the character is an agent of the British government, he will likely be a member of the Secret Intelligence Bureau. His energies will be spent conducting counterespionage against agents of foreign powers, thwarting anarchist conspiracies, and rooting out the most powerful criminal enterprises infesting the metropolis. The character may work closely with Special Branch, in which case those he works with will know his true identity.

Characters serving foreign powers will be expected to gather intelligence and report back to their handlers. Rarely, such a character will be called upon to aid another agent in need, commit sabotage, or eliminate an enemy agent. If the truth of the character's identity is discovered, the best he can hope for is a lengthy and thorough telepathic interrogation before being locked in a cell for the rest of his life.

Secret agents may have access to a small network of safe houses throughout the metropolis. These safe houses will be unassuming dwellings, likely either disguised as businesses or modest homes. Each has a stash of food and weapons. One or more other agents may be operating out of a safe house at any time. Safe houses move about constantly and are abandoned once compromised. It will be the duty of the character's handler to apprise him of the locations of currently active safe houses.

A character with this Quality increases his Wealth by 1.

### **Secret Occult Society Membership, 3 Point Quality**

The character is a member of a secret occult organization. The organization may be dedicated to the pursuit of occult knowledge, the worship of pagan gods, sexual exploration through erotic rituals, the financial betterment of its members through the application of the black arts, or any other of a number of unifying goals. The society may have very few members or it may be a major organization with hundreds of initiates. Before the start of the game, the player and Narrator should work together to determine the details of the organization as well as





the character's background and membership status. If the cult is quite large or powerful or if the character occupies a position of authority, the Narrator should double or triple the cost of this Quality.

As a member of a secret society, the character will be able to call upon this society in times of need, especially if the aid he requires pertains to the specialty of the organization or the supernatural in general. Support the society can provide includes, but is not limited to, psychical or spiritual assistance, research, financial aid, legal support, and advice on any number of esoteric subjects. Likewise, the character can be asked to perform services or duties for the society or its members from time to time.

The character will have sworn a number of oaths to the organization to which he belongs, including oaths of loyalty and silence, and he will be called upon to take part in society functions and rituals. Should the character break his oaths, the consequences could be dire, especially if the organization is criminal in nature, association could compromise the status of its members, or the group has potentially damaging secrets to keep. Even the most benevolent organizations will go to extreme lengths to keep its membership and secrets safe.

Only characters with rank 2 or more in Parapsychology can take this Quality.

## Social Impediments

### Escaped Mental Patient, 2 Point Impediment

The character is an escaped mental patient on the run. Having been held against his will for evaluation or treatment, the character broke out of a hospital or asylum and made his way back to the streets of the metropolis. If the character is a psychic, the authorities are certain to be aware of his known capabilities and status as a fugitive. If he is captured, the character will be returned to the institution from which he escaped.

### Monthly Evaluation, 3 Point Impediment

Due to some past indiscretion or peculiarity in the psychic's psychology, he must report for monthly psychological evaluations. Should the character act erratically during an evaluation or fail to show up, he will certainly lose his license and may be remanded to the care of a mental hospital or asylum.

The character suffers -1 on Charm rolls when dealing with peers who are aware of his evaluations.

This Impediment can only be taken by characters with at least one psychical Devotion. This Impediment cannot be taken by characters with the Escaped Mental Patient or Unlicensed Psychic Impediments.

### Quick Temper, 2 Point Impediment

The character becomes highly aggressive at any perceived slight. If the character is insulted or ignored, however unintentionally, he must make a Will roll (DR 14) to avoid reacting with insults, threats, or blows.

### Unlicensed Psychic, 3 Point Impediment

The psychic does not have a license. He may have had his license revoked or he may never have registered in the first place. If the psychic never registered, there will be no record of his powers. In either case, the psychic is not legally able to seek financial gain from his powers.

The character does not begin with Concentration 2 as a starting Skill. Additionally, the psychic suffers -2 on Charm - Credibility rolls when dealing with professional psychics or potential employers who are aware of the character's psychical powers.

This Impediment can only be taken by characters with at least one psychical Devotion.

## Supernormal Nemesis

A character with the Nemesis Impediment (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 140 – 141) may be dogged by a vengeful spirit rather than a living, breathing antagonist. Though a spectral nemesis is unlikely to have the same connections as a flesh and blood enemy, a ghostly enemy has its own ways of tormenting a character. It can invisibly observe the character, potentially studying his life in great detail, and then use its manifestations to wreak havoc in the most sensitive areas. The spirit may even enter alliances with the character's other enemies in hopes of utilizing human agents to exact its revenge.

## Supermundane

### Supermundane Qualities

#### Cipher (Telepath Only), 3 Point Quality

The character is a supernormal cipher. While reading the thoughts of another, the character's mind automatically translates his Subject's thoughts, circumventing any language barrier. Likewise, when the character telepathically sends a message to the mind of another, his mind naturally translates those thoughts into a form his Subject can understand.

This Quality can only be taken by characters with at least one level in the Telepathy Devotion.

#### Dream Sight (Clairvoyant Only), 4 Point Quality

The psychic can use any Extrasensory Perception powers that requires him to enter a trance while sleeping. When the character wakes up, his memories of what he saw and heard while dreaming will be fleeting. The character can make a Will roll (DR 14) to recall his dream. If the character succeeds, he recalls every detail of his dream. If the character fails, he can only recall the dimmest aspects of his dream. Characters with the Dream Recall Quality (see page 55) automatically pass this roll.

The Narrator can use this ability as a story device during play to give the character information about distant localities even if the character is not actively attempting to use his powers.

This Quality can only be taken by psychics with at least one level in the Extrasensory Perception Devotion.

#### Infectious Personality (Empath Only), 4 Point Quality

The character's personality is naturally infectious. Those in his presence will begin to take on his affectations, vocal patterns, and inflections. When he is happy, those around him laugh with him. When he despairs, those in his presence share his pain. When using an Empathy power, the character can reroll failed contested Will rolls. A failed roll may only be rerolled once due to Infectious Personality.

This Quality can only be taken by characters with at least one level in the Empathy Devotion.

#### Psi-Null, 4 Point Quality

There is something about the character that disrupts the use of some psychical abilities in his presence. The character can never develop psychical Devotions.

The character is completely immune to all Empathy and Telepathy powers. When the character is targeted by a psychical ability requiring a contested Will roll, he automatically wins the roll. Additionally, when a character uses a psychical power within 10 feet x the Psi-Null character's Will, the psychic gains an Instability Point (see page 66).

Psychics and Mediums cannot take this Quality.

#### Sensitive, 4 Point Quality

The character's senses extend into the spirit world. The character can see spirits and hear their words whether they are attempting to manifest or not. However, the character's supernormal senses are not nearly as keen as those of a Medium.

The character can smell decay in the presence of a spirit or feel an unhealthy tingle when passing through space occupied by a spirit.

The degree to which the character can perceive a spirit depends on the spirit's Will. If the spirit has Will 3 or less, the character will see it as a shadow or ball of light. If it makes a noise, the character will hear it but the sound will be distant and indistinct. He will not be able to understand the spirit even if it is screaming.

If the spirit has Will 4 or 5, the character will be able to make out some details of its physical appearance with a successful Wit roll (DR 14). Sounds made by the spirit will still be eerie and indistinct, but the character will be able to understand the spirit with a successful Wit roll (DR 14).

The character can perceive spirits with Will greater than 5 as if they were physically in his presence.

Mediums cannot take this Quality.

#### Spirit Touched, 6 Point Quality

Due to an innate sensitivity, the result of near death experience, or because he was born in a location noted for its high spectral activity, the character is something divorced from his wholly human brethren. He has been touched by the spirit world in a much deeper way than victims of external spiritual activity, and as a result he has been changed spiritually as well as physically.

The character is a half-lifer, and his exotic nature gives him some abilities that can be mixed blessings. Like mediums, the spirit touched can see and hear spirits whether or not they are manifesting. If the spirit has a Will 3 or less, the character will see it as a shadow or ball of light. If the spirit has Will 4 or 5, the character will be able to make out some details of its physical appearance with a successful Wit roll (DR 14). He will be unable to hear the spirit no matter what sounds it makes.

Like other half-lifers, the Spirit Touched cannot gain Physical Corruption. Their bodies are touched by the spirit world and already corrupted in their own way. Spirit-touched characters all bear some mark of unearthly heritage, such as faintly luminous eyes (noticeable in the dark) or an unnatural pallor. These traits, merely aesthetic,



may impact social interactions at the Narrator's discretion. The character also gains a bonus of +2 to any Will rolls made to resist spiritual powers.

Spirit-touched characters may not learn *Psychical Devotions*. Half-lifers and psychics cannot take the *Spirit Touched Quality*.

## Supernatural Impediments

### Altered States, 4 Point Impediment

The character is only able to utilize his *psychical Devotions* and *Second Sight* while under the effects of a mind-altering substance. The character may have a drug of choice that he uses to clear his mind, such as alcohol or opium, or may simply use any substance at hand. The character must ingest enough of the substance to be completely under its effects before using his powers.

The character suffers all the penalties and secondary effects pertaining to his powers whether or not he is intoxicated. It is only the use of his powers that are affected by this Impediment.

This Impediment can only be taken by characters with *Second Sight* or at least one *psychical Devotion*.

### Blinded Sight (Clairvoyant Only), 2 Point Impediment

The psychic cannot use *Extrasensory Perception* powers while he can see normally. He must keep his eyes closed, blindfold himself, or work in the dark. If the character opens his eyes or is suddenly able to see normally while using one or more *Extrasensory Perception* powers, any maintained powers immediately expire and he gains 1 *Instability Point* (see page 66). If the character is blinded, he suffers no further penalties from this Impediment.

This Impediment can only be taken by psychics with at least one level in the *Extrasensory Perception Devotion*. A character with the *Blind Impediment* cannot take this Impediment.

### Blood Work (Precog Only), 4 Point Impediment

The psychic has come to believe that blood is a key component to his *Prescience* powers. As a result, the character may be perpetually covered in intricate scars and self-inflicted wounds. These scars could take the form of spirals, mathematical equations, or complex occult symbols. The psychic's passively triggered *Prescience* powers only function while he has open wounds on his body. Additionally, the psychic cannot enter a trance without a blood focus to concentrate on. This focus may include, but is not limited to, covering himself with gore, staring into a pool of fresh blood, or cutting himself or someone else.

This Impediment can only be taken by psychics with at least one level in the *Prescience Devotion*.

### Burns (Electrokinetic or Pyrokinetic Only), 5 Point Impediment

The psychic suffers burns anytime he fails an *Electrokinesis* or *Pyrokinesis* control check. When the psychic fails an *Electrokinesis* control check, he suffers an electrical shock damage roll (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 178 – 179) with a modifier equal to the level of the power he failed to use. When the psychic fails a *Pyrokinesis* control check, he is set on fire (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 180 – 181).

This Impediment can only be taken by psychics with at least one level in the Electrokinesis or Pyrokinesis Devotions.

### **Combustible Dreams (Pyrokinetic Only), 5 Point Impediment**

The psychic's sleep is frequently disturbed by terrible nightmares. More horrifying than the dreams themselves are the psychic's response to them. In the dead of sleep, the character is prone to psychically lashing out at his invisible assailants with all-too-real blasts of fire. These attacks invariably begin with a moderate pyrotechnic display that may awaken the character before things truly get out of hand. However, if the psychic is in a deep sleep, he may not be able to arouse himself before he sets himself ablaze. Most psychics with this Impediment take care to ensure their sleep is observed by someone they trust.

Each night the psychic sleeps unobserved, he must succeed in a Wit roll (DR 14) to wake up before setting himself on fire. If the roll is successful, the psychic controls himself. If he fails, he sets fire to the area around him.

If the character is sedated, matters only get worse. Unable to wake up, the character will certainly set his surroundings on fire. While under the effects of psi-inhibitors, the psychic does not suffer from this Impediment.

This Impediment can only be taken by psychics with at least one level in the Pyrokinesis Devotion.

### **Delirium Tremens (Empath or Telepath Only), 4 Point Impediment**

The character's Empathy and Telepathy powers only affect those who are intoxicated, sedated, groggy, sleeping, or insane. Attempts to affect those who are awake, sober, and free of a Mental Disorder automatically fail.

Delirium Tremens can only be taken by characters with at least one level in the Empathy or Telepathy Devotions.

### **Dream Bound (Precog Only), 3 Point Impediment**

The psychic can only use his Prescience powers while sleeping. The sleep need not be natural: an unconscious state induced by drugs or head trauma will function as well as peaceful slumber. He may suppress his oracular ability by keeping himself awake or increase the likelihood of visions by sedating himself. When the character wakes up, his memories of what he saw and heard while dreaming will be fleeting. The character can make a Will roll (DR 14) to recall his dream. If the character succeeds, he recalls every detail of his dream. If the character fails, he can only recall the dimmest aspects of his dream. Characters with the Dream Recall Quality (see page 55) automatically pass this roll.

This Impediment can only be taken by psychics with at least one level in the Prescience Devotion.

### **Ghost Lover, 2 Point Impediment**

The character is obsessed with a past lover who has died but yet lingers at the threshold. This ghost lover is a constant source of turmoil for the character. Though he can *feel* the presence of his lover nearby, he lacks any ability to communicate with or even see the spirit. The estranged relationship colours every aspect of the character's life. No living man or woman will ever be good enough for him. Even more perversely,

the character feels a sense of obligation to the spirit, certain that *she* is watching and judging him continually.

The ghost may love the character or it may be entirely indifferent to his existence. If the ghost is as equally obsessed with the character as the character is by it, the character may be the ghost's Haunt (see pages 137 – 138). The player and the Narrator should determine all details pertaining to the ghost, including its powers of Manifestation and its relationship with the character, before the start of play. The ghost begins the game with Will 4.

This Impediment cannot be taken by characters with at least one level in Second Sight.

### **Hands On (Empath or Telepath Only), 4 Point Impediment**

When using his Empathy and Telepathy powers, the character is only able to affect subjects he touches with his bare flesh.

Hands On can only be taken by characters with at least one level in the Empathy or Telepathy Devotions.

### **Haunted, Variable Point Impediment (1–7)**

The character is a Haunt of a malicious ghost (see pages 137 – 138). The ghost seldom strays far from the character, and its Manifestations will all occur in the character's presence. Depending on the severity of this Impediment, the ghost may be annoying, distracting, or downright dangerous.

The character must have been very important to the ghost when it was alive. The character may be its killer, a jilted lover, a relative, close friend, or hated enemy. Because of this close association and because the ghost spends a great deal of time invisibly watching the character, it is certain to know a great deal about him.

Before the start of the game, the player and the Narrator should determine the ghost's origins. Who is the ghost? What was the ghost's relationship with the character? What are its goals now? How far will it go to get what it wants?

It should only be possible to put the ghost to rest through a major in-game event involving a lengthy resolution. If the ghost is laid to rest by any other means, it is greatly weakened and cannot manifest for 3d10 days. At the end of this time, it returns with its Will fully restored.

If the haunted character is a medium, the ghost gains +2 on contested Will rolls to resist the character's Second Sight powers.

The ghost should make its presence known once or twice per game session.

- **1 Point Impediment:** The ghost is fairly weak and relatively unintelligent, proving more of a burden than a threat. It may be thought of as an unwanted spectral houseguest or uncontrollable pet. Its activities take the form of strange spectral phenomena in the character's presence (see Secondary Manifestations, pages 139 – 140). The ghost has Will 2 or less.
- **3 Point Impediment:** The moderately powerful ghost has its own goals and interests that regularly conflict with those of the character. The ghost will constantly struggle with the character in hopes of furthering its own agenda. It may be jealous of the character, wish him to accomplish a series of never-ending tasks, or ask him to destroy the ghost's mortal enemies. However, the character very likely has no idea of what the ghost's actual aims are. While the ghost

is unlikely to harm the character directly to accomplish its goals, it will certainly take its aggressions out on those around him. The ghost has Will 3.

- **5 Point Impediment:** A mad ghost has attached itself to the character. Its manifestations should be mindless but dangerous and chaotic. Such manifestations may be misguided attempts at communication or simply psychotic episodes. The ghost may be at some times playful and at others destructive. Psychokinetic manifestations are common among such hauntings. If the character does something to anger the ghost, its manifestations will grow more dangerous and erratic. The ghost is unlikely to kill the character, though it will think little of injuring him. The ghost has Will 4.

- **7 Point Impediment:** The ghost haunting the character bears a grudge against him and intends to kill him one day, but not before making him suffer. Likely the ghost blames the character for its undoing, whether rightly or wrongly. The ghost is as likely to lash out at the character's associates and possessions as it is to harm the character directly. It will not actually take the character's life unless it believes there is nothing more that can be gained by tormenting him. The fashion in which it finally kills the character should have some significance to the reasons the ghost haunts the character. The ghost has Will 5.

### **Heat Wave (Pyrokinetic Only), 5 Point Impediment**

When the psychic uses a Pyrokinesis power, the air around him becomes dry and superheated. Anything flammable within 3 feet x the psychic's Will catches fire. If the psychic is wearing clothes, they will spontaneously, but harmlessly, burn off his body. The character can make a control check when he uses a Pyrokinesis power to control this effect. If he succeeds, the heat wave is not triggered.

This Impediment can only be taken by characters with at least one level in the Pyrokinesis Devotion.

### **Hellbent (Precog Only), 1 Point Impediment**

The psychic's Precognition visions are never pleasant. Regardless of the information conveyed, the visions are accompanied by apocalyptic scenes of death and mass destruction. Even portents of joy and good fortune will be tainted by death and ruin. Because his gifts are so narrowly focused, a psychic with this Impediment will generally be ineligible for the best-paying positions, though he is a natural for the Oracle project.

This Impediment can only be taken by psychics with at least one level in the Precognition Devotion.

### **Inconsolable, 4 Point Impediment**

The character is incredibly sensitive to deaths occurring in his presence. When a living or half-lifer character dies within 10 feet of the character x the character's Will, this character gains 1 Instability Point (see page 66).

Inconsolable can only be taken by characters with at least one level in the Empathy, Extrasensory Perception, Precognition, or Telepathy Devotions.

### **Mental Strain, 5 Point Impediment**

The character's psychical powers put an incredible strain on his mind and body. Whenever the character uses a thought- or focus-triggered power, he will grow noticeably pale and weak and runs the risk of falling into a catatonic state. If the character fails a control check, he immediately passes out from the strain on his mind. For 10 + 2d10 minutes, the character cannot be awakened by any means.

This Impediment can only be taken by a character with psychic powers.



### **Phantom Signal (Electrokinetic Only), 4 Point Impediment**

The psychic constantly broadcasts his thoughts as radio waves. The signal is broadcast on multiple channels and has a strange way of finding the wavelength that will be picked up by as many receivers as possible within a range equal to 1 mile x the psychic's Will. Even the dialogue of the psychic's dreams is broadcast.

This Impediment can only be taken by psychics with at least one level in the Electrokinesis Devotion.

### **Psychospasm (Telekinetic Only), 2 Point Impediment**

The psychic lacks control over his telekinetic powers. When he uses Telekinesis, unintentional side effects accompany the effects of the power. Examples of these side effects include, but are not limited to, objects flying off shelves, glass shattering, and furniture moving. At the Narrator's discretion, such phenomena may also occur when the character is injured or angered. Generally, Psychospasm effects are harmless, but they can be quite disturbing for bystanders.

This Impediment can only be taken by characters with at least one level in the Telekinesis Devotion.

### **Psychotrope (Empath or Telepath Only), 2 Point Impediment**

The character's lunacy is viral. When he reaches out to the mind of another, his Subject becomes infected with his Mental Disorders. A Subject who is affected by one of the character's Empathy or Telepathy powers must make a Will roll (DR 11 + the psychic's Will). If the Subject succeeds, nothing happens. If he fails, the Subject immediately begins to suffer from the chronic version of one of the character's Mental Disorders for 2d10 hours. The Narrator chooses the Mental Disorder the Subject is affected by.

This Impediment can only be taken by characters with at least one level in the Empathy or Telepathy Devotions.

### **Sandman (Empath or Telepath Only), 2 Point Impediment**

Characters with this Impediment leave traces of themselves in their targets' unconscious minds. After being affected by one of this character's Empathy or Telepathy powers, a Subject will invariably dream about the psychic character the next time he sleeps. The content of the dream is at the Narrator's discretion but should reveal some secret about the psychic character. Unless the dreaming Subject has the Dream Recall Quality (see page 55), his memories of the dream will soon be forgotten, but the Subject can make a Will roll (DR 14) to recall his dream. If the Subject succeeds, he clearly recalls his dream. If the Subject fails, he can only recall aspects of his dreams determined by the Narrator.

This Impediment can only be taken by characters with at least one level in the Empathy or Telepathy Devotions.

### **Spirit Beacon, 4 Point Impediment**

For some reason, spirits are naturally drawn to the character and are stronger in his presence. The character is plagued by spectral manifestations. Intelligent spirits may take actions to draw his attention in hopes of communicating with him, and mindless

spirits will remain close to him. Malicious spirits are bound to do harm to him above all others. Whatever the case, the character receives little peace and quiet while in the presence of spirits.

Spirits gain +2 on Will rolls while in the character's presence.

### **Visible Manifestation (Telekinetic Only), 2 Point Impediment**

The telekinetic's manipulations are visible to the naked eye. When he uses his powers, ectoplasmic mist visibly trails from the psychic to the objects he manipulates. Anyone coming in contact with one of these tendrils will experience an uncomfortable and unnatural chill.

This Impediment can only be taken by characters with at least one level in the Telekinesis Devotion.

### **Waking Dream, 5 Point Impediment**

The character's psychical powers have unhinged something fundamental in his mind. In addition to the visions he receives as a result of his talents, the character is also subject to elaborate hallucinations that seem wholly unreal. Anytime the character actively uses a psychical power, he must make a Will roll (DR 14). If the roll fails, he suffers powerful hallucinations for one hour. During this time, the character suffers a -2 penalty on Charm, Will, Wit, Intellect, and Skill rolls.



The Narrator should vividly describe the hallucinations plaguing the character. These hallucinations should reflect the character's Mental Impediments and Disorders and be coloured by any insights the character gains through the use of his psychical powers.

This Impediment can only be taken by characters with at least one psychical Devotion.

### **Weird (Clairvoyant Only), 3 Point Impediment**

When the psychic uses his Extrasensory Perception to gaze upon individuals he could not otherwise see with his physical eyes (such as with the application of Astral Projection, Minor Clairvoyance, or Teleperception), those he watches can feel his presence. These individuals will be certain they are being watched though they will not be aware of the source or manner of observation.

This Impediment can only be taken by psychics with at least one level in the Extrasensory Perception Devotion.

## **Physical**

### **Physical Qualities**

#### **Living Furnace (Pyrokinetic Only), 2 Point Quality**

Though the psychic feels no discomfort, his flesh is always hot to the touch. Anyone coming in contact with the character's skin will assume he has a serious fever. The character's internal heat keeps him warm when others would be chilled, and thus, the psychic does not require coats or blankets for warmth except in near freezing conditions. Anyone sharing a bed with him, however, will find the heat uncomfortable.

This Quality can only be taken by characters with at least one level in the Pyrokinesis Devotion.

### **Physical Impediments**

#### **Ashen Breath (Pyrokinetic Only), 2 Point Impediment**

Thin wisps of vaguely unpleasant smelling smoke escape the psychic's mouth and nose as he breathes and speaks. Though the smoke is harmless, it may be disconcerting to others. The effect is rarely noticeable when the character is wearing a respirator. The character suffers -1 on Charm - Guile and Seduction rolls.

This Impediment can only be taken by characters with at least one level in the Pyrokinesis Devotion.

#### **Draw Lightning (Electrokinetic Only), 4 Point Impediment**

The psychic is a living lightning rod. There is a small chance that he will be struck by lightning whenever he is outdoors, and during a storm, it is all but certain to occur at least once. The psychic is always unharmed by the electrical strikes, though his clothes may burn or catch fire, and he may be bruised or cut when thrown by a powerful blast. Anyone nearby the character when he is struck is likely to be seriously shocked and burned, suffering an electrical shock damage roll with a +5 modifier (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 178 - 179).

If the character rolls a critical failure on any roll while outdoors, he is struck by lightning. During stormy conditions, the Narrator should roll a d10 for the character every five minutes. If the roll results in a 1 or 10, the character is struck by lightning.

This Impediment can only be taken by characters with at least one level in the Electrokinesis Devotion.

#### **Eidolon (Clairvoyant or Precog Only), 2 Point Impediment**

The psychic is little more than a ghost encased in flesh. Having spent so much time in trance states, he is no longer comfortable in his own skin and is morose and lethargic when stranded in his body. When he speaks, his voice is hollow and tired. He often ignores the physical aspects of his life and frequently forgets to eat, bathe, or go to work.

As a result, the character's body has begun to deteriorate from lack of nourishment and exercise. His movements are slow and jerky, as if he has forgotten how to use his own body. His face is constantly placid, lacking any spark of emotion.

The character can never have a Vitality higher than 4.

Eidolon can only be taken by characters with at least one level in the Extrasensory Perception or Prescience Devotions. A character with this Impediment cannot have the Gigantism or Light Sleeper Qualities.

#### **Entropic Presence (Half-Lifer or Electrokinetic Only), 2 Point Impediment**

Though the character seldom feels either warm or cold, he has a chilling effect on the temperature around him. Furthermore, anyone who spends much time around the character will feel weak and more susceptible to illness, as though their life force was being slowly leached from them. While in the character's presence, other living characters suffer -1 on Vitality rolls. Likewise, anyone making a Medicine Skill roll to treat a wound or complication in the character's presence suffers -1 on the roll.

This Impediment can only be taken by characters with at least one level in the Electrokinesis Devotion or half-lifers.

#### **Haywire (Electrokinetic Only), 2 Point Impediment**

Galvanic devices within ten feet of the character constantly malfunction and may burst into flames. The character's presence also jams nearby radio reception and causes galvanic streetlights to burn out as he passes them by. When the psychic suffers from powerful emotions, the range of this Impediment is increased by a number of feet equal to 3 times the character's Will.

The Narrator determines the effects of this Impediment on nearby galvanic devices. Sometimes the effects may be humorous, at others terrifying.

This Impediment can only be taken by characters with at least one level in the Electrokinesis Devotion.

### **Internal Light (Electrokinetic Only), 2 Point Impediment**

The psychic's eyes, mouth, and nostrils glow with a faint electrical light, and electricity periodically flickers over his skin. Should the character be wounded, the wounds glow more brightly and may spark. When the character feels strong emotions, the light intensifies, and when he is exhausted or depressed, the light will grow dim.

Anyone attempting to treat the character's wounds or complications suffers -2 on their Medicine rolls due to distracting lights and mild electrical shocks. When the psychic is targeted with a ranged attack, his attacker never suffers a Poor Visibility modifier for darkness.

This Impediment can only be taken by characters with at least one level in the Electrokinesis Devotion.

### **Void Marked (Electrokinetic Only), 2 Point Impediment**

The psychic's appearance begins to change as a result of his powers. His flesh grows pale and appears lifeless. He either loses all his hair or it turns stark white and stands on end. The character's face is generally relaxed and placid, and it is difficult for the character to become expressive.

The character suffers -1 on Charm rolls.

This Impediment can only be taken by characters with at least one level in the Electrokinesis Devotion.

### **Waking Fits, 3 Point Impediment**

The act of returning to physical consciousness takes a grave toll on the character's body. Whenever he wakes up from sleep or comes out of a trance, he immediately goes into fits that can last up to 2d10 minutes. These fits are incredibly violent, and the character runs the risk of biting off his own tongue or inflicting all manner of grievous harm to his person. During a fit, the character can do nothing, and unless restrained, he suffers a 2d10 damage roll minus his Vitality from bruises and injuries.

## **Mental**

### **Mental Qualities**

#### **Dream Recall, 2 Point Quality**

The character has complete recall of his dreams. The character automatically passes Will rolls to remember his dreams.

#### **Emotionally Dead, 2 Point Quality**

The character has great trouble expressing emotion. He is a lifeless creature who seldom laughs, cries, or smiles. The character's emotional state goes beyond his demeanour. Something inside him is missing. Even his closest friends and family members regard him

as a loveless stone. The character will almost certainly die alone and unremembered.

Not given to emotional outbursts, the character can keep a cool head even at the most trying times. He can reroll failed Will - Fear rolls. Each failed roll may be rerolled only once as a result of Emotionally Dead. The character gains +2 on contested Will rolls to resist Empathy powers. An empath with this Quality does not suffer empathic backlash (see page 70).

## **Mental Impediments**

### **Catalyst of Despair, 4 Point Impediment**

Wherever the character goes, despair, chaos, and madness follow. Anyone making a Mental Disorder control check in the character's presence cannot add his Concentration Skill to the roll. When a psychic uses an Empathy, Prescience, or Telepathy power in the character's presence, he gains 1 Instability Point.

A character must have at least one chronic Mental Disorder to take this Impediment.





### **Delamayn (Empath or Telepath Only), 2 Point Impediment**

The character's extraordinary insight into the human mind has rendered ordinary human interaction boring and irritating. The character does not concern himself with irrelevant social niceties. Why bother to consider the feelings of others when those feelings can be altered with a thought? His behaviour is indifferent at best, abrasive and abusive at worst. The character seems to thrive in the constant hum of wounded loathing from those around him.

The character suffers a -2 on Charm rolls unless he is actively using an Empathy or Telepathy power to influence the outcome of the situation. When the character ceases using an Empathy or Telepathy power on a Subject, he must make a Will roll (DR 14). If he succeeds, nothing happens. If he fails, the Subject is struck by a wave of revulsion and violation and will react appropriately.

This Impediment can only be taken by characters with at least one level in the Empathy or Telepathy Devotions.

### **Reversion, 3 Point Impediment**

The character is socially underdeveloped to a fantastic degree. In times of stress, he must succeed in a Will roll (DR 14) or revert to a childlike state. Once triggered, the character remains in this state for 6d10 minutes. During this time, he takes on an affected voice and is prone to ferocious tantrums and malicious behaviour. He may become shy or extremely talkative, and all manner of repressed memories may come flooding to the surface.

Telekinetics are particularly prone to this Impediment.

### **Sexual Dysfunction, 2 Point Impediment**

The character suffers a sexual dysfunction disorder and is unwilling to take part in sexual contact. The character may fear the consequences of losing control during sex or may loathe the close contact with another person. Whatever the cause, the character has not lost his sex drive, only the ability to reach sexual fulfilment with another person.

In situations where the character must interact romantically or sexually with another person, he must make a Will roll (DR 14) not to retreat in disgust or fear. Observing others engaged in courting behaviours of any sort requires the character to succeed in a Will roll (DR 11) to retain his composure.

Empaths are particularly prone to this Impediment.

### **Timeless (Precog Only), 4 Point Impediment**

Time has lost all meaning to the psychic. As the years of his life fade together, the psychic simultaneously lives out his past, future, and present. He occasionally finds himself repeating whole days of his life, attempting to cast those around him in the roles of people long dead or absent. He mistakes those he meets on the street for departed relations and refuses to acknowledge the presence of the "dead," even if the individual has not yet passed. He may find himself briefly living moments he has not yet lived, experiencing brief flashes of the future that blot out the present entirely.

Though similar to the symptoms caused by senile dementia, these effects are the product of continuous visions. The character's mind simply lacks the capacity to sort through all the information it receives. The best anyone can do to help is to temporarily convince the character of certain facts of the present. Such convincing is time consuming, and the result is short lived; over the passing of a couple days, the psychic will return to his befuddled state. He is likely to forget to eat for long periods of time, running the risk of starvation. Without someone to take care of him, the psychic's affairs will soon end in ruin.

The psychic suffers -2 on Charm - Credibility rolls and Intellect - General Knowledge rolls concerning recent history.

This Impediment can only be taken by characters with at least one level in the Prescience Devotion. A character with this Impediment cannot take the Time Sense Quality.

## New Mental Disorders

### Agrypnia, 3 or 5 Point Impediment

The character has lost the capacity for sleep. Insomnia does not begin to express the depth of the character's affliction. What little rest he gains comes from the use of powerful sedatives. His eyes are deeply sunken into his face, and his flesh appears ashen and unwholesome. His reactions are slow, and his speech is broken. As a result of the character's disorder, he has built up a considerable tolerance for exhaustion and can go days without sleep.

Unless the character has slept at least five of the previous twenty-four hours, he suffers -2 on Wit, Intellect, and Initiative rolls. Sleeping requires the character to either take a sedative or succeed in an Agrypnia control check. Control checks may be made once per night. If the character manages to will himself to sleep, he sleeps lightly and is easily awakened. If awakened, the character must succeed on an additional control check to return to sleep.

Minor Agrypnia is a 3 point Impediment. Chronic Agrypnia is a 5 point Impediment.

### Multiple Personality Disorder, 3 or 5 Point Impediment

The character has two or more distinct dissociated identities or personalities. Each personality has its own life history, patterns of perception, and ways of interacting with the character's environment. The life history of each personality may be rooted in the character's actual history or be a complete fabrication. The character has a primary personality that is in control of his actions most of the time while his additional personalities remain dormant. At times of stress, one of the character's dormant personalities may surface and take over his consciousness for a time. While a dormant personality is in control, the character's primary personality will not recall the events that transpire.

The player and Narrator should work together before the start of the game to create distinctly different personalities for the character. The character's primary personality may be a meek school teacher while his other personality is that of a scowling, stone-faced killer. One personality should be designated the primary personality and the other(s) as dormant. Each will have

a name by which it prefers to be called. The Narrator may even allow the player to select different Skills, Corruption Afflictions, or Devotions for his personalities. The character's Attributes may also change based on the personality that is in control.

Anytime the character finds himself in a threatening or stressful situation, he must make a control check to keep from switching personalities. If the roll succeeds, his primary personality remains in control. If the roll fails, one of the character's dormant personalities takes control. After a failed roll, the character can attempt to reassert his primary personality after d10 hours. If this roll fails, roll again after d10 additional hours and so on until the character's primary personality reasserts itself. If the character wishes, he may forfeit the control check to allow himself to switch personalities.

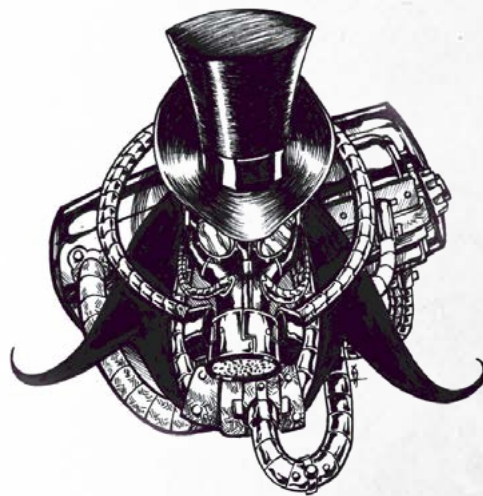
Minor Multiple Personality Disorder is a 3 point Impediment. Chronic Multiple Personality Disorder is a 5 point Impediment.

### Pyromania, 3 or 5 Point Impediment

The character suffers from an insatiable need to start fires that stems from an intense obsession. The act of setting a fire induces a tremendous sense of joy, gratification, and release in the pyromaniac. He sets fires exclusively to watch the flames and never for personal gain or any other motivation, and he likely collects newspaper reports of fires, especially the ones he set.

Anytime the character experiences a significant amount of stress in his daily life, he must make a control check. If the character succeeds, he is able to control his compulsion. If the character fails, all he will be able to think about is setting a fire. Due to his powerful preoccupation, the character will be unable to sleep and suffers -2 on Intellect, Wit, Will, Charm, and Skill rolls not directly pertaining to starting a fire until he has done so. The character can tide himself over for a time by setting small fires, but will suffer a cumulative -1 penalty on further control checks every day until he sets a sizable blaze.

Minor Pyromania is a 3 point Impediment. Chronic Pyromania is a 5 point Impediment.





# CHAPTER THREE: THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY

From the notes of Dr. A.B. Hartley, St. Guy's Hospital, 1993.

...The unusual frequency of psychical manifestation among the insane and, correspondingly, the pervasiveness of mental disturbance among the psychically gifted have led the notable physicians of this age to propose a direct and causal linkage between the manifestation of psychical abilities and pathological irregularity of mind. The nature of this causality and the pathways of its operation have heretofore been unknown to us. I believe that the set of experiments that lie before us will serve to illuminate at last the operating principles of this phenomenon, one of the great scientific mysteries of our time.

The origins of psychical manifestation and the accompanying mental disturbances lie, I believe, in the breakdown of the bicameral structure of the mind. The human psyche is composed of two parts: first, the conscious mind, the rational and active principle, and second, the subconscious mind, subordinate to the first in the waking hours and permitted full autonomy only when the conscious mind slumbers. The subconscious mind is the primitive oceanic wellspring beneath the rational being, the ancient mind that holds the source of myths and dreams... whereas the conscious mind, the seat of thought and reason, is the identity of man and the whole of the recognized "I."

This balance, in which reason is keeper and warden to the symbol-ridden unconscious, defines sanity in ordinary men. When some disturbance enters the mind, as with some traumatic or distressing event, and does some violence to the workings of the subconscious, neurosis or insanity may result, depending on the severity of the event and the stability and health of the mental environment prior to the disturbing incident. In severe cases, the revolt within the subconscious may have sufficient force to entirely overwhelm the capacity of the conscious mind to filter the storm of emotion and symbol into sensible, organized thought. In these cases where the seat of reason is entirely overwhelmed, the conscious and reasonable mind withdraws, losing awareness of the significance of external stimuli in the face of the overwhelming chaos within. These ordinary lunatics are unreasoning and unreasonable, prone to fits of violence, screaming, unintelligible speech, and catatonia; but of psychical manifestations, there are none. It is my belief that in these ordinary lunatics the balance of the mind has been disturbed while the organization, the inherent primacy of conscious over subconscious, has remained intact.

In very rare cases, perhaps one lunatic in a hundred or one in a thousand, the ordinary pathologies are accompanied by abnormal manifestations of power. The earliest undeniable occurrences of this sort came out of the horrors of the pre-reclamation period, emerging in the smaller encampments facing epidemics of cholera and Plague. The conditions faced by these people cannot today be easily imagined. Insanity and catatonia were commonplace as the human mind was unable to cope with the unrelenting horrors

of everyday life. Under these conditions, some very small fraction of the populace began to manifest psychical abilities. Empathy and telepathy were common manifestations, if unfortunate under the circumstances. Psychokinesis, particularly of the pyrokinetic variety, was not infrequently observed, and all of these spontaneous manifestations tended to be of significant power. Psychical individuals invariably suffer from severe psychoses and are often unable to control the use of their power. The emergence of psychical powers seems to be not a defence against madness but rather a consequence of the same.

The same pattern is observable in today's institutions. Some very small percentage of the insane is given to these manifestations, and the strength of the psychical gift appears to correlate to the severity of the mental afflictions. The least powerful manifestations are associated with the lowest levels of mental disturbance and are by far the most common outside of extraordinary circumstances. More significant gifts accompany further degrees of insanity, and it is frequently observed in patients of this type that the psychical gift will become stronger as the pathology progresses. The psychical activity does not serve to protect the mind in any way; on the contrary, patients of this sort are less amenable to treatment than ordinary psychotics, progress more quickly in their afflictions, and are far less often cured.

There are some for whom the psychical gifts are seemingly inherent, requiring no traumatic event to bring to the surface. These individuals tend to manifest their abilities in childhood or early adolescence. The ability usually surfaces quietly rather than in some cataclysmic show of power, except in the case of telekinetic manifestations. It is my opinion that these children are born with the irregularities in mental architecture that permit psychical abilities to manifest or else that some unknown or unremembered event of early life caused the irregularities to form. These are undeniably strange children, weird and wild, prone to dark moods and disturbing behaviours, all of which is generally exacerbated by the eventual emergence of the gift.

I have proposed a series of experiments to test these theories and to better understand the nature of psychical phenomena. It is known that, under certain conditions in the less-maintained wards of London's hospitals, spontaneous manifestations of these abilities have occurred. I propose to undertake an attempt to engineer the psychical talent deliberately. Patients dedicated to this project will be systematically subjected to stimuli intended to break down the conscious mind. Physical pain in combination with sleep deprivation has proved efficacious over the long term, though this has not been done under controlled conditions. We hope to achieve the same results with sensory deprivation and graded dosages of psychoactive drugs.

The patients to be sacrificed to this effort are chronic cases, unable to work for a living and unlikely to ever be released from the wards. The severity of the disturbance varies among cases,



*some few being severely neurotic or phobic but otherwise rational and others exhibiting degrees of psychotic behaviour up to and including total catatonia. It remains to be seen whether the more damaged minds of the psychotics will be suitable for this work or whether the more intact and sensitive minds of the ordinary neurotics will better serve the needs of my experiments...*

## Devotions & the Gifted

*Nothing that ever has been is lost to the vision of the seer; nothing that now is, can be hidden from his piercing gaze; nothing that shall be is wholly veiled from his prophetic glances. Involuntarily, though perhaps shudderingly, he finds his spiritual eyes are open, and he is compelled to gaze upon the innermost of life's awful mystery whether he will or no.*

—Chevalier de B—, *Ghost Land*, 1876

Throughout the Victorian era, interest in psychical phenomena was strong, even among the stern empiricists of the scientific establishment. The theories of Franz Mesmer were discussed heatedly by medical men, and academies of medicine attached their names to reports purporting to prove the supernatural potential of the human mind. Still, the reality of psychical phenomena was far from accepted fact. Strict materialism, which swayed much of Victorian thought, discounted the possibility of phenomena that defied the known laws of the physical universe. Most scientific establishments treated psychical studies with disdain and rejected the concept that there was anything within man that could not be weighed in a balance or interrogated beneath a scalpel.

The existence of psychical phenomena has since ceased to be a matter for doubt. Often, extraordinary circumstances unlock the full capacities of the human mind, and the horrors that followed after the first outbreak of Plague triggered the emergence of a new breed of psychic far more powerful than anything seen before.

There is some evidence to suggest that all humanity possesses at least rudimentary psychical potential. For ordinary people, this potential remains latent, surfacing only at rare moments as a premonition of impending danger or a dream that seems to speak keenly of the future. It is possible to induce the temporary emergence of latent psychical abilities in a relatively normal mind by hypnosis, but the process is difficult and uncertain. The unexercised psychical faculties are often weak, and nothing is retained by the conscious mind when the trance is concluded. The mind seems almost to defend itself against the realization of its fullest potential.

The surfacing of psychical ability appears to be incongruent with normalcy of the mind. Indeed, the troubled mind seems singularly capable to tap these abilities in ways unavailable to a normally functioning psyche. Furthermore, it cannot be doubted that psychical awareness has the capacity to further unbalance the human psyche. Many psychically talented individuals have access to all manner of input beyond the five senses, and their minds may not be able to process all they take in. As a psychic relies more and more on his perceptions of the supernatural world, it is possible that his mundane senses will atrophy and his perceptions will drift farther from the consensus reality. Those with these capacities seem to be eternally distracted, as if listening to voices

or music they alone can hear. Their eyes tend to sparkle and track strange patterns in the air that are indiscernible to others. Ultimately, the workings of the psychic's mind may become almost entirely divorced from mundane stimuli.

Since the Reclamation, parapsychologists have worked exhaustively to catalogue and describe known psychical abilities. These abilities, though varied, appear to fall under a set of general categories that have come to be known as devotions. Documented devotions include empathy, clairvoyance, prescience, telepathy, electrokinesis, pyrokinesis, and telekinesis. The later three are collectively referred to as psychokinetic devotions. Empathy is the ability to feel and manipulate the emotions of others. Clairvoyance is the gift of "psychical sight," the ability to "read" the auras of others and to see distant or removed locations. Prescience grants a glimpse into the future, but the visions bestowed by this gift can be horrifically detailed or frustratingly vague. Telepathy is the power to read thoughts and control the minds of others. Psychokinetic devotions are terrifying gifts that allows a psychic to impose his will on physical reality. Some psychokinetics can move massive objects with their minds, others develop control over fire, and some few manipulate electricity and harness the power of lightning itself. While devotions possess common characteristics in all their manifestations, there is considerable diversity in range and power among psychics.

## Registration & Licensing

All psychics are expected to register their powers with the Board of Psychical Health, a government agency established by the Psychic Vigilance Act of 1976. The Board is charged with the education, evaluation, and licensing of psychics. Though psychics are not legally required to register their powers, in practice, the majority do so. Some act out of a sense of civic responsibility, while others are driven by financial necessity or are registered as part of legal proceedings, such as might follow

an arrest or forcible confinement to a psychiatric care facility. Licensing gives an individual the right to lawfully use his powers for personal gain. While in theory there are no penalties for unregistered psychics using their powers in accordance with the law, there is no legal means of profiting from them without registration. In fact, no reputable firm or individual would knowingly employ an unlicensed psychic in any capacity. Not only would such an incident result in an embarrassing scandal should it come to light, but it could also lead to substantial fines and other legal repercussions.

Before a psychic can be licensed, he must first undergo registration and training in the use of his talents. The registration process begins with an evaluation of the psychic's powers. Generally, each of a psychic's devotions is ranked from first to third. Psi grading relies on careful observation, complex psychological evaluations, and sensitive aetheric measurements. The tests are long and gruelling, taking hours for an accurate evaluation. Grading must be conducted in near isolation, completely devoid of external distractions. Though a psychic is expected to demonstrate control over his talents, the ingenious system only requires the psychic to accomplish very simple tasks. Following grading and psychological evaluation, the psychic is issued a document stating his class.

A psychic must also undergo training to learn to control his powers. While the Board of Psychical Health offers training for psychics, free of charge, psychics with the means may enrol in special academies that are as exclusive and prestigious as any Neo-Victorian finishing school. In addition to methods of concentration and training pertaining directly to a psychic's control over his powers, these academies also teach courses in psi law, economics, and market prognostication. The products of these academies are highly sought after by the best firms in the metropolis. Occasionally psychics of aristocratic birth are taught by prominent tutors in their own homes. This way a good family can ensure their privacy while providing the best possible education for their child.

### Grading Rules

A character must have both the Parapsychology and Psychology Skills and access to an aetheric monitor (see pages 169-170) to attempt to grade a psychic. Each Devotion must be graded separately, and grading each Devotion takes an average of four hours. After the character grading the psychic has spent the required amount of time observing and evaluating his subject, he makes a Parapsychology or Psychology Skill roll, whichever is higher, against DR 11 + the psychic's Will.

If the roll succeeds, the character determines the psychic's class in that Devotion. If the roll fails, the results of the grading will be inconclusive, and the test must be repeated.

A character with level 5 in a Devotion is first class. A character with level 3 or 4 is second class. A character with level 1 or 2 is third class.

If the psychic possesses the minor Multiple Personality Disorder (see page 57), add +3 to the DR of the evaluation roll. If the psychic suffers from chronic Multiple Personality Disorder, add +5 to the DR of the evaluation roll.

The evaluating character can rush the process, but the DR of the evaluation is increased by 2 for every hour the evaluation is truncated. An evaluation cannot be shortened to less than one hour.

The evaluation and observation process can also be extended. For every additional two hours of observation, the evaluating character gains +1 to his Skill roll. A character cannot gain more than a +4 bonus on his Skill rolls from additional observation time.

Once a psychic has been graded, registered, and completed training, he may be licensed. Licensing costs £1/10s/- annually, and the psychic must undergo a fresh round of psi grading at the time of renewal.

A small number of psychics refuse to submit to registration. Lower-class psychics who learn to fear the police avoid registration out of a concern that the registry could be used by the police to track their movements. Others refuse to submit to what they consider to be an invasive abuse of government powers.

It is a common practice, however, for psychics to register only a fraction of their powers while keeping other devotions secret. This is especially true in cases in which a psychic possesses both empathy, which is often a legal liability, and a more marketable devotion.

## Psi Law

Over the years, the Neo-Victorians have passed a number of laws intended to protect the sleeper population from the psychically gifted while establishing acceptable guidelines for the integration of psychics into society. Mentally dominating or influencing the actions of another, either empathically or telepathically, is highly illegal. Even mild empathic manipulations can carry punishments of up to two years in prison. If it can be proven that an individual was compelled to sign a contract while under the mental or emotional influence of another, that contract is legally nullified and the perpetrator subject to up to ten years of hard labour. While it is legal to use one's powers of telepathy for the purpose of communication, using those same powers to influence the mind of another is against the law.



Since the passage of the Psychic Vigilance Act, actively using one's powers to eavesdrop on a British citizen is illegal. However, using one's powers to gather sensory information is not. *For example, a psychic who uses his powers to listen in on a secret meeting of his competitors has broken the law, while the psychic who reads his neighbour's aura has not.* The police and government are legally exempted from the laws governing extrasensory surveillance, and both utilize clairvoyants in the investigation and prevention of crime.

Precogs are not legally liable for the accuracy of their predictions, but deliberately falsifying prognostications is dealt with as fraud, especially if it can be proven that the psychic benefited from them. In practice, saddled with a difficult and unreliable talent, many precognitive psychical consultants make it a standard practice to embellish certain details of their visions to make them more palatable to their clients. Bad news may be tempered to spare the messenger and good news manipulated to manage expectations.

A licensed psychokinetic is legally considered to be a registered weapon. While these psychics are legally able to profit from their powers, they are responsible for any property damage or harm resulting from their use. Psychic Branch employs a number of psychokinetic consultants who use their specialized knowledge to aid in the investigation of physical psi crimes.

Neo-Victorian culture pressures all psychics to act in accordance with the law at all times, and even the accusation of a crime can inflict lasting damage to a psychic's reputation. If a psychic is convicted of a crime involving the use of his psychical powers, he will likely be sentenced to the fullest extent of the law, his license will certainly be suspended or revoked, and the damage to his career will be total. However, most criminal cases against psychics are dismissed due to lack of evidence. If the perpetrator is careful, the victim will often not even realize that a crime has occurred. Obtaining a conviction against a psychic criminal often requires catching the psychic in the commission of a crime, which usually requires another psychic.

When a psychic is observed using his powers by a member of the police force, he may be asked to present his license. Those who refuse or who are unlicensed may be taken in for questioning. If the psychic refuses to be questioned, he will be arrested. In the case of a dangerous or uncontrollable psychic, the police will attempt to sedate him or inhibit the use of his powers with pharmaceuticals. Should these measures prove insufficient or impossible to implement, the police will resort to physical force. When possible, the constabulary relies on Psychic Branch to deal with psychic criminals. Not only are psychic detectives intimately familiar with the psychical mind, but they are also better trained and more experienced in dealing with threats of this nature. Psychic Branch maintains special cells for high-risk suspects, a vast array of psi-inhibiting drugs, and a dedicated staff of alienists.

Psychics who are convicted of crimes generally serve their time in prison wards tailored to the unique needs and capabilities of these prisoners. Many psychic criminals are held in solitary confinement. The most deranged psychic criminals are remitted to the care of mental health institutions, which are better prepared to deal with them than the Neo-Victorian prison system.

## Psychic Countermeasures

Over the years there have been a great number of countermeasures developed to mitigate the threat posed by the psychically talented. Wealthy individuals, corporations, and government agencies often provide their own security in the form of advanced aetheric dampening fields and psychic watchdogs. Dampening fields create zones that nullify a psychic's ability to manifest his powers. Psychic watchdogs are generally clairvoyant security professionals employed to use their powers to scan an area for unwanted psychical intrusion.

## The Psychic Asylums

*Nobody is healthy in London, nobody can be.*

— *Jane Austen, Emma, 1816*

The public asylums and sanatoriums of the metropolis are vast warehouses for the criminally insane—psychic and otherwise. They are places of indescribable misery, powder kegs of psychical energy in which human time bombs tick away toward inevitable detonation. Isolation, cramped conditions, and a dearth of treatment take a grave toll, sending the minds of many psychics spiralling further into madness and fuelling their devastating powers to new heights.

Schizophrenic empaths and psychotic precogs are forced to compete with the criminally insane for bed space in Neo-Victorian mental health institutions. Even the most passive psychical talents are sometimes accompanied by extreme mental disorders that render their possessors too dangerous to be allowed to freely roam the streets of the metropolis. Since no reliable methods of restoring psychics to normal mental function have been found, they are locked up to limit the threat they pose to life and property. As a result, mundane lunatics and hopeless cases are often released onto the streets to make room for truly dangerous patients.

The most dangerous psychics who find their way into the asylums of the metropolis are the psychokinetics. These individuals are capable of generating lethal and often catastrophic physical manifestations of their will. Their talents stem from illimitable fear, uncontrollable rage, and a near complete disassociation with reality. The most powerful psychokinetics can level buildings with a thought, often destroying themselves in the process.

In addition to these rare cases, there are many lesser psychics who have been institutionalized for more mundane mental illnesses. Many of these lower-grade psychics spontaneously developed their abilities after being locked away. Insane and generally untrained, these psychics lack any capacity to control their abilities and may cause considerable havoc before their powers are detected.

Institutions take great care to separate psychic inmates from the mundane population when possible. Those exhibiting any level of psychical ability are prescribed psi inhibitors. Individuals prone to harming themselves or others are additionally restrained, isolated, and possibly sedated. Those psychics whose powers



make them a threat to public safety are housed in wards specially designed to contain high-risk patients. These wards are devoid of anything that could be used as a weapon. Lacking even beds, each cell contains nothing more than a stone floor and bare walls that have been heavily reinforced to withstand telekinetic assaults. Many cells for high-risk psychic inmates are built with vents that can release a sedating gas or be sealed airtight to deprive them of oxygen. Extraordinarily dangerous psychics who are of no further use for experimentation, have developed a resistance to sedatives and psi inhibitors, or are prone to escape may be lobotomized.

## Psychic Branch Revisited

Psychic Branch is the division of Scotland Yard specializing in supernatural investigations. Psychic Branch represents only a fraction of the total number of detectives employed by Scotland Yard, and not all of the detectives employed by Psychic Branch possess psychical talents. Because of its limited manpower, Psychic Branch generally restricts its investigations to psychical crimes, high-profile homicides, and cases that jeopardize the security of the metropolis itself.

Gifted Psychic Branch detectives rely on mundane methods of police work as much as they do their psychical talents. In fact, the majority of psychics employed by Psychic Branch are of the second and third classes. The very few first-class psychics who work for Psychic Branch are kept extremely busy. Few of these psychics do

actual leg work, and instead, they rely upon their talents to track the movements of the most dangerous Neo-Victorian criminals. Not only are first-class psychics too valuable to risk on the streets, but most also have severe psychological and behavioural disabilities that require near constant attention from staff alienists. Of course, a scant number of first-class detectives may be in the field at any time.

Psychic Branch is divided into three departments: Psi Crime, Special Interrogation, and Oracle.

Psi Crime employs psychic detectives, mostly clairvoyants and precogs, who use their supernormal talents to hunt criminals and solve crimes. A small number of Psi Crime detectives also possess telepathic talents, though most telepaths are employed by the Special Interrogation Department. Psi Crime is primarily concerned with investigations pertaining to psychic criminals, but detectives may be put on any high-profile case.

Notorious for their grim and stoic dispositions, Psi Crime detectives are the public face of the Psychic Branch. The mere appearance of the "Blackbirds" is generally enough to cause even hardened criminals to take flight. Though few in number, these detectives are among the most fearsome tools of law enforcement available to the Metropolitan Police.

Psi Crime employs five rapid-response tactical teams to deal with direct psychical threats to the metropolis. Three of these teams are on duty at any given time, and each is made up of four to six psychics. All highly trained and well armed, most detectives assigned to the rapid response teams are precogs with talents that enable them to react to any threat with inhuman speed and precision.



The Special Interrogation department trains telepaths to pry information from the minds of criminal suspects. These detectives silently witness all important police interrogations and work in pairs to corroborate psychical evidence. Interrogator teams work closely with Special Branch to tear the secrets from the minds of the most dangerous spies, traitors, and terrorists. This department is one reason Psychic Branch goes to great lengths to avoid drawing attention to itself; too much public scrutiny of the program could have dire repercussions. Special interrogators never appear in court, and few suspects even realize their thoughts are being read. However, those who are subjected to the most relentless psychical scans are unlikely to ever see a trial anyway. They simply disappear into the clutches of Special Branch.

Oracle is a well-funded, vast network of precogs and analysts within Psychic Branch. Unlike their peers in other departments, Oracle employees are not police detectives and learn only the basics of administrative police work. Instead, the psychics work day and night scanning the aether for signs of future disasters, and teams of parapsychologists trained to decipher visions and prognostications review, analyze, and compare their premonitions. The hope is not merely to presage coming disasters but to know when and where a potential calamity will strike.

The most reliable application of Oracle has been the prediction of lost days, which has led to the development of a citywide warning system. Oracle precogs can generally forecast the occurrence of a lost day within three days of the event. Precise forecasting is difficult, and sometimes lost days go undetected or occur later than forecast. Once lost days have been prophesized, the dailies print the forecasts on their front pages.

Though Oracle's success record has been mixed, Inspector Jonathan Rathley has been able to secure generous funding for the program. There are many within Her Majesty's Government who see the potential of this psychical detection system, and as of 2103, Oracle's payroll accounted for over forty percent of Psychic Branch's total operating budget.

In addition to the psychics employed by Psychic Branch, a number of mediums have also been quietly added to the ranks. A different breed than those profiting from contact with the dead, these mediums take a thoroughly scientific approach to their craft, working alongside Psi Crime detectives. It is worth noting that despite the obvious benefits of consulting the dead in criminal investigations, especially those involving death or disappearance, spiritual evidence can be extremely difficult to verify.

Psychic Branch also employs a large number of alienists and parapsychologists. Known for their terse demeanours and icy stares, Psychic Branch alienists are particularly frightening figures whose authority on matters of mental health within the department supersedes all others. Because

## Planning the Perfect Caper

In this age of psychic detectives and forensic mediums, committing the perfect crime may seem like a thing of the past. Indeed, the Neo-Victorians have a great number of supernatural investigative techniques at their disposal. However, it is worth keeping in mind that Psychic Branch does not have the capacity to investigate every crime. If a criminal is not using his psychical powers to blatantly manipulate aristocrats out of their fortunes or to burn down the East End, odds are that he will not draw their attention. Of course there are exceptions; should a criminal offend the wrong peer or ranking member of the Privy Council, he may find the sniffers at his door.

Any professional criminal will know a trick or two to throw off even the most vigilant Blackbird. The first and most obvious method of avoiding detection is to conceal one's face. This is not too hard in a city where virtually the entire population wears a gas mask. Even if a clairvoyant detective can use psychometry to get a vision of a suspect, if the suspect is wearing a mask, the detective will not be able to give an accurate description of his appearance. It is nigh impossible to create a sketch of an aura or emotional state to circulate to the boys on the street.

It is common knowledge that Blackbirds can psychically track suspects from the scene of the crime, but unless the psychic has actually met the suspect, this task can be very difficult. A criminal with his wits about him will head for the greatest concentration of humanity possible, hoping to lose his "scent" amongst the crowds. The technique can throw off psychic trackers much like crossing a river can cause mundane bloodhounds to lose the trail.

Though spiritual forensics can yield valuable information to a supernatural investigator, such techniques have their own pitfalls. There is no guarantee that a deceased individual will return from the dead as a spirit. Even if he does so, he may not return as a sentient spirit. Again, even in this case, there is no guarantee that the spirit will recall the events pertaining to the crime. Death is always very traumatic and often destroys much of a spirit's memory. Should the spirit recall the event, there is no promise he will be interested in sharing the details of the crime with investigators. Finally, should the spirit discuss the events, it is unlikely any evidence it shares will be admissible in court.

When in doubt, modern criminals are able to rely on the same traits that their class has relied upon since time immemorial: be smart, be quiet, and be lucky.

psychic employees can suffer breakdowns and psychotic episodes, the alienists must remain in control at all times. Internal Psychic Branch figures show that more than seventy percent of psychic employees will be forcibly retired by staff alienists within their first five years on the job.

In addition to normal grading and licensing, potential Psychic Branch recruits undergo an extended battery of tests to determine their psychological stability. Those who fail are either held for observation or simply rejected. During training, recruits remain under the close watch of Branch alienists. All known psychics employed by the Metropolitan Police Department must undergo monthly psychological evaluations and are psi graded quarterly. Those employees acting erratically or displaying signs of breakdown are subjected to full psychological reviews to determine competency. While under review, employees are put on administrative leave and issued psi inhibitors.

Due to empath's extreme unpredictability and reputation for erratic behaviour, Psychic Branch does not employ those with the empathy devotion. Empaths discovered working for the Metropolitan Police Department in any capacity are removed from duty.

## Psychic Rules

### Devotions

Devotions are categories of psychical talents that determine a character's powers. Each Devotion is divided into five levels and each level includes three powers. A character with a Devotion has all the powers listed up through his level in the Devotion. For example, a character with Empathy 3 has all Empathy powers listed under levels one, two, and three.

Generally, only characters with the Psychic Calling can have Devotions.

Half-lifers never develop psychical powers, and if a character with psychical powers becomes a half-lifer or undead, he permanently loses all his psychical powers.

## Mental Instability

Psychics are notoriously unstable and prone to breakdowns and bouts of temporary insanity. The more powerful the psychic, the greater the risk his powers pose to his sanity.

### Psychic Control Checks

Psychical powers can place a great strain on the mind and can be very difficult to control. When a character uses a psychical power, he will sometimes be required to make a control check. Not all powers require character to make control checks. The description of the power determines when the character makes a control check. Some powers require the psychic to make a control check before using a power. Other powers require the psychic to make a control check after using the power.

A control check is a Will roll versus DR 11 + double the level of the power. If the character succeeds, nothing happens. If the character fails, he gains one Instability Point (see below) and may suffer other effects as detailed in the description of the power.

*For example, Marc's electrokinetic, Egor, uses the Galvanic Field electrokinetic power to recharge his group's galvanic devices while on a foray into the wastes. At this time, Marc makes a control check for Egor. The DR for this check is 17 (11 + double Galvanic Field's level of 3).*

Marc rolls a 6 and adds Egor's Will 4 and Concentration 3 for a total of 13. Egor fails the roll and gains one Instability Point, but the Galvanic Field power still activates normally. If the description of Galvanic Field included an additional penalty for failing the control check, Egor would suffer this effect as well as gaining the Instability Point.

## Instability Points

A psychic's mental disintegration is tracked by the acquisition of Instability Points, which are gained through the use of his psychological powers. If a character gains too many Instability Points, he will suffer a Breakdown (see below). A character may gain Instability Points as a result of failing control checks, due to the use of a particularly taxing psychological power, or through situational events, such as psychically contacting an incredibly disturbed mind.

A character can remove one Instability Point after a night of sleep or after eight hours wakeful peace and quiet during which he does not use his psychological powers.

## Latent Insanity

Latent Insanity is the creeping madness waiting in the recesses of the psychic's mind for a moment of weakness to rise to the surface. Though this madness does not normally affect the character, it comes out during times of mental duress, manifesting as Temporary Insanity.

A character with one or more Devotions must select a Mental Disorder to act as his Latent Insanity. A character cannot select a Mental Disorder that he already has to be his Latent Insanity. A character's Latent Insanity is not considered to be an Impediment and does not give the character Custom Points. Once selected, a character's Latent Insanity cannot be changed.

## Breakdowns

When a character acquires a number of Instability Points equal to his base Will, he suffers a Breakdown. When a character suffers a Breakdown, he immediately removes one Instability Point and the character's controller chooses one of the following results:

- **Temporary Insanity:** The character's Latent Insanity manifests. While manifesting, the character suffers from the effects of his Latent Insanity as if it were a minor Mental Disorder. The Narrator makes a d10 roll in secret to determine the number of days the character suffers the effects of the Latent Insanity. After this time elapses, the character no longer suffers from Temporary Insanity and his disorder returns to being latent.

If the character is currently suffering from Temporary Insanity, his controller cannot choose this option.

- **Degeneration:** If the character suffers a Breakdown while still affected by Temporary Insanity, his controller may choose to make the character's Latent Insanity permanent. In this case, the character's latent disorder becomes a new, permanent minor Mental Disorder. If the character's Latent Insanity becomes permanent, the player controlling the character must choose a new Mental Disorder to serve as the character's Latent Insanity.
- **Chronic Madness:** One of the character's minor Mental Disorders becomes permanently chronic.

## Half-Lifers, Spirits, and the Undead

Half-lifers such as dhampiri, thropes, and ghouls are more resistant to psychological abilities than living humans but are still subject to the effects of most Devotions. When a character uses a psychological power requiring a contested Will roll on a half-lifer, double the half-lifer's Will for the purposes of this roll.

Empathy, Extrasensory Perception, and Telepathy work normally on spirits. If a power requires the psychic to have a line of sight to his target, he can only use the power on a spirit if he can perceive the spirit, such as while the spirit is manifesting or through the use of Second Sight or an Extrasensory Perception power. Psychokinetic powers have no more effect on spirits than any other physical attack.

Unlike spirits, the undead are unaffected by most psychological powers. The only psychological powers that affect the undead normally are psychokinetic powers: Electrokinesis, Pyrokinesis, and Telekinesis. Unless stated otherwise within the description of a power, Empathy, Extrasensory Perception, Precognition, and Telepathy powers have no effect on the undead.

Though many psychological powers cannot affect the undead directly, they may still be useful for the detection of the unliving. The psychological void an empath or telepath feels when directing his powers toward an undead abomination can give away the creature's true nature. Likewise, a clairvoyant who can perceive the aura of a vampire or animate will "see" only a gaping spiritual wound in the space the creature occupies.

## Trances

Some psychological powers require a character to enter a trance before the power can be activated. Powers requiring a character to enter a trance are noted in the description of the power.

A character must have Concentration 1 or greater to intentionally enter a trance, which he can do automatically by focusing his mind for five minutes.

If a character attempting to enter a trance is in a loud or stressful environment, such as on a busy street or in the heat of combat, he must make a Will roll to enter the trance (DR 11 or more, depending on the situation). If the character has something on which to focus his attention while attempting to enter a trance, such as an open flame or crystal ball, he gains +1 on this roll. If the character is under the effects of a mild sedative or depressant when he attempts to enter the trance, he gains +2 on this roll. If the character succeeds, he enters the trance. If the character fails, he can attempt to enter the trance again after focusing his mind for another five minutes.

A character may remain in a trance as long as he wishes. While in a trance, a character will be unaware of his physical surroundings unless he is actively using a psychological power, such as Teleperception or Minor Clairvoyance, that is trained on the location of his physical body.

When the character comes out of a trance, he will usually have complete recall of all he experienced.

Coming out of a trance requires the character to succeed in a Will roll (DR 11). If the character succeeds, he comes out of the trance and any maintained psychological powers that require him to be in a trance expire. If the character fails, he does not come out of the trance but can try again after one minute.

If the character is under the effects of a sedative or depressant, he suffers -2 on the roll to end his trance. If the character has an associate who is attempting to pull him out of a trance, the character gains +2 on this roll. A character can be instantly taken out of a trance if another character violently shakes him or yells in his close proximity or if the character suffers a wound. If the character is brought out of trance suddenly, all psychological abilities he is maintaining immediately end and the character gains an Instability Point.

## Devotions Defined

### Characteristics

Each psychological power is defined by its Subject, Range, Trigger, and Description. These attributes govern how the ability can be used during play.

### Subject

The Subject is the target of the psychological power. Some psychological powers can only be used to affect a single person or object while others can affect whole groups. There are also powers that only affect the psychic.

### Range

The Range of a psychological power describes the reach of the power: either the area affected by the power or the maximum distance the psychic can be from a Subject and still affect it with the power. Many powers require the psychic to have "line of sight," meaning the character must be able to see his subject, either by physical sight or through the application of a psychological power.

The psychic can rein in the Range of any of his psychological powers by voluntarily making a control check. If the check succeeds, the power affects a smaller area determined by the psychic. If the check fails, the psychological power activates normally, affecting the maximum Range of the power.

### Trigger

Each psychological power has a Trigger that determines when and how the power can be activated. There are three types of Triggers: maintained, passive, and thought.



## Maintained

A maintained psychical power may be activated at will and remains active as long as the psychic concentrates on it. A psychic can simultaneously maintain a number of powers equal to his Concentration Skill, with a minimum of one. In combat, activating a power with a maintained Trigger requires the character to spend an action.

While a maintained power that affects a group or area is in use, anyone moving into the Range of this power will be affected by it unless the power specifies that the psychic has the option of excluding certain individuals and chooses not to affect the new arrival. This may mean that a character entering the affected area will have to make a Will roll to resist the effects of the psychical power. A character affected by a maintained power who then leaves the Range of the power will no longer be affected by it. Should the character re-enter the Range of the power, he will be affected by it exactly as he was before leaving.

## Passive

Passive psychical powers are generally active while the character is awake. Some passive powers continue to function while the character is sleeping or unconscious. A character can make a voluntary control check to temporarily suppress a passive power. If the character succeeds, the power becomes inactive for 3d10 minutes x the psychic's current Will. If the character fails, nothing happens. The character can reactivate a power that he intentionally shut off at will.

## Thought

Psychical powers with a thought Trigger may be activated at will. Thought-triggered powers take effect immediately after they are activated. In combat, activating a power with a thought Trigger requires the expenditure of an action.

## Description

This is the description of the psychical power.

## Empathy

Empathy is the psychical ability to feel and manipulate the emotions of others. Among the most common of all psychical abilities, some parapsychologists believe that all humans possess at least some latent degree of psychical empathy. Empathy is at its strongest when the subject is someone with whom the psychic has a powerful emotional connection, whether his feelings for the subject are tender, primal, or vengeful.

Psychical empathy is, in practical terms, an extension of the normal human ability to understand the reactions of others. An empath can easily conceal the supernormal nature of his talents by passing his uncanny perceptions off as a gift for "reading people." The Devotion's effects can also be very hard to detect because empaths have a far easier time manipulating existing emotions than creating them whole cloth. Many empaths keep their gifts secret because it allows them to exercise their powers freely without incurring the suspicion that the sleeper population commonly directs at psychics. The most skilled make a career of twisting the strings of the heart, subtly bending desires of others to their own ends. It is no accident that some of the greatest Neo-

Victorian chisellers, philanderers, grifters, and gold diggers are empaths. Manipulating another with an empathic ability is a crime, but proving empathic manipulation in a court of law is nearly impossible.

Empaths make inhumanly effective interrogators. Their ability to know what a subject is feeling enables them to discern the most proficient methods of applying stress to gain information. Additionally, Empathy enables a psychic interrogator to focus on the mental duress of a subject rather than having to resort to physical duress, such as sleep deprivation or hunger.

An empath who lacks the mental discipline to control his gifts is constantly at risk of being overwhelmed by the powerful emotions around him. A tense crowd can jerk the psychic's emotional sensitivities in all directions with mind-numbing quickness. One second the psychic may be awash in an overpowering sense of sorrow over the death of a stranger's loved one; the next he is feeling the exhilaration of newlyweds, only to be dragged back down by the morbidity clinging to a would-be suicide. If walking through a crowd can prove invasive and threatening, human contact can be an actual violation. Touch can fill an empath with unwanted emotions, sending his mind reeling with an overload of stimuli. Equally dangerous is the psychic's proximity to a troubled mind. The erratic emotions of lunatics take their toll on an empath. Madmen throw off a kind of grating static that can cause the psychic nausea and headaches in a manner similar to motion sickness.

Sex is an exhilarating game of roulette for the empath. Even the most disciplined must be especially careful during intercourse; more than one has lost control at this crucial moment only to have his heart explode from the subsequent backlash of emotional energy. Despite the risks, many grow addicted to these powerful sensations.

An empath's temptation to bend the emotions of others to his desires can be overwhelming. Indeed, the strongest empaths manipulate every person they pass instinctually, without consideration of consequence or free will. Those empaths who succumb to their base nature invariably maintain strings of broken relationships with lovers who are desperate to do anything the empath desires. Often, these low empaths will use their talents to insinuate themselves into aristocratic households, taking advantage of their lovers' hospitality. These families will eventually be forced to take matters into their own hands. If a thieving interloper refuses to leave gracefully, he may find himself on the wrong end of a harsh beating or worse.

Many empaths make their living more honestly as matchmakers and heart readers. These individuals are not only employed to determine the presence of emotional manipulation but also to test the strength, fidelity, and commitment of love before a marriage.

## Playing an Empath

Empaths are unquestionably tragic characters without a true place in Neo-Victorian society. Though they are skilled negotiators and communicators, empaths lack the professional opportunities available to other psychics. While a telepath can look into the mind of a subject to get to the truth, the empath is perceived as preying

on the weak when he manipulates a subject to tell it willingly. Even when an empath finds a role in which he excels, should his powers be discovered, his accomplishments will become suspect. The empath's closest friends may question whether they truly enjoy his company or whether he has manipulated them into a false sense of kinship.

Many empaths suffer a peculiar deficiency of character. Due to an inflated sense of self worth and a general loathing for what they perceive as a hateful weakness in others, these psychics become villainous schemers. Everything in life seems to come easily to the empath, but he can never be truly satisfied because ultimately he knows the fickle truth of human emotions. Others are so jaded that they resolve to spend their days in solitude, choosing to blame humanity for what they see as a slavish devotion to insipid sentimentality and fragile loyalties.

Empaths seem naturally drawn toward Desire Corruption. Many develop the Hedonist Affliction and devote their lives to the pursuit of pleasure in the avoidance of painful emotions. Some empaths become hopelessly addicted to inflicting emotions upon others. An empath that regularly uses opiates or psychoactive drugs in hopes of controlling or expanding his psychical powers may find himself a slave to his growing dependence. Such empaths suffer the Addiction Affliction.

There are those empaths who avoid the dangers posed by human contact by establishing nontraditional, or even taboo, relationships. The Necrophilia Mental Disorder (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 153) is common among empaths who are drawn to the complete absence of emotion represented by a corpse. Empaths have also been known to seek out sentient vampires as sexual partners. Older vampires appreciate the pathos wrapped up in the empath's troubled psyche.

Empathy has the potential to transcend death, and an empath may be able to reach out and feel the presence of a loved one that lingers beyond threshold. Such empaths are eternally tortured, sensing their loved ones but denied any means of contact or true communication. Some empaths have been driven to suicide by the inescapable presence of lost love.

## Empathy Rules

### Animals

Most Empathy powers have no effect on animals. However, those that do are indicated in their descriptions.

### Critical Rolls

Tampering with emotions is an imprecise science at best. An empath never knows what reactions his manipulations will trigger. When something goes wrong, the effects are often spectacular.

When the empath attempts to manipulate, but not scan, the emotions of another and rolls a critical failure or success on a contested Will roll, something has gone wrong. If the character rolls a critical failure, the response will be the opposite of what he intended. If he rolls a critical success, his manipulation works too well. At the Narrator's discretion, the manipulation may



drive the Subject into an emotional frenzy, cause a permanent emotional response, or inflict lasting damage to the Subject's psyche. For instance, if the character is attempting to use his powers to seduce a Subject and rolls a critical success, his Subject may attempt to tear his clothes off and consummate relations right on the spot.

## Empathic Backlash

Until an empath learns to control his powers, he is constantly barraged by the emotions of those around him. A character with Empathy 2 or greater is subject to Backlash any time he is in close proximity to the living, half-living, or spirits experiencing strong emotions. The effect is intensified when the character is in the presence of a crowd gripped by a single powerful emotion, such as during a rally, funeral, or riot. The Narrator determines when the character is in danger of suffering Backlash.

When suffering Backlash caused by a solitary individual or from a small group, the empath must make a Will roll versus DR 11 + the highest Will among the characters in the group. Add +2 to the DR if the empath has flesh-to-flesh contact with the source of the strong emotion. If the empath succeeds, he manages to shut out the potentially harmful emotions. If the roll fails, the empath suffers a damage roll with a modifier equal to the highest Will among the characters in the group. If the empath suffers an Incapacitating Wound, instead of suffering a complication he enters a coma from which he cannot be awakened by any means for d10 days. When the character awakens, he still suffers the lingering effects of a Serious Wound.

When the source of the strong emotion is a large group of people, the character must make a Will roll (DR 16). If the roll succeeds, nothing happens. If the roll fails, the character suffers a +5 damage roll with the same result as described above.

A character with the Silence Mental Discipline Stunt (see page 45) or who is actively under the effects of psi inhibitors, sedatives, or opiates does not suffer Backlash.

## Touch

Despite the inherent dangers from Backlash, flesh-to-flesh contact can greatly enhance the empath's powers. While touching his subject and using an Empathy power, the psychic gains +2 on contested Will rolls against his subject.

## Empathy Powers

Empathic powers require some imagination to resolve. An empath seldom truly knows the effects his talents will have on a Subject until his powers are in use. In part, this is because the emotions created by the empath may conflict with the Subject's natural emotional responses. Some individuals will take the manipulation in stride while others will become fearful of the alien emotions overtaking them. Furthermore, in the minds of the mentally or emotionally disturbed, empathic manipulations may set off cataclysmic chain reactions that produce full-fledged psychotic episodes. If the results of an Empathy roll indicate that an unexpected effect will ensue, the Narrator determines the nature of any secondary effects.

Remember that unless otherwise stated, Empathy powers have no effect on the undead though they affect spirits normally.

## Level 1 Empathic Bond

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Self

**Trigger:** Passive

**Description:** The empath can sense when a loved one or close acquaintance dies or experiences extremely intense emotions. The character receives these troubling feelings regardless of proximity. While the empath will sense his loved one's emotions, this power neither gives insight into the cause of these emotions nor informs the psychic of his loved one's whereabouts.

Before the start of the game, the player and Narrator should determine who the empath's close acquaintances and loved ones are. These emotional connections may include a cherished pet. The psychic may develop additional empathic bonds through roleplaying at the Narrator's discretion.

When the character senses the death of a loved one, he gains one Instability Point. When he senses that a loved one is threatened or in great emotional distress, he must make a control check.

## Ingratiate

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** Touch

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The empath can manipulate the emotional response of a stranger upon their first meeting, thus enabling him to psychically ingratiate himself to the subject. He can also use this power to allay suspicion by reducing a subject's natural inhibitions and creating an artificial sense of trust and wellbeing. However, this power does not change what a subject knows to be true, only what he feels. A subject may not trust the empath even if he feels at ease around him.

When the character uses this power, he makes a contested Will roll versus his Subject. If the Subject wins, he successfully resists the psychic's emotional manipulation and the psychic gains one Instability Point. If the empath wins, he gains +2 on contested Charm rolls versus his Subject while this power is maintained.

Once this power has affected the subject, the psychic is not required to keep physical contact with his subject to maintain it. The subject continues to be affected by this power as long as it is maintained and he remains within the Range of this power.

The empath may use this power to calm hostile animals with a successful contested Will roll.

## Read Emotion

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the empath's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The empath can discern the emotional state of a Subject within his field of vision and in the Range of this power. This power enables the empath to sense his Subject's emotions and their intensity but not to know the reasons behind them.

When the empath uses this power, he makes a contested Will roll versus his Subject. If the Subject wins, nothing happens. If the empath wins, he learns the emotional state of the Subject. Players describe the emotional state of their characters, and the Narrator describes the emotional state of non-player characters.

Once this power has affected the Subject, the psychic is not required to keep a line of sight to maintain it. The Subject continues to be affected by this power as long as it is maintained and he remains within the Range of this power. The empath will know if his subject's emotional state changes over time or if his subject dies or leaves the Range of this power.

While this power is maintained, the empath can reroll failed contested Charm and Psychology rolls against the Subject. Each failed roll may be rerolled only once as a result of Read Emotion.

If the Subject of this power is a spirit or has either a chronic Mental Disorder or Corruption 4 or greater in any one Corruption Path, the telepath must make a control check.

If the psychic successfully uses this power on a Subject who is possessed, he will immediately realize the Subject's condition.

This power can be used to read the emotions of animals.

## Level 2 Empathic Scan

Subject: Group

**Range:** Radius of 10 feet x the empath's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The empath can read the emotional states of all Subjects within Range of this power, whether he can see them or not, but he only discerns his Subjects' emotional states, not the reasons behind them.

When the empath uses this power, he makes a single Will roll. Separate contested Will rolls are made for each character in the affected area. If a Subject rolls equal to or higher than the empath's roll, the scan does not affect that character. If the empath rolls higher than a Subject, he can read that Subject's emotional state. If he can see a Subject, the psychic will know which emotions belong to that Subject. Players describe the emotional state of their characters, and the Narrator describes the emotional state of non-player characters. If the empath cannot see a Subject who is affected by this power, all he receives is a vague sense of the Subject's location and knowledge of the emotions the Subject is experiencing. The empath can maintain Empathic Scan to monitor his Subjects' emotional states over time. The psychic will also know if an affected individual dies or leaves the Range of this power.

While the scan is maintained, the empath can reroll failed contested Charm and Psychology rolls against a Subject affected by this power. Each failed roll may be rerolled only once as a result of Empathic Scan. Additionally, while maintaining this power, the character can use other psychical powers that require a line of sight on Subjects affected by Empathic Scan whether he can see them or not.



If one of more Subjects of this power is a spirit or has either a chronic Mental Disorder or Corruption 4 or greater in any one Corruption Path, the telepath must make a control check. If he succeeds in using this power on a Subject who is possessed, he will immediately realize the Subject's condition.

This power can be used to read the emotions of animals.

### Lie Detector

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the empath's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** This power enables the empath to gauge a Subject's emotional responses to discern whether or not the Subject is telling the truth.

When the empath uses this power, he makes a contested Will roll versus his Subject. If the Subject wins, he successfully resists the psychic's emotional manipulation and the psychic gains one Instability Point. If the empath wins, the empath will automatically know when the Subject tells a lie for as long as this power is maintained.

Once this power has affected the Subject, the psychic is not required to keep line of sight to his Subject to maintain it but must be able to hear the Subject's voice. The Subject continues to be affected by this power as long as it is maintained and he remains within the Range of this power.

### Subtle Manipulations

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 5 feet x the empath's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The empath can ignite or cool a Subject's pre-existing moods. He can cause a happy Subject to become ecstatic, an angry Subject to become passive, or a perceived slight to be blown out of all proportion.

When the character uses this power, he makes a contested Will roll versus his Subject. If the Subject wins, he successfully resists the psychic's emotional manipulation and the psychic gains one Instability Point. If the empath wins, the Subject's emotions are manipulated in a manner determined by the empath. The effect of this power varies depending on the emotional state of the Subject and the intentions of the empath. The Narrator determines how the Subject responds to the empath's manipulations.

Once this power has affected the Subject, the psychic is not required to keep a line of sight to maintain it. The Subject continues to be affected by this power as long as it is maintained and he remains within the Range of this power.

Should the empath use this power to intensify the dread felt by a character who has just failed an initial Will – Fear roll (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 161), the Subject will automatically fail his second Will – Fear roll.

If the empath uses this power to antagonize his Subject during a fit of anger, the Subject must succeed in a Will roll (DR 11 + the empath's Will) to keep control over himself. If he fails, he suffers an emotional outburst and verbally or physically assaults the offending person or object.

In addition to the emotional responses induced, the Subject suffers –1 on Will and Charm rolls while the power is maintained.

This power can be used to agitate or calm animals.

## Level 3 Bedroom Eyes

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** Line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The empath can use this power to seduce his Subject through mere eye contact. If the empath is successful, the Subject will melt into his arms, seemingly enthralled in his embrace. The manipulation is only temporary, however, and the Subject will not necessarily be kindly disposed to the character after they consummate their relationship.

When the empath uses this power, he makes a contested Will roll versus his Subject. If sexual contact with the empath would be significantly repellent to the target under ordinary circumstances, the Subject receives a +2 to his roll. If the Subject wins, the attempted seduction fails and the psychic gains one Instability Point. If the empath wins, as long as this power is maintained, the Subject will follow the character anywhere, provided he promises sexual contact in the immediate future.

If the empath succeeds and does anything to harm his Subject, mentally or physically, he must make a contested Charm roll against his Subject's Will. If the Subject wins, he shakes off the effects of this power and is no longer enthralled by the empath. If the empath wins, his Subject remains under his seductive spell.

Once this power has affected the Subject, the psychic is not required to keep eye contact to maintain it. If the psychic ceases to maintain Bedroom Eyes, the effects of this power end immediately, a potentially embarrassing moment for all parties concerned.

### Heart Strings

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** See below

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** By focusing his attentions on a single Subject over time, the empath can induce a Subject to fall in love with him. There is a tendency among unscrupulous empaths with such capabilities to parasitically feed off their Subjects, bleeding them dry of monetary and emotional wealth, leaving them only once their fortunes flounder.

For this power to have any effect, the Subject must be sexually compatible with the empath.

After spending at least one hour alone with his Subject, the empath makes a contested Will roll against his Subject. If the Subject wins, he successfully resists the psychic's emotional manipulation and the psychic gains one Instability Point. If the psychic wins, the Subject's fondness for him grows. Once the empath has accumulated a number of successes equal to his Subject's base Will, the seduction is complete and his Subject falls in love with him. The empath can only make one Heart Strings roll against his Subject each day. Should the empath fail to spend an hour with his Subject on any given day before his emotional domination is complete, the

process automatically fails and the empath must begin his psychical seduction again.

Once he has succeeded in making his Subject fall in love with him, his Subject's affection for the empath will be second to none. The Subject is likely to break off all other affairs of the heart and will prefer to spend his every waking hour in the empath's presence. The empath gains +2 on all contested Will and Charm rolls against his Subject.

Heart Strings is a powerful ability that lingers for some time. For its effects to wear off, a Subject must be separated from the empath for a length of time equal to 1 month x the empath's base Charm. Even after this time, the Subject is likely to be fondly disposed to the character unless confronted with irrefutable evidence of the empath's treachery and philandering. Of course, with sufficient evidence, intense love can be turned to intense hatred.

### Provocation

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the empath's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The empath can use this power to trigger violent emotional outbursts in a Subject. While affected by this power, a Subject will be overwhelmed with rage and will attack over the slightest provocation or perceived insult.

When the character activates this power, he makes a contested Will roll versus his Subject. If the Subject wins, he successfully resists the psychic's emotional manipulation and the psychic gains one

Instability Point. If the empath wins, the Subject's emotional state becomes murderously unstable.

Once this power has affected the Subject, the psychic is not required to keep a line of sight to maintain it. The Subject continues to be affected by this power as long as it is maintained and he remains within the Range of this power.

While under the effects of this power, the Subject must make a Will roll (DR 11 + the empath's Will) each minute. If the Subject succeeds, nothing happens. If the Subject fails, he flies into a rage and attacks anything or anyone nearby, likely the poor sod closest to him. If anyone in the Subject's vicinity is doing something to draw the Subject's ire, that person will become the target of his rage. If an enraged Subject is holding a weapon or solid object of any kind, he will attack with it. If the Subject is unarmed, he will fight with his bare hands rather than drawing a weapon. Once enraged, the Subject will continue to attack those around him until he is restrained or the empath ceases to maintain this power.

This power affects animals.

### Level 4 Grip of Fear

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the empath's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The empath can use this power to invoke a sense of fear so powerful that the Subject's mind seizes, effectively paralyzing him.



When the empath uses this power, he makes a contested Will roll versus his Subject. If the Subject wins, he successfully resists the psychic's emotional manipulation and the psychic gains one Instability Point. If the empath wins, the Subject is paralyzed with fear and cannot move or take any actions as long as this power is maintained. The Subject is freed from the effects of this power if he suffers a wound while the power is maintained.

Once this power has affected the Subject, the psychic is not required to keep a line of sight. The Subject continues to be affected by this power as long as it is maintained and he remains within the Range of this power.

This power affects animals.

### **Mass Hysteria**

**Subject:** Group

**Range:** Radius of 15 feet x the empath's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The empath can use this power to influence whole crowds at a time. He can cause peaceful crowds to riot, rioting crowds to calmly disperse, or any other emotional manipulation that suits his purposes.

When the empath uses this power, the character's controller declares the emotional state the empath is broadcasting and then makes a Will roll. Separate contested Will rolls are made for each character in the area affected by this power. If a Subject rolls equal to or higher than the empath's roll, the Subject is not affected. If the empath rolls higher than a Subject, the Subject is affected.

If the psychic can see an individual, he may make a control check to keep that character from being affected by this power. This control check must be made before the character makes a roll to resist the effects of this power. If the control check succeeds, that character is not affected by this power.

The exact effects of this power are determined by the Narrator. Though affected Subjects will take on the emotional state broadcast by the empath, such manipulations are dangerously unpredictable. No one knows how a particular mind will react to sudden emotions with no obvious cause.

The empath must make a control check after using this power.

Provided the emotions projected are not too complex, this power will affect animals.

### **True Emotion**

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the empath's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** The empath can use this power to create true and lasting emotional responses that will take a lifetime to fade without the intervention of a skilled alienist.

When the empath uses this power, the empath's controller describes the emotions his character is instilling, their strength, and what the emotions pertain to. *For example, the empath could instill a subject with a powerful love of clowns, hatred for a close friend, or a mild distaste for top hats.*

When the empath uses this power, he makes a contested Will roll against his Subject. If the Subject wins, he successfully resists the psychic's emotional manipulation and the psychic gains one Instability Point. If the empath wins, he is one step closer to instilling the emotion in the Subject. A Subject can only be affected by this power once per day. Once the empath succeeds in using True Emotion on his Subject a number of times equal to the Subject's base Will, the emotion will be instilled and the Subject will react as though the emotion were entirely natural. The Subject's mind will even do its best to justify the emotional response.

Until the empath accumulates a number of successes equal to the Subject's base Will, he must use this power on his Subject once per day. Should the empath fail to use this power on his Subject on any day before the emotion is implanted, the process automatically fails and the empath must start it again.

### **Level 5 Dominion**

**Subject:** Group

**Range:** Radius of 200 feet x the empath's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The empath is a force of human nature. He can blanket city blocks with his emotional manipulations, inciting bloody riots or orgies at will. Even when he is not consciously using this power, the empath's emotional state bleeds out into the world around him. Should he feel melancholic, the streets empty. When angered, they run with blood. When he dreams, his dreamscapes cause ripples through the consciousness of those around him. Communities of artists, lunatics, and libertines are drawn to the empath's vicinity, but anyone he sees on a regular basis will either be terrified of him or utterly cowed by the sheer power of his personality.

When the psychic intentionally uses this power, he declares the emotional state he is broadcasting and then makes a Will roll. Separate contested Will rolls are made for each character in the affected area. If a Subject rolls equal to or higher than the psychic's roll, the Subject is not affected by Dominion. If the psychic rolls higher than a Subject, the Subject is affected.

If the psychic can see an individual, he may make a control check to prevent that character from being affected by this power. If he succeeds, that character is not affected. This control check is made before the character makes a roll to resist the effects of this power. If the control check succeeds, that character is not affected by this power.

The exact effects of this ability are determined by the Narrator but should be extremely memorable. The intentional use of this power is the sort of thing that alerts the Oracle Project to the character's existence.

While the empath is experiencing a powerful emotion, the Range of this power is doubled.

The character gains one Instability Point each time he intentionally uses this power.

This power affects animals in strange ways. Most animals that are regularly exposed to this power simply leave the affected area. Those that cannot leave suffer from constant agitation.

### Heart Stopper

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the empath's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** The psychic can kill by causing a Subject to suffer overwhelming fear. The victim is actually killed by either heart failure or aneurism but usually not before unleashing a scream of unadulterated terror. Many victims tear out their own eyes before their hearts explode.

When the character uses this power, he makes a contested Will roll against his Subject. If the empath wins, the Subject dies within seconds. If the Subject wins, he lives and the empath gains an Instability Point. However, even if he wins the roll, the Subject experiences a feeling of absolute dread and must make a Will – Fear roll (DR 11 + the empath's Will) (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 161).

If the Subject lives, he will remain terrified of the empath for the rest of his life. After using Heart Stopper at least once on a given Subject, the empath gains a permanent +2 bonus on Charm – Intimidation rolls (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 86) against that subject.

### Soul Searcher

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** Line of sight

**Trigger:** Passive

**Description:** The empath has learned to read people like open books. At a glance, he will know what a Subject is feeling, his emotional fortitude, and how he will react to any given situation.

When the empath makes a contested Will roll against a Subject he can see, the Subject cannot add his Concentration Skill to the roll.

Additionally, the empath can reroll failed Charm, Psychology, and Torture rolls against characters he can see. Each failed roll can be rerolled only once as a result of Soul Searcher.

## Extrasensory Perception

*I saw, or seemed to see, that I was now all force; that I was soul loosed from the body save by the invisible cord which connected me with it; also, that I was in the realm of soul, the soul of matter; and that as my soul and the soul-realm in which I had now entered, was the real force which kept matter together, I could just as easily break the atoms apart and pass through them as one can put a solid body into the midst of water or air.*

—Chevalier de B——, *Ghost Land*, 1876

Extrasensory Perception is the psychical ability to acquire sensory information beyond that which is detectable by the physical senses. These psychics, sometimes referred to as ESPers, seers, or clairvoyants, can perceive the energy surrounding all living things in its raw and generally imperceptible form. Extrasensory Perception does not represent a sharpening of the senses. Instead, this Devotion is an exercise in mental projection and acuteness. As a clairvoyant gains greater control over his powers, he will develop the ability to perceive distant places, people, or things. Eventually, he may learn to project his conscience outside of his body.

Though Extrasensory Perception is generally described in terms of what a psychic can see, this Devotion does not rely on the sense of sight or any other ordinary sense of the body, and the vocabulary of sight is not used by all clairvoyants. There



have been blind psychics whose supernormal senses allow them to function as though their physical sight were intact. These individuals generally describe their perceptions in terms of synaesthesia: “smelling” the taint of the unliving or “hearing” words written on a paper.

Clairvoyants must take care not to use their powers to break the law. Since the passage of the Psychic Vigilance Act in 1976, it has been illegal to use psychological powers to spy on British citizens. Though virtually any use of a clairvoyant’s powers has the possibility of breaking the letter of the law, in practice, most of such crimes are either too minor to prosecute or virtually impossible to prove.

## Playing a Clairvoyant

Generally regarded as consummate professionals, clairvoyants are known to work tirelessly toward their chosen pursuits. They tend to be quiet, contemplative, and solitary. Though there are always exceptions, most would rather observe the world in silence than be noticed and spoken to. Some clairvoyants, however, take their miraculous talents to the stage. These psychics become famous for both their showmanship and wondrous capabilities. Regardless of their choice of public life, clairvoyants take their privacy very seriously. Their subtle gifts grant them easy access to the secrets of others, and they are all too aware that these same talents could be turned against them.

Those clairvoyants focused on success above all else are prone to Drive Corruption while others succumb to the depredations of Desire Corruption. Naturally voyeuristic, these psychics use their heightened gifts to experience the myriad variety of sensations the metropolis has to offer.

Since clairvoyants spend so much time utilizing senses beyond their physical bodies, they are constantly at risk of developing the Dementia Mental Disorder (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 152). Among those clairvoyants given to madness, self-inflicted blindness is common. It seems that many demented psychics come to believe their physical vision is a hindrance and that tearing out their eyes will enhance their powers.

Clairvoyants also commonly suffer disassociation from their bodies. They may fail to react to violent or loud stimuli because they believe it to be happening far away from their corporeal selves. Of course, these psychics may also develop the opposite habit, reacting to distant sounds and events as if they are a threat to their physical bodies.

## Extrasensory Perception Rules

### Animals

Most Extrasensory Perception powers have no effect on animals. However, those that do are indicated in their descriptions.

### Split Perception

A clairvoyant using Astral Projection, Major Clairvoyance, Minor Clairvoyance, Revelation, and Teleperception has the capacity to use split his awareness between several locations

simultaneously. Should the character activate one of these powers while maintaining another, he must make a control check using the DR of the highest level power he is using. Additionally, a clairvoyant using more than one of the powers listed above simultaneously suffers a cumulative –1 penalty on Wit rolls for each of these psychological powers he is maintaining.

The character must also make a split-perception control check if he uses one of the listed powers while already maintaining a separate instance of the same power. *For example, if the character is using Minor Clairvoyance to see into a room adjacent to his flat while simultaneously using Minor Clairvoyance to watch the doorway to his bedroom, he must make a Will roll against DR 17 (11 + double the level of the Minor Clairvoyance power, 3).*

If the character succeeds, the power activates normally. If he fails, he gains one Instability Point for failing the control check and the powers he is maintaining expire.

Note that while some combinations of ESP powers cause split perception, many of these powers can be used in conjunction without a Split Perception control roll. *For example, a character that is using Minor Clairvoyance to spy on a meeting could also use Aura Sight to gain additional information about the subjects observed without making a control check for split perception.*

## Extrasensory Perception Powers

The information a character learns from Extrasensory Perception powers is left up to the Narrator to describe. When designing scenarios, Narrators should make special note of any clairvoyants in the group. Extrasensory Perception powers can take stories in many exciting directions but are also capable of foiling or derailing more mundane mysteries.

### Level 1 Psi-Senses

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Self

**Trigger:** Passive

**Description:** This power augments the clairvoyant’s mundane senses, giving him supernormal insights into the world around him. Lost and hidden objects call out to him. Important clues glow in his presence. Shadows move aside for his gaze.

The psychic can reroll failed Wit – Perception rolls (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 160). Each failed roll may be rerolled only once due to Psi-Senses.

### Sense Presence

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** Radius of 10 feet x the clairvoyant’s Will

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** The psychic can open himself up to the lingering psychological impression left by the presence of another. When the psychic uses this power by focusing his thoughts on an individual, he can determine if that individual has recently been within the Range of this power. The psychic can only use this power to detect the presence of a Subject whom he has met personally or whom

he can accurately visualize. The more the psychic knows about a Subject, the greater his chances of success when using this power.

When the clairvoyant activates this power, he makes a Will roll to sense his Subject. The DR for the roll depends on the psychic's familiarity with the Subject. If the psychic knows the individual personally, the DR is 14. If the psychic has detailed information pertaining to his Subject, including a photograph or life-like rendering of the Subject, but has not met the Subject, the DR is 16. If the psychic has only a photograph and no other information, the DR is 18. If all the psychic has to go on is a verbal description of the Subject, his DR is 20. If the area the psychic is sensing gets a lot of foot traffic, such as in the heart of a rookery or on a busy street, increase the DR by 2. Subtract the Will of the Subject the psychic is trying to sense from the DR and add the number of days that have passed since the Subject was last within area.

*For example, Acep's clairvoyant Hardeen attempts to use this power to determine if a missing contact made his way home one night. Because Hardeen knows the subject personally, the base DR for Hardeen's roll is 14. Acep's Narrator adds 3 to the DR for the number of days Hardeen's contact has been absent from his abode. The DR is then lowered by the contact's Will for a final DR of 15.*

If the Subject has not been in the location, the attempt fails automatically.

The Narrator should never tell a player the DR for a Sense Presence roll and should have the player to make the roll whether or not there is any chance of success to avoid giving away unintended information.

If the psychic fails this roll, he gains one Instability Point but can attempt to use this power again. If the psychic succeeds, he learns if his Subject has been in the area, where within the range of this power the Subject was, and how many days ago the Subject was last there.

If the psychic uses this power to sense the presence of an individual with one or more chronic Mental Disorders or with Corruption 4 or greater in a single Corruption Path, he must make a control check. Whether or not he succeeds, he can go on to use this power normally.

## Teleperception

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** 10 feet x the clairvoyant's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The clairvoyant can use this power to change the perspective of his mundane senses. Instead of receiving sensory input from his present physical location, he can "throw" his sight, hearing, or any other sense to a point within the range of this power. The psychic gains sensory input from the point he projects to as if he were standing at that location. The character could literally watch his own back by throwing his senses to a point behind himself or listen at the door from a hiding place across the street. While using this power, the character does not receive sensory input from his physical location.

This power can approximate any of the character's senses as long as it is maintained, effectively giving a blind psychic the ability to see or a deaf psychic the ability to hear. While maintaining this power,

the character can use other psychological powers that require a line of sight on targets he perceives as a result of Teleperception.

The character can maintain several instances of this power simultaneously to gather sensory information from several locations at the same time, but the character must split his perception to do so.

## Level 2

### Aura Sight

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** Line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The clairvoyant can see and read the ordinarily invisible aetheric energy that surrounds all living things. With practice, the psychic can learn to discern a Subject's mental, physical, and emotional states. The aura of a happy person in the peak of health glows brilliantly. A Subject on his deathbed may appear to have a very dim aura. If a Subject is killed while a psychic using this power watches, the Subject's aura will appear to be quickly extinguished, like a snuffed-out candle flame. Individuals with exceptionally vibrant personalities may sparkle or flare with intense light. Unstable personalities may glow with scintillating colours. Physicians with these abilities can literally see their patient's health fluctuate as they operate. A half-lifer or undead character will be readily identifiable to a psychic using Aura Sight.

Using this power does not require a die roll.

If the psychic wishes, he can maintain this power multiple times to observe the auras of several individuals simultaneously. Maintaining several instances of this power does not require the psychic to make split-perception control checks.

While maintaining Aura Sight, the clairvoyant can observe as his Subject's aura changes with his mood and health. Additionally, while maintaining this power, the clairvoyant gains +1 on Charm, Interrogation, Medicine, Parapsychology, Psychology, Torture, and Wit – Perception rolls involving the Subject observed.

If a Subject uses a psychological power while the clairvoyant is observing his aura, the clairvoyant immediately becomes aware that a psychological power is in use but cannot identify the power that is being used.

A blind character could use Aura Sight to get a psychological "view" of a Subject, enabling him to use psychological powers that ordinarily require line of sight.

If the character is in the presence of a spirit that is not presently manifesting, he can use this power on the spirit to see its true form. If he uses this power on a Subject who is possessed, he will immediately realize the Subject's condition.

This power can be used to read the auras of animals.

### Darklight

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The clairvoyant can use this power to see in complete darkness. Under such conditions, the psychic perceives physical



objects to give off a soft, gold-grey glow, allowing the character to manoeuvre as if the environment was well lit. A character using this power cannot distinguish colours beyond light and dark but could read a printed page.

While maintaining this power, the character never suffers ranged attack modifiers for poor visibility due to darkness (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 168).

This power can approximate vision while it is maintained, giving a blind psychic the ability to see.

### **Psychometry**

**Subject:** Single object

**Range:** Touch

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The clairvoyant can read psychical impressions left behind on physical objects by the touch of sentient living or half-living creatures. When the psychic uses this power, he receives a mental picture of the last person to touch the object.

To read an object, the psychic must physically touch the object while maintaining this power. When he uses this power, he makes a Will roll. The base DR for this roll (16) is modified by subtracting the Will of the last character to touch the object before the psychic and adding the number of days ago that he touched it.

*For example, Acep's clairvoyant, Hardeen, uses Psychometry on a revolver that was discarded at the location of a murder. The DR for this roll is 16 (base DR 16, -3 for the killer's Will, +3 for the days that have passed since the killer touched the weapon). Acep rolls a 14 for Hardeen and adds his Will 3 for a total of 17. Hardeen receives a clear image of the killer and can determine when he last touched the revolver.*

The Narrator should never tell a player the DR for a Psychometry roll to avoid giving away unintended information.

If the psychic fails, he gains one Instability Point but can attempt to use this power again. If he succeeds, the psychic gains a clear image of the last person to touch the object before him as well as a sense of how recently the object was touched.

When the psychic touches an object while maintaining this power, he is not considered to be the last person to touch the object and leaves no impression on the object.

While maintaining this power, the psychic can use additional psychical powers on the image granted by the object, such as Aura Sight or Read Emotion, to gain additional information about the character who last touched the object.

Some objects carry powerful psychological stains that extend beyond the impressions left by ordinary people. Murder weapons, holy relics, and treasured artefacts often have their own auras that can be read for decades or even centuries. The impressions left on these objects do not change when touched unless they become stained with an even more powerful impression. When a clairvoyant attempts to use Psychometry on such an artefact, the Narrator should adjust the DR for the character's roll; the more powerful the stain, the lower the DR. If the psychic succeeds in the roll, he will likely gain far more information about the object than he bargained for. Instead of a mental snapshot of the last person who handled the object, the psychic's mind will be flooded with images and sensations pertaining to the impressions left on the object, and he must make a control check.

Some objects are so psychically charged that a clairvoyant will get a vision from the object whether or not this power is in use. In such a case, the psychic that unwittingly handles the object must still make a control check. Some artefacts can reach out to nearby clairvoyants whether they come in contact with the object or not. Such powerful objects often affect the psychic's dreams for days after he comes in contact with it.

### Level 3 Minor Clairvoyance

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** 150 feet x the clairvoyant's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** While in a trance, the clairvoyant can use this power to project his senses to a distant location within the range of this power. The clairvoyant can "see" and "hear" as if he were standing in the location to which he projected his senses. While maintaining this power, the character can change the location on which his senses are centred at will.

This power can approximate vision and hearing while it is maintained, giving a blind psychic the ability to see or a deaf psychic the ability to hear. While maintaining this power, the character can use other psychical powers that require line of sight on Subjects whom he perceives as a result of Minor Clairvoyance.

The character can maintain several instances of this power to gather sensory information from several locations simultaneously, but the character must split his perception to do so (see Split Perception, page 76).

### Psi Tracker

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** See below

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The clairvoyant can use this power to trace the psychological trail left by another. The lingering aetheric trail appears to the psychic as a faint spectral glow that traces the movement of his Subject across the ground or through the air.

Before the psychic can follow a trail, he must first confirm his prey was at his location with the successful use of the Sense Presence power (see pages 76 – 77). Once the psychic picks up the trail, he can follow it by walking in his Subject's steps.

If the trail crosses into an area frequented by large concentrations of sentient living or half-living beings, the psychic must succeed in a Wit roll (DR 20) or lose the trail. Subtract the Will of the Subject from the DR, and add the number of days since the Subject has last been in the location.

The Narrator should never tell a player the DR for a Psi Tracker roll to avoid giving away unintended information.

If the psychic succeeds, he can continue to follow the trail. If he fails, he loses the trail and must succeed in another use of Sense Presence to pick up the trail once more.

*For example, Acep's clairvoyant, Hardeen, is using Psi Tracker to follow a thief through a crowded slum. The Narrator determines that Hardeen must succeed in a Wit roll to keep from losing the trail. The DR for this roll is 18 (base DR 20, -3 for the thief's Will, +1 for the days that have passed since the thief crossed through the area). This time, Hardeen's luck does not hold out. Acep rolls a 9 and adds Hardeen's Will 3 for a total of 12. Not only does Hardeen fail to track the thief, but he must succeed in using Sense Presence again before he attempts to use Psi Tracker again.*

### Telelocation

**Subject:** Single object

**Range:** 5 miles x the clairvoyant's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** While in a trance, the clairvoyant can use this power to learn the location of an object by focusing his mind upon it. Many psychics describe objects they telelocate as calling out to them; the closer the psychic is to the object, the louder this call is said to become. Telelocation gives the psychic a general impression of



how far away an object is and in what direction it lies rather than giving him its precise whereabouts.

It is easier for the psychic to locate objects he has touched, but he may be able to locate any object he can envision. Envisioning a specific object the psychic has never seen may require studying photographs of the object or telepathically looking into the memories of someone who has seen it.

Once in a trance, the psychic must spend five minutes focusing his mind on the object he wishes to telelocate. He then makes a Will roll (DR 20). The psychic gains +4 on this roll if he has ever physically touched the sought-for object. If the roll fails, the psychic suffers a dreadful headache, gains an Instability Point for his troubles, and comes out of the trance. If the roll succeeds and the object is within the range of this power, the clairvoyant immediately discerns the approximate direction and distance to the object. If the psychic succeeds but the object is not within the range of this power, he will not be able to gain any idea of the object's location.

After succeeding in this initial roll, if the psychic has a map and the object is within the range of this power, he can attempt another Will roll (DR 16) to pinpoint the object's location, even while in a trance. If he fails, he cannot pinpoint its location.

While this power is maintained, the psychic will know if the object is moved or is moving as well as the speed at which it is moving. If the object is within the range of another of the psychic's powers, such as Minor Clairvoyance, the psychic can automatically centre the other power on the object's location.

This power can be used to locate specific animals as well as objects.

#### **Level 4 Aura Scan**

**Subject:** Group

**Range:** Line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The psychic can use this power to read the auras of all individuals in his field of vision. This power gives the character the same insights and bonuses as Aura Sight (see page 77) but does not require the psychic to maintain a separate instance of this power to read each character's aura.

#### **Major Clairvoyance**

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** 10 miles x the clairvoyant's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** While in a trance, the clairvoyant can use this power to project his senses to a distant location within the range of this power. Other than its extended range, this power performs exactly like Minor Clairvoyance (see page 79).

#### **Photospheres**

**Subject:** Group

**Range:** Line of sight

**Trigger:** Passive

**Description:** This power enables the psychic to perceive photospheres, pools of faint aetheric energy that constantly drift from the physical and spiritual bodies of sentient creatures, while maintaining Aura Scan or Aura Sight. If the clairvoyant can see a

Subject's aura, he can automatically see the Subject's photospheres as well.

Photospheres can float several feet from their creator before dissipating into thin air. While in motion, the sphere trails glowing aetheric mist that connects it to the being that spawned it. Like auras, a photosphere reflects an individual's mental, physical, and emotional states, but it also reveals additional information about the character who created it. An individual with a particularly low self image or unstable mental state will have far darker photospheres than an individual in good mental health. Within each sphere is a moving image pertaining to the psyche of the creature that created it. The images may reflect what the character is thinking, reveal his innermost fears or desires, or take on dire shapes reflective of the darker aspects of the individual's soul. A murderer may be trailed by the faces of his victims. A madman may ooze photospheres made up of millions of tiny spiders. An individual in mourning may be surrounded by images of the departed. The photospheres of half-lifers are always pale grey and ooze faint smoke trails.

When this power is used, the Narrator describes the appearance of the photospheres surrounding an individual, giving the psychic insight into the Subject's psychology. While the clairvoyant can perceive a Subject's photospheres, he may reroll failed Charm, Parapsychology, Psychology, Torture, and Interrogation rolls involving the Subject. A failed roll may be rerolled only once due to Photospheres.

Spirits do not have photospheres. They are extinguished with the aura at the time of death.

#### **Level 5 Astral Projection**

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Limitless

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** While in a trance, the psychic can project his consciousness out of his body. At such times, the psychic's consciousness travels invisibly as a spirit. Obviously, an individual who can astrally project is capable of amazing feats of surveillance and reconnaissance. Psychics of this magnitude are often utilized to communicate across the globe. Government agencies go to great lengths to recruit such gifted individuals despite their potential for mental instability. It is said that Her Majesty's government employs teams of powerful telepathic clairvoyants to psychically carry messages and to unobtrusively watch over the Queen at all times.

When a clairvoyant astrally projects, his consciousness moves at incredible speeds. If the psychic has been to a location and knows where it is geographically, he can project his consciousness there instantly. Otherwise he must project his mind across the face of the earth until he reaches the desired location. Though the character's mind moves at hundreds of miles per minute, finding a location by blind reckoning can take weeks of effort.

While he is astrally projecting, the astral form can be affected by the Empathy, Extrasensory Perception, Prescience, and Telepathy Devotions. The character's astral form may be detected by psychics using Aura Scan, Aura Sight, Empathic Scan, Mind Scan, Omniscience, or Revelation. While using this power, the psychic's astral form can be affected by the Second Sight powers Death

## Psychically Resistant Locations

For reasons not entirely understood, there are regions of the world that are not amenable to psychic observation by means including, but not limited to, Astral Projection, Clairvoyance, and Teleperception. The heart of Paris, the Americas west of the Mississippi River, Ireland, and any portion of the Dark Continent past a scant few miles inland from the Mediterranean are among these areas. Clairvoyants attempting to access these regions usually simply fail, immediately waking from their trances. In some cases, the psychic may slip into a coma without warning, never to recover.

Speaker, Ghost Sight, and Impression as if he were a spirit. While astrally projecting, the Ranges of the psychic's powers are based on the location of his astral form rather than his physical location, and he uses his powers as if he were physically in the location he is projecting to.

This power can approximate vision and hearing while it is maintained, giving a blind psychic the ability to see or a deaf psychic the ability to hear.

When the psychic uses this power he gains one Instability Point.

## Revelation

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** A radius of 500 feet x the clairvoyant's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** This power enables the psychic to sense the presence of others as they come and go within the Range of this power. While maintaining this power, the character knows how many sentient individuals are within the Range of this power, including other psychics who are astrally projecting. He will also know who these individuals are if he has met them before.

While maintaining this power, the character can use other psychical powers that require a line of sight to Subjects he perceives as a result of Revelation. While maintaining this power, the psychic can identify the presence of undead within the affected area.

If the clairvoyant is the target of a Surprise Attack (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 163) by a living or half-lifer assailant while maintaining this power, the attack automatically misses though the character immediately comes out of his trance if he was in one.

If the character uses this power in an area that is populated by more than a handful of sentient minds, he gains an Instability Point.

## Seeker

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** Limitless

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** While in a trance, the psychic can use this power to learn the general location of an individual or a physical object, no matter where it is in the world. Seeker does not give the character the precise location of his Subject. Instead, it gives him an impression of how far he is from the Subject. The psychic finds it far easier to locate objects he has touched or to find individuals he has met, but

he will be able to locate any Subject he can completely envision. Envisioning a specific object or person the psychic has never seen may require studying photographs of the object or telepathically looking into the memories of someone who has seen the Subject.

After five minutes of focusing his mind on the Subject while in a trance, the clairvoyant makes a Will roll to locate his Subject. The DR for the roll depends on the psychic's familiarity with the Subject. If the psychic has handled the object or knows the individual, the DR is 16. If the psychic must rely on a photo or description of the Subject, the DR is 20. If the Subject is a sentient creature, add the Subject's Will to the psychic's roll.

If the roll fails, if the psychic suffers a dreadful headache, gains an Instability Point for his troubles, and may try again after focusing his mind for another five minutes. If the roll succeeds, the clairvoyant immediately senses the approximate direction and distance to the Subject. If the psychic has a map, he can pinpoint the object's location even while in a trance.

While this power is maintained, the clairvoyant will know if his Subject moves or is moving as well as the speed at which it is moving. If his Subject is within the range of another of the psychic's powers, such as Minor Clairvoyance, the psychic can automatically centre the other power on the Subject's location.

This power can be used to locate specific animals.

## Prescience

Prescience is the gift to predict the future through vision and premonition. At first, the prescient, or precog, can use his psychical powers to sense impending danger and the probable outcome of any given course of action. As his abilities grow stronger, the precog will begin to see the past and future unfold before him in visions. These visions can be triggered at will, but they will often occur uncontrollably and without warning.

Augury has never been an exact science, and its practitioners are often forced to rely on dead reckoning. It is a difficult gift, and the meaning of what is foretold is not always clear; visions are often contaminated with dream-images and projections of the subconscious, making them difficult to decipher. For these reasons, precogs have a dreadful reputation for fallibility.

Prescience is not a gentle Devotion. A precog must often wade through a waking nightmare, constantly in fear of his next revelation. It is a vicious irony that the most valuable premonitions are often also the most terrible. Furthermore, precogs risk losing perspective on temporal existence. In their visions they may lose themselves in places long gone and forget those which still remain. At times, they may refer to people they have not yet met or events that have not come to pass.

Not all precogs become hermits, however. Some respond by becoming reckless gamblers, relying completely on their talents to keep them out of harm's way. Other precogs suffer delusions of grandeur, coming to see themselves as instruments of fate. Taking an active hand in destiny, these psychics attempt to bring about the revelations their visions foretell. Such individuals may believe their visions are sent by God, the Great Architect of the Universe, the



Secret Masters, or any other extra-worldly agency to which their talents may be ascribed. It is not unknown for these madmen to draw a following among like-minded individuals. The phenomenon has given rise to a number of doomsday cults that are particularly active in the Underground.

The use of many precognitive powers requires the psychic to enter a trance or meditative state. In such a state, the precog opens himself up to visions. The precog may have a preferred method of entering trances. Some clear their minds and focus on a specific topic, hoping to induce a vision pertaining to that Subject. Those psychics with a sense of the romantic or anachronistic may use crystal balls or playing cards as a focus for their powers. While in a trance, the precog's posture may change and his voice may take on peculiar qualities as if he were possessed. Some have linked this state to that used by a medium in channelling spirits, but alienists versed in parapsychology believe such responses are due to a latent split personality. Such a personality would exist to shield the psychic from a continual stream of unwanted and confusing stimuli that could otherwise overload his already troubled mind.

Despite the problem of unreliable visions, precognitive psychics are much sought after. Many Neo-Victorian oracles make comfortable livings sharing their insights with paying clients, and the most talented are able to conjure visions pertaining to any Subject they turn their minds to. Such individuals may pursue lucrative careers in business, cultivating a clientele among the rich and powerful. Throughout the Reclamation, precognitive talents were among the most effective means of detecting or foretelling outbreaks of the Plague. Today, the metropolis is watched over by Oracle, Psychic Branch's precognitive early warning system. The employees of Oracle work around the clock, receiving and deciphering visions of possible futures to come.

### Playing a Precog

The Neo-Victorians are just as interested in seeking the advice of mystics to navigate their fates as their forebears were. As a result, professional precogs can command very high wages for their services. Those who can decipher future market fluctuations are assured fame and fortune while those cursed with insight into the most terrible of human calamities are doomed to the obscurity of the streets or thankless government work.

Not every psychic chooses to make his living behind a desk. Led by their strange visions, psychic explorers have met with great success uncovering the lost colonies of the Empire. Precognitive detectives have experimented with solving crimes before they occur, arriving in the nick of time to save a would-be victim from his would-be killer. Attempts to earn an income through the use of preventative augury have landed more than one psychic detective in a court of law on charges of extortion. While not strictly illegal, the courts do not look kindly on psychics demanding compensation before informing someone of his impending death or dismemberment. There is also a breed of precog who applies their talents to martial pursuits. Relying on their supernormal intuition to bolster their reflexes and chances of survival, these individuals may become skilled Undertakers or inhumanly proficient bodyguards.

Many precogs spend a disproportionate amount of time dwelling on thoughts of death and ruin. The visions of such psychics are clouded with omens of their own doom and dissolution in which

they see their own deaths and the deaths of those closest to them. They may develop a powerful aversion to making new acquaintances because they have seen too many friends die. Constantly withdrawn and melancholic, these psychics live joyless existences that amount to little more than noting the passage of days. Ultimately, a precog may suffer the *ennui* of a being that has lived out a hundred lifetimes. Most end their lives in the throes of dementia.

## Prescience Powers

Prescience powers are unpredictable and mysterious. As the psychic begins to develop his powers, he generally has little control over the visions the psychic receives. As his command over his powers grow, the precog will be able to choose the Subjects of his visions but will have no control over their content. The visions the character receives can also be repeated, especially if they foretell important events that have not yet come to pass.

Prophecy can be an amazing storytelling tool. If a Narrator has a precog in his group, it is best to plan out some visions before beginning a play session. That way, the Narrator can work the visions into the story, steering the actions of the players and providing them with clues along the way. If players abuse or come to rely too heavily on visions, the Narrator should remind them how fickle these powers can be. Visions can be repeated, used to lead players astray, or become desperate and incomprehensible to ratchet up tension during play.

### Level 1 Flashes

Subject: Single target

Range: Touch

Trigger: Passive

**Description:** The precog experiences flashes of psychical insight whenever he touches a living or half-living Subject. These flashes always pertain to the near future of the Subject. The information gained will generally be very simple, usually limited to a brief vision, a sense of impending tragedy, or a few words uttered in the back of his mind.

If the Subject has a particularly high Corruption rating (four or more in one or more paths), the insights gained will inevitably be of the darkest nature, revealing aspects of the Subject most would prefer remain hidden. In such cases, the psychic must make a control check.

Since this is a passive power, the flashes occur whether the psychic wills them to or not. The Narrator determines the information passed onto the psychic through such contact.

### Premonition

Subject: Self

Range: Self

Trigger: Passive

**Description:** Throughout his daily life, the psychic regularly receives vague impressions of the future. The precog may receive impressions of dread before a catastrophe occurs, especially if he knows those potentially involved. At times of great loss, precogs in the same area may share the same premonition.

These impressions come without warning and cannot be intentionally triggered by the psychic. The information conveyed by such premonitions is limited to a vague feeling or sense of the future rather



than an actual vision. While these premonitions can be very strong, the psychic may not have any idea to what they pertain. A premonition may also be reoccurring, nagging at the precog for weeks or months at a time.

The Narrator determines when the psychic experiences a premonition. The character should receive one or two premonitions every play session. These impressions may or may not have anything to do with the scenario.

If the psychic receives a particularly powerful premonition of great tragedy, he must make a control check.

### **Sixth Sense**

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Self

**Trigger:** Passive

**Description:** The precog possesses a sixth sense that alerts him to impending danger. Sixth Sense may take the form of a brief vision of some personal calamity, an internal scream, a feeling of nausea, or another method of warning. This power pushes the psychic into action and enables him to sidestep harm. In the case of a premeditated threat, the psychic may feel something is wrong days in advance and the sense of danger will grow until the threat is nearly upon him.

The character gains +1 on initiative rolls. Surprise Attacks (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 163) targeting the character automatically miss, even while he is asleep. If the character is about to be harmed while sleeping, he either tosses in his sleep the instant he would be harmed, causing the attack to miss, or wakes up with just enough time to move out of the way.

### **Level 2 Awareness**

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Self

**Trigger:** Passive

**Description:** This power gives the psychic an enhanced awareness of his surroundings. The psychic always knows when he is being watched; he can feel eyes or psychical senses on him at any distance. The precog even knows when he is being watched by spirits or astrally projecting clairvoyants.

If the precog remains motionless for one minute, he can make a Wit roll (DR 16) to attempt to psychically pinpoint the location of an observer. If the roll fails, nothing happens. If the psychic succeeds, he can sense the watcher's physical or astral location whether he is nearby, in the spirit world, or watching remotely through the application of psychical powers. If the observer is within fifty feet x the precog's Will, he will know the watcher's general direction and distance from him.

- This power can detect the undead.

### **Portent**

**Subject:** One topic

**Range:** Self

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** This power enables the psychic to receive a premonition pertaining to any topic upon which he meditates. To use Portent, the character must first enter a trance (see pages 66-67) and focus

his mind on a topic for five minutes. The precog then makes a control check. If he fails, he suddenly awakens from his trance. If he succeeds, the precog receives a premonition.

The content of this premonition will be very simple, generally limited to a sense of good or ill. The character should have little idea of what this portent actually foretells.

The psychic can make a Wit roll (DR 16) to divine additional information pertaining to his premonition. If he succeeds, the Narrator should provide the character with a little more insight into the fate of his Subject. If he fails, the precog learns nothing more.

### **Uncontrolled Vision**

**Subject:** One topic

**Range:** Self

**Trigger:** Passive

**Description:** The psychic receives precognitive visions that occur without warning whether he is awake or asleep. They may pertain to any Subject, future or past. A precog may have a vision that relates to his life, occupation, interests, or friends and associates, or he may see images of distant events and complete strangers. A character's uncontrolled visions may foretell events of great importance, potential personal danger, or little apparent significance.

Such visions are generally vague and will require some effort to decipher. Rarely, the character's visions will be poignant and clear. More often, a vision only makes sense after the events it foretold have come to pass. When a precog has a vision relating to a stranger, he often meets that individual later in life, an event which may put the vision into context. Most visions have dreamlike qualities and may draw on the symbols of dream. If the character is religious, the symbolism of the vision may relate to the character's faith.

The content of the vision is entirely up to the Narrator. A Narrator may use visions as a storytelling tool to push players in a certain direction, to give them clues and insights, or for any other purpose that comes to mind. Narrators should prepare potential visions before the start of play. These visions may or may not relate to the current scenario and could be used to presage events that will transpire in future play sessions.

Generally, a character can take no action while he is receiving a vision because the vision commands his complete attention. Such visions may be very brief or, at the Narrator's discretion, go on for several minutes or more. A vision may put a great deal of stress on the character. If its content is particularly jarring or violent, the vision may cause the character's body to contort uncontrollably as his consciousness is besieged by terrifying imagery.

When the psychic has an uncontrolled vision, he can either choose to receive the vision or fight it. If he fights it, the psychic must make a control check. If he succeeds, the vision is pushed from his mind. If he fails, the vision occurs normally.

### **Level 3 Augury**

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Self

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** After spending an hour in a trance (see pages 66-67),

the precog can cause himself to receive a vision. When the character uses this power, he must make a control check. If he fails, he emerges from his trance without experiencing a vision. If he succeeds, he is granted a vision. The vision the character receives is of the same type as those described under Uncontrolled Vision above. Remember, the character will have no control over what is foretold in visions induced by this power.

### Future Sight

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Self

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** This power enables the psychic to see into the near future, giving him a glimpse of events that will come to pass moments before they occur.

When the psychic uses this power, he makes a control check. If he fails, his psychic vision is clouded and he learns nothing. If he succeeds, the Narrator should describe to the character the most likely events of the next five minutes. For example, this power can enable to psychic to foresee an accident or learn the likely outcome of a contest. However, the future is malleable and prognostication fallible. At best, the psychic will see the most likely future, which can be altered by his intervention. It is also possible that the psychic will receive partial insights into the future that have the potential to be tragically misleading.

### Guided Hand

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Self

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The psychic can rely on his formidable intuition to aid him in the execution of any task. Able to discern the probable outcome of any action, the character is able to steer clear of mistakes and accidents, thus greatly enhancing his chances of success.

When the character uses this power, he selects one non-combat Skill. While this power is maintained, the psychic can reroll failed rolls that pertain to the selected Skill. A failed roll can be rerolled only once due to Guided Hand.

## Level 4 Pathfinder

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Self

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** By entering a waking trance, the psychic can safely navigate his way through the most treacherous environments. Acting with limited omniscience, the psychic will circumvent every

threat, find any passageway, and discover whatever he seeks, no matter how well hidden.

Once the psychic enters a trance, the character's controller describes what the psychic is attempting to accomplish (generally finding his way to a location or locating a hidden object). The Narrator then takes control of the character as the character makes his way toward his objective.

While maintaining this power, the psychic walks silently with the slow, patient steadiness of a somnambulist. He must move under his own power to maintain his trance. He has the uncanny ability to move with perfect timing, moving through the open when sentries blink or turn away and sidestepping traps and hazards. To avoid detection, the psychic will contort his body painfully, using any available terrain feature to obfuscate his presence. Additionally, his movements are perfectly executed, giving him +3 on Coordination – Climbing and Coordination – Leap rolls (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 159 – 160).

While the character is under the Narrator's control, no harm should come to him. The character will not make any attacks or take any actions that do not directly relate to moving closer to his objective. If the psychic is put in a situation he cannot safely navigate, he will stop moving until either he comes out of his trance or his path becomes clear, at which time he will resume movement.

The psychic automatically comes out of his trance when he reaches his objective. The psychic's controlling player can also make a Will roll (DR 16) to end the character's trance at any time. If the roll succeeds, the psychic comes out of the trance. If the roll fails, the psychic remains in the trance but can make another attempt to come out of the trance after one minute.

Though other characters may attempt to follow the psychic, they will have to take great care to keep up with him and avoid detection. While the psychic moves with perfect timing, those following him do not. Worse yet, there is a potential that anyone following the character will make a noise loud enough to break the character's trance, a potentially hazardous situation for all parties involved.

Note, though this ability will eventually take the psychic to his objective, it can take a very, very long time. This power could steer the psychic into hiding places from which he will not be able to move undetected for hours or even days.



## Preternatural Reflexes

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Self

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** By relying on his psychical instincts, the precog can react to any threat before it presents itself. Though his reflexes are not physically enhanced, this power can give the character the illusion of inhuman speed and grace. The character can duck falling debris, sidestep accidents, and seemingly dodge gunfire.

While maintaining this power, the character can dodge and parry ranged attacks as well as melee attacks. To parry a ranged attack, the psychic must be holding an object strong enough to stop or deflect the projectile. Bullets may pass through soft objects or ricochet off hard objects.

Additionally, while maintaining this power the character can reroll his initiative roll and failed Coordination rolls. A roll may be rerolled only once due to Preternatural Reflexes.

## Retrocognition

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Self

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** While in a trance, the psychic can focus his mind on a person, place, or thing to gain insights about it. When he uses this power, the precog's mind is suddenly flooded with images pertaining to the history of his Subject.

After spending an hour in a trance focusing his mind on his Subject, the psychic makes a control check. He gains +2 to this roll if he has personally met, touched, or visited his Subject and +4 if his Subject is present when he uses this power. If he succeeds, he gains a vision of his Subject's past. If he fails, he awakens from his trance without receiving a vision.

The psychic's retrocognitive vision will give vague or incomplete insight into the Subject. Such visions may include sights and sounds of defining events in the Subject's history, important words spoken by or about the Subject, and powerful feelings and thoughts that surrounded the Subject.

This power is not without risks. The precog can uncover terrible secrets that could damage his mental health. If the character stumbles upon a truly horrific event or focuses his mind on a Subject with a particularly high Corruption rating (4 or more in one or more Corruption Paths), the psychic must make a control check. If he fails, the psychic wakes suddenly from his trance. If he succeeds, he maintains control throughout the trance.

Ominously, some precogs have reported instances in which the Subject of a retrocognitive vision has looked back at the psychic, occasionally going so far as to address the psychic by name.

## Level 5 Dream Shaper

**Subject:** Group

**Range:** Radius of 3 miles x the precog's Will

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** The psychic can use this power to craft and broadcast his own visions throughout the world around him.

When the psychic uses this power, the character's controller describes the detailed content of the vision the psychic will broadcast. All precogs within the range of this power then receive the vision as if it were an Uncontrolled Vision. After using this power, the broadcasting psychic must make a control check.

The psychic can also broadcast a vision so powerful that anyone sleeping within range will receive it, whether they have psychical powers or not. Unless a character receiving this vision has the Dream Recall Quality (see page 55), he must succeed in a Will roll (DR 14) or his recollections of the dream will be fleeting and soon forgotten. If the dreaming character fails, he can only recall the dimmest aspects of his dreams as determined by the Narrator. When the psychic broadcasts such a dream, he gains an Instability Point.

Additionally, the precog's visions, thoughts, and dreams have become infectious, resonating through the psyches of those around him. When the psychic receives a powerful vision, it may send a ripple through the consciousnesses of lesser precogs within the range of this power. These precogs will experience facets of the psychic's vision as an Uncontrolled Vision (see page 84). The Narrator determines the content of these psychical ripples.

## Fate Weaver

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Self

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** The precog's command over Prescience and probability has evolved to such a degree that he can influence fate itself. Through the sheer force of will, the psychic can manipulate the likely outcome of any action or event.

The psychic can use Second Chances and Devil's Luck (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 131 – 132) to alter the outcome of any die roll or situation whether it directly relates to the character or not. For example, the psychic can use a Second Chance to allow a friend to reroll a failed Skill roll or force an enemy to do the same. When using Devil's Luck in this manner, the player should describe the desired effect of his psychic manipulation and leave the details to the Narrator. As with all other aspects of Prescience, the anticipated results seldom reflect the eventual outcome.

## Prophecy

**Subject:** One topic

**Range:** Self

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** The psychic can open his mind to receive a vision pertaining to any Subject he desires. Furthermore, the psychic's gift for prophecy is such that he no longer needs to enter a trance to receive a vision.

Even at this apex of precognitive power, the psychic is not able to guide the content of the visions he receives. Though he can choose the topic of his visions, the character cannot control his vision's form or the information it reveals. Visions gained from this power should relate at least tangentially to the future or possible future of the Subject. Prophetic visions may be clear, leaving little room for interpretation, or distressingly vague and uncertain. If the psychic repeatedly uses this power to gain insights into the same Subject, his visions are likely repeat

themselves endlessly with slight variations until the established prophecy has come to pass. The closer the prophesized events are to reaching fruition, the more powerful and desperate the character's reoccurring visions become.

Occasionally the character's intended visions will be derailed by portents of grave and impending events, especially if the character, a loved one, or the whole of the metropolis is in jeopardy. As always, the Narrator is the final architect of the character's visions.

Prophetic visions may take on the character of images, powerful impressions, fragmentary memories, sounds, and sensations. They may occur in an instant or command the psychic's attention for minutes at a time. Generally the more powerful the vision, the longer it lasts. While experiencing a vision, the psychic can take no other action.

When the character uses this power, he gains an Instability Point.

## Telepathy

Among the most powerful and subtle of Devotions, Telepathy is the power to read and control minds. Those who manifest this gift are able to mentally send and receive messages and read the surface thoughts of others. Over time, a telepath can develop the ability to induce the sensation of pain, override a Subject's senses, implant subliminal commands, rewrite memories, and rifle through the minds of others for their secrets.

Telepaths tend to be quiet, withdrawn, and professional. From an early age, they learn to guard their thoughts as closely as their words. By contrast, most sleepers go through life obliviously broadcasting their every thought. These stray thoughts are intrusive to a telepath and can be extremely distracting until he learns to shut them out. Most telepaths are only truly comfortable alone or in the company of their own kind. For this reason, telepaths frequently intermarry. Among the resulting prominent bloodlines, arranged marriages are common and usually bring together powerful business interests.

There are a number of exclusive clubs throughout the metropolis catering to telepathic clientele. Eerily quiet, telepaths gather at these establishments to engage in nonverbal communication. Though some are open to individuals lacking the telepathic gift, they are generally avoided by sleepers, who find the silence there oppressive.

Telepaths tend to stand out even among the Neo-Victorians for their stark and conservative dress. These psychics keep their bodies covered at all times to avoid unintended flesh-to-flesh contact with others. Such contact can bring the consciousness of the telepath and that of his unwitting Subject all too close together, giving each insight into the mind of the other. Fine leather gloves have become the hallmark of the professional telepath for they are seldom removed even in private.

Telepaths are inherently distrusted by sleepers. The public image of telepaths is made all the worse by the fact that many are employed to probe the minds of others for private or governmental interests. Though unauthorized psychical scans are against the law, a citizen can wilfully wave his rights and Subject himself to



invasive psychical interrogations. Many corporations require their employees to submit to annual telepathic examinations. Those who refuse are typically passed over for promotion and are increasingly viewed with suspicion. Government agencies have the authorization to use psychical interrogations in the course of a criminal investigation.

In practice, the upper class are seldom, if ever, subjected to such indignities. Should an aristocrat be forced to undergo psychical interrogation, it would only be for the direst reasons. In this rare case, the interrogator would certainly be a member of the upper class, of sterling reputation, who can be trusted to only extract details pertinent to the investigation while turning a blind eye to all other facets of the suspect's mind.

The members of the aristocracy particularly avoid private contact with telepaths. It is virtually impossible to maintain one's privacy in the presence of a telepath, and the minds of the aristocracy are labyrinthine depositories of scandalous lore and family secrets. For this reason, telepaths are shunned by polite society.

## Playing a Telepath

Most telepaths seem aloof and reserved. Their gifts are feared and misunderstood by sleepers and non-telepathic psychics alike. Even those who understand the nature of Telepathy can never be sure of whether or not the psychic is listening into their most intimate thoughts. Associating with sleepers is by no means easy for telepaths either. Though many of them enjoy comfortable middle- or upper-class lifestyles, their sleeper peers will never accept them. As a result of their separation from mundane society, telepaths tend to be clannish and possess a natural sense of arrogance and intellectual superiority.

Those telepaths who remain predominantly in the presence of other telepaths over long periods of time may begin to eschew verbal communication for thought-to-thought transferences. When dealing with other telepaths, it is common to initiate communication telepathically, reverting to speech only when sleepers are present. As the years pass by, these psychics eventually come to find speech clumsy and jarring. They may refuse to speak more than a few words at a time and then will speak only when they are completely unable to make themselves understood psychically.

Some telepaths internalize their professional role to the degree that they come to see themselves as the sentinels of Neo-Victorian society. This attitude is especially prevalent among corporate psychics employed to ensure employee fidelity. Such individuals are constantly on the lookout for criminal malfeasance. Over time the telepath's preoccupations may devolve into genuine paranoia resulting in the psychic illegally scanning the minds of everyone he meets.

Dementia is frightfully common among telepaths. For those who remain in the presence of others, the constant exposure to foreign thoughts has a potentially destabilizing effect. However, the isolation that characterizes the lives of many telepaths can also lead to increasing instability. In either case, a psychic on the verge of mental breakdown is a truly wretched creature. In his anguish, a mad telepath will lash out with his powers, violating the mind of anyone who crosses his path. Though this Devotion

is less obviously destructive than a pyrokinetic conflagration, the toll the psychic can take on the minds of his victims is no less palpable.

## Telepathy Rules

### Madness Induction

A telepath that uses his psychical powers on a disturbed mind will internalize a fraction of his Subject's mental instability. When the psychic successfully uses a Telepathy power requiring a contested Will roll on a Subject with a chronic Mental Disorder or 4 or more in any one Corruption Path, the psychic gains one Instability Point.

### Mindlock

A psychic's mastery of this Devotion protects him from the predations of lesser telepaths. When a psychic attempts to use a Telepathy power on a character with a higher level of Telepathy than the telepath using the power, the attempt automatically fails unless the target intentionally allows it to proceed.

### Touch

A telepath's powers are enhanced by touch. Physical contact opens a floodgate between the minds, allowing a free flow of thought from a Subject to the telepath. However, this contact is not without risks. When a telepath makes flesh-to-flesh contact with a living or half-living character, he must make Will roll (DR 10 + the Will of the character touched). If the psychic succeeds, he gains some insight into the mind of the individual whom he is touching. This insight should be limited to a snap-shot or a single impression of what the other character is thinking. If the psychic fails, he gains an Instability Point.

A psychic with the Silence Mental Discipline Stunt (see page 45) can choose to automatically pass this roll if he wishes, though he will not receive insight into the mind of the other character if he does so.

Additionally, while maintaining flesh-to-flesh contact with his Subject, a psychic gains +2 on contested Will rolls against his Subject.

## Telepathy Powers

Telepathy powers give insight into the minds of others. Some, but not all, Telepathy powers work on spirits. Those Telepathy powers that affect spirits are noted in their descriptions. Telepathy powers have no effect on animals. Unless stated otherwise, Telepathy powers have no effect on the undead.

### Level 1

#### Distraction

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 5 feet x the telepath's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** This power enables the psychic to subtly manipulate the senses of a Subject by inducing the impression of sensory information to a minor degree. For example, he could create the perception of a figure standing just outside his Subject's periphery of vision or cause his Subject to suffer vertigo, nausea, upset bowels, or hear phantom sounds. The psychic could also

create the sensation of physical touch, such as a tap on the shoulder or the sensation of hundreds of bugs crawling over the skin. This power is generally limited to distracting a Subject and cannot be used to create lifelike hallucinations or to cripple the senses, such as by causing the Subject to go blind or deaf.

When the character activates this power, he makes a contested Will roll against his Subject. If the Subject wins, he successfully resists the psychic's telepathic manipulation and the psychic gains one Instability Point. If the telepath wins, the Subject is affected by this power. In addition to experiencing the sensory illusion described by the psychic's controller, as long as this power is maintained, the Subject cannot add his Concentration Skill to his Will rolls and he suffers -1 on Wit - Perception rolls.

Once this power has affected the Subject, the psychic is not required to keep a line of sight to maintain it. The Subject continues to be affected by this power as long as it is maintained and he remains within the Range of this power.

### Silent Voice

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 5 feet x the telepath's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** The psychic can mentally broadcast short messages consisting of either a simple mental image or up to ten words to a Subject within his field of vision and in the range of this power. If the psychic wishes, he can cause the words to be mentally "heard" in his voice. Silent Voice does not allow the telepath to hear his Subject's thoughts or to receive a mental message in return.

When the psychic uses this power, the Subject has the option to resist the message or to willingly receive it. The Subject will have no idea of the source of the message; he will only feel it tapping at the boundaries of his consciousness. If the Subject willingly accepts the message, he receives it and no contested roll is made. If the Subject resists the psychic's attempts to communicate, the psychic must make a contested Will roll against his Subject. If the psychic wins, the Subject receives the message. If the Subject wins, he successfully blocks the psychic's attempts to broadcast the message and the psychic gains one Instability Point. The psychic may attempt to resend the message at will.

### Thought Reader

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 5 feet x the telepath's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The telepath can use this power to "hear" the surface thoughts of a Subject within his field of vision and in the Range of this power. The psychic can receive the impression of colours, letters, images, or anything else that enters the Subject's mind. The psychic can use this power on a sleeping Subject, though he is



unlikely to learn more than the details of his Subject's dream. The psychic cannot use this power to access the Subject's emotions or deeper memories. However, an experienced psychic interrogator will have a number of tricks to cause his Subject to call to mind topics of importance, thus making them accessible to the interrogator.

When the character uses this power, he makes a contested Will roll against his Subject. If the Subject wins, he successfully resists the psychic's telepathic manipulation and the psychic gains one Instability Point. If the telepath wins, he can read his Subject's thoughts. The Subject's controller describes what his character is thinking.

Once this power has affected the Subject, the psychic is not required to keep a line of sight to maintain it. The Subject continues to be affected by this power as long as it is maintained and he remains within the Range of this power.

While maintaining this power, the psychic gains +1 on contested Charm and Psychology rolls against his Subject. If his Subject attacks him, the psychic gains +2 on rolls to dodge and parry attacks made by the Subject.

This power can affect spirits if the psychic can see the spirit. However, if this power is used on a spirit, the psychic gains one Instability Point.

### Level 2 Mind Scan

**Subject:** Group

**Range:** Radius of 10 feet x the telepath's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The telepath can read the surface thoughts of all Subjects in the Range of this power. The psychic becomes aware of every mind affected by this power whether he can see the Subject or not.

When the telepath uses this power, he makes a single Will roll. Separate contested Will rolls are made for each character in the affected area. If a Subject rolls equal to or higher than the telepath's roll, the scan does not affect that character. If the telepath rolls higher than a Subject, he can read that Subject's surface thoughts. If a psychic without the Silence Mental Discipline Stunt (see page 45) uses this power, he gains one Instability Point each minute this power is maintained.

While the scan is maintained, the telepath can read the surface thoughts, but not the deeper memories or emotional state, of any affected Subject within its range. The telepath can only read the thoughts of one Subject at a time, but he is able to move from one affected mind to the next at will. A character's controller describes what his character is thinking.

The psychic can read the minds of affected individuals even if he cannot see them, but if he can see a Subject, the psychic will know which thoughts belong to that Subject. If the telepath cannot see a Subject who is affected by this power, all he receives is a vague sense of the Subject's location and his thoughts, he will not know the Subject's identity.

The telepath can maintain Mind Scan to monitor his Subjects' surface thoughts over time. The psychic will also know if an affected individual dies or leaves the Range of this power.

The psychic gains +1 on all contested Charm and Psychology rolls against Subjects while they are affected by this power. If an affected Subject attacks the psychic, the psychic gains +2 on rolls to dodge and parry attacks made by the Subject.

This power affects spirits. However, if there are any spirits in the Range of this power while it is maintained, the character gains one Instability Point.

### **Pain Induction**

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the telepath's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The psychic can induce the sensation of crippling pain in the mind of a Subject within his line of sight and in the Range of this power. While the effects of this power are excruciating, it does not actually inflict lasting physical harm, though the Subject may contort painfully.

When the telepath uses this power, he makes a contested Will roll against his Subject. If the Subject wins, he successfully resists the psychic's telepathic manipulation and the psychic gains one Instability Point. If the telepath wins, the Subject is wracked with pain. As long as this power is maintained, the Subject suffers -2 to Attribute, initiative, and Skill rolls.

Once this power has affected the Subject, the psychic is not required to keep a line of sight to maintain it. The Subject continues to be

affected by this power as long as it is maintained and he remains within the Range of this power.

### **Thought Transfer**

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the telepath's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The psychic can use this power to communicate telepathically with a Subject. While this power is maintained, the psychic and his Subject can send and receive thoughts to one another as if they were conversing verbally. They can also send mental images to each other. Each character will only "hear" the thoughts intentionally directed towards him by the other character; Thought Transfer does not enable the psychic or the Subject to read the surface thoughts or memories of the other.

Once this link is established, the psychic and his Subject do not require a line of sight to one another to broadcast messages. However, if the Subject leaves the Range of this power, contact is broken and must be re-established with another use of this power once the Subject is back in Range and in the psychic's line of sight.

This power can affect spirits. Note, however, that the psychic has to be able to see the spirit to use this power. If this power is used on a spirit, the psychic gains one Instability Point.

## **Level 3 Conduit**

**Subject:** Group

**Range:** Radius of 15 feet x the telepath's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** Acting as a psychical conduit, the telepath can use his powers to contact several minds simultaneously. When the telepath uses this power, he establishes a link between one or more Subjects in his field of vision and in the power's Range.

The psychic can form a conduit with a maximum number of Subjects equal to his Will. *For example, if the psychic had Will 3, he could form a mental conduit with up to three other characters.*

While this power is maintained and the Subjects remain within its Range, the psychic and his Subjects can send and receive thoughts amongst themselves as if they were conversing verbally. In addition to words, the characters can send mental images to each other. The psychic can send messages to the entire group or a single Subject. Subjects can direct mental messages to the psychic or to the whole group. Conduit does not enable a character to read another's surface thoughts. Only thoughts that are intentionally projected will be received by those connected by the conduit.

Once the conduit is established, the participants do not require a line of sight to one another to broadcast messages. However, if a Subject moves out of the Range of this ability, his connection to the conduit is severed even if he moves back into Range. The psychic can remove Subjects from the conduit at will.

### **Memory Suppression**

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the telepath's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Thought



**Description:** The telepath can cause a Subject within his field of vision and in the Range of this power to permanently forget or misremember the details of his recent memories: the psychic can cause his Subject to forget the past few seconds, the precise details of a conversation, a name he just heard, or another recent occurrence. However, the scope of this power is limited. The telepath is unable to use this ability to alter memories that are more than one hour old.

Before using this power, the psychic must establish mental contact with his Subject by successfully using *Cognivore*, *Mind Scan*, *Omniscience*, *Thought Reader*, or *Thought Transfer* on the Subject. If the psychic is using *Mind Scan*, *Thought Reader*, or *Thought Transfer*, he must induce the Subject to think about the memories the psychic intends to suppress.

When the psychic uses this power, he makes a contested Will roll against his Subject. If the Subject wins, he successfully resists the psychic's telepathic manipulation and the psychic gains one Instability Point. If the telepath wins, he can remove or manipulate the details of up to one minute of the Subject's recent memory.

The Narrator is the final arbiter of how extensive the modifications can be. The psychic can only remove the memories of which he is aware. If the Narrator determines that the character's desired effect oversteps the reach of this ability, the attempt automatically fails.

### **Psychosomnia**

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 15 feet x the telepath's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The telepath can use this power to force a Subject within his field of vision and in the Range of this power to sleep.

When the telepath uses this power, he makes a contested Will roll against his Subject. If the Subject wins, he successfully resists the psychic's telepathic manipulation and the psychic gains one Instability Point. If the telepath wins, the Subject enters a deep sleep.

Provided this power is maintained and the Subject remains within its Range, an affected character cannot be awakened by any means and will be entirely unaware of his environment and of anything done to him until he wakes. If the psychic ceases to maintain this power, the Subject enters an ordinary sleep and will awaken after d10 minutes. During this time, the Subject can be awakened by normal means. *Psychosomnia* can be used in place of anaesthetic during medical procedures.

Once this power has affected the Subject, the psychic is not required to keep a line of sight to his Subject to maintain it.

### **Level 4 Cognivore**

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 5 feet x the telepath's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The telepath can use this power to dig deeply into the mind of another, accessing his Subject's deepest memories, hopes, and dreams. Though distant and repressed memories are more difficult to reach than more recent ones, with time and dedication no secret can be kept from the psychic.

When the psychic uses this power, he makes a contested Will roll against his Subject. If the Subject wins, he successfully resists the psychic's telepathic manipulation and the psychic gains one Instability Point. If the telepath wins, he can begin digging into his Subject's mind.

It can take a great deal of time to search through the recesses of a human mind. Reviewing the Subject's memories of the past couple days will only take a few moments, but going back months or years can be much more time consuming. Constructing a rough but relatively complete life history can take twelve hours or more. A psychic can locate a specific piece of information in an hour if he has some idea of what he is looking for.

The scan itself is terrifically unpleasant, inflicting both pain and nausea. As the telepath forces his way into a Subject's mind, the Subject will suffer a series of jarring flashbacks as his memories are triggered at random. Being the Subject of *Cognivore* will ignite a fight or flight reaction in most characters. Unless a Subject has been restrained, he will almost certainly attempt to escape from the psychic's presence. The psychic may use *Psychosomnia* or *Overmind* to hold his Subject in place while using this power. A character undergoing a scan suffers -2 on Intellect, Wit, and Skill rolls for the duration of the scan and for one hour afterward.

The Subject can willingly allow the psychic to access his mind by forfeiting the contested Will roll. In this case, the Subject feels a vague sense of mental violation rather than pain but does not suffer the penalties described above, and he may be able to help the psychic locate the memories the telepath seeks.

Once this power has affected the Subject, the psychic is not required to keep a line of sight to his Subject to maintain it. The Subject continues to be affected by this power as long as it is maintained and he remains within the Range of this power.

### **Overmind**

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the telepath's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The telepath can use this power to seize control of the body or physical senses of a Subject. With a mental command from the psychic, the Subject is compelled to move and act in accordance to the psychic's will. The Subject can be forced to stop moving, leap into the path of an oncoming train, throw himself over a bridge, open fire on his best friends, cut his own throat, or take any other action dictated by the psychic.

When the psychic uses this power, he states the action he intends to force his Subject to take. He then makes a contested Will roll against his Subject. If the action the psychic is forcing his Subject to take is clearly suicidal and the Subject is aware that taking the action will result in his death, double the Subject's Will for the purposes of resolving this roll. Remember to also add the Subject's Concentration Skill to the roll. If the Subject wins, he successfully resists the psychic's telepathic manipulation and the psychic gains one Instability Point. If the telepath wins, his Subject is compelled to take the action described.

Provided he remains within the Range of this power, the Subject will continue to carry out this action as long as this power is

maintained even if the Subject leaves the psychic's line of sight. If the psychic wishes to force his Subject to take a different action, he must cease using this power on that Subject and attempt to use this power on the Subject again.

While under the influence of this power, the Subject's movements are jerky and imprecise. Though he will have no control over himself, the Subject will obviously be acting under duress. While under the effects of this power, a character suffers -3 on Attribute and Skill rolls. The psychic cannot force a Subject to perform an action that the psychic does not know how to perform himself nor one that requires extreme care and proficiency, such as surgery.

Instead of forcing a Subject to perform an action, the psychic may use *Overmind* shut down his target's senses, causing the target to go blind, deaf, or mute with the same effects as the *Physical Impediments* of the same name (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 146 and 148). The psychic can choose for his Subject to suffer some or all of these effects. A character that suddenly finds himself struck blind must make a Will - Fear roll (DR 14) (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 161).

The psychic can also use this power to cause a Subject to experience realistic sensory hallucinations. Such illusions will feel, seem, and appear wholly physical to the Subject. The exact effect of these mental projections is up to the Narrator's discretion and may be as subtle or incapacitating as the psychic wishes.

Once this power has affected the Subject, the psychic is not required to keep a line of sight to maintain it. The Subject continues to be affected by this power as long as it is maintained and he remains within the Range of this power.

### **Psychogenesis**

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the telepath's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The telepath can significantly manipulate the memories and psychological makeup of a Subject through a slow and methodical process of psychic annihilation and reconstruction. There are a number of potential uses for this power, and its effects depend on the intentions of the psychic. Unless otherwise stated, the effects of this power are permanent.

Some Psychogenesis effects allow the psychic to implant triggers in the Subject's mind. In this case, the effects of the psychic's manipulations are not felt by the Subject until the triggering event occurs. Triggers may include specific events, sights, sounds, key phrases, a specific time or place, a thought, or virtually any other occurrence.

Before the psychic can use this power on a Subject, he must thoroughly probe the Subject's mind with *Cognivore*, a process which will take at least eight hours. Once the psychic has done this, he can use this power on his Subject at will. He will generally not need to scan the Subject's mind again to use this power, unless the Subject undergoes major psychological trauma or another psychic uses *Psychogenesis* to manipulate the Subject's mental state.

When the psychic uses this power, he makes a contested Will roll against his Subject. If the Subject wins, he resists the psychic's telepathic manipulations and the psychic gains one Instability Point. If the psychic wins, he can begin the reconstruction of his Subject's mind. The length of time required for such manipulations depends on the alterations the psychic makes to his Subject's mind.

The possible uses for Psychogenesis are described below.

- **Cloud Memory:** The psychic can use this power to suppress his Subject's memories. Suppressed memories still exist in the depths of the Subject's mind but cannot be accessed consciously by the Subject. The Subject's suppressed memories can be returned by the psychic who suppressed them, through the intervention of another telepath with this power, or with years of hypnotherapy. Most telepaths consider memory suppression more humane than memory destruction.

Suppressing the details of the previous couple days requires five minutes. Particularly traumatic or happy memories about which the character often thinks will take substantial time to suppress or remove because they will touch on so many of the Subject's other memories. Generally, for every year that has passed since the event the psychic wishes to suppress, the telepath must spend at least ten minutes manipulating his Subject's memories.

Suppressed memories cannot be altered. Instead, they take the form of amnesiac episodes.

When the psychic suppresses the Subject's memories, he can implant a trigger that will cause the Subject's memories to come flooding back to him.

Each memory the psychic suppresses requires a separate use of this power.

- **Memory Manipulation:** The psychic can add, erase, or alter a Subject's memories. Adding memories involves the fabrication of recollections that then become real to the Subject. Erasing memories involves permanently removing memories from the Subject's mind. Removing memories is difficult because to ensure success, every instance of the event must be removed from the character's extended memory. Significantly altering memories requires great attention to detail to create consistent, credible memories.

Manipulating the details of the past few days, whether the psychic is altering or erasing memories, takes mere minutes. Particularly traumatic or happy memories about which the character often thinks will take substantial time to alter or remove because they will touch on so many of the Subject's other memories. Generally, for every year that has passed since the event the psychic wishes to manipulate, the psychic must spend at least ten minutes manipulating his Subject's memories.



When the psychic removes memories, he has the option of leaving an amnesiac episode in the Subject's memory or filling the gap with fabricated memories. Creating a memory is much simpler than removing one, but adding supporting details to give the fabricated memory substantiality can take a significant amount of time. The more supporting details etched into the Subject's consciousness, the more real the memory will become to the Subject and the more clearly the Subject will recall it. Fabricating replacement memories will double the time required to alter the memories.

The telepath can use this power to implant a trigger in his Subject's mind that will delay the effects of this power. When the triggering condition is met, the effects of this power take effect. The Subject may suddenly lose his memories or begin to remember the altered version of his memories.

Note that permanently removed memories cannot be returned. If the psychic wishes removed memories to return, he should suppress, rather than remove, them.

Each memory the psychic manipulates requires a separate use of this power.

- **Mental Commands:** The psychic can use this power to implant a set of mental commands in his Subject's mind. These commands detail a course of action the character will be compelled to take. When the psychic implants mental commands, he must choose a trigger for the commands.

If the action the psychic is forcing his Subject to take is clearly suicidal and the Subject is aware that taking the action will result in his death, double the Subject's Will for the purposes of resisting this power.

Implanting mental commands takes thirty minutes.

The commands can be as complex as the psychic wishes, and the Subject will be compelled to do everything in his power to carry them out or die trying. If the Subject lacks the necessary skills to complete his mental command, he will do his best to comply. When the limit of his efforts has been reached, the Subject automatically shakes off the effects of the command.

If the Subject is somehow restrained and someone whom he trusts attempts to reason with him, the Subject can make a Will roll (DR 11 + the psychic's Will) to attempt to shake off the effects of the command. If the Subject succeeds, he is no longer affected by the command. If he fails, he continues in the course of action implanted by the psychic.

- **Mental Stabilization/Destabilization:** The psychic can use this power to stabilize or destabilize his Subject's mind. Mental stabilization or destabilization takes one hour per attempt.

When the psychic makes his contested Will roll to use this power, he adds his Psychology Skill rather than his Concentration Skill to the roll. If his Subject wins, the psychic gains one Instability Point. If the psychic wins, he can choose to stabilize or destabilize his Subject's mind.

If he decides to destabilize his Subject's mind, the psychic can choose to give the Subject a new Mental Impediment or minor Mental Disorder or to cause one of the Subject's minor Mental Disorders to become chronic.

If the psychic stabilizes his Subject's mind, the psychic can choose to remove one Mental Impediment or minor Mental Disorder or to have one of his Subject's chronic Mental Disorders become minor. The psychic may not remove a character's Latent Insanity.

When the psychic uses this power, he can choose to plant a trigger in his Subject's mind that delays the effects of this power until

the triggering event occurs. The psychic could also choose to make his manipulations temporary, restoring the Subject to his previous mental condition when the triggering event occurs.

- **Secret Message:** The psychic can use this power to implant a message in his Subject's mind. When the psychic implants the message, he must also select a trigger that will cause the Subject to receive the message. The message itself can take any form. The message may be as simple or as complex as the psychic wishes and takes five minutes to implant.

## Level 5 Mind Slave

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** Touch

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The telepath can cast his consciousness from his own body to seize complete control over the body of the Subject. While possessed, the Subject's consciousness is forced to the nether regions of his mind. Though the Subject is fully aware of what his body is doing, he is powerless to control himself. The psychic must be physically touching his Subject to use this power.

When the psychic uses this power, he makes a contested Will roll against his Subject. If the Subject wins, the psychic fails to possess him. If the telepath wins, he assumes control of the Subject's body. Each time the psychic attempts to use this power he gains one Instability Point whether he is successful or not.

While in control of his Subject's body, the telepath uses his own Intellect, Wit, and Will and his host's Vitality and Coordination. While possessing a host body, the psychic's Charm is the average of his Attribute and the Charm Attribute of his Subject, rounded down. While inhabiting the body of another, the Range of all the psychic's powers is measured from the host body.

Unless the psychic has some skill in acting and has spent time studying his Subject's mannerisms, it will be obvious to those who know the Subject that something is wrong. Though it is unlikely they will guess the Subject is possessed, those who know him will be aware of a change in his personality. They may believe he is ill, melancholic, traumatized, or simply out of sorts. In extreme cases they may fear the Subject has gone mad.

If a character uses Aura Scan on the psychic's host body, he will see two overlapping auras, one dominant and the other dimmed. After this, the clairvoyant can make a Parapsychology Skill roll (DR 14) to determine the host body is being possessed by a telepath.

While the psychic is possessing the Subject, his own body enters a comatose state. The psychic will not have any idea of the condition of his body during this time. The psychic can return to his own body at will, and if the psychic loses his concentration, sleeps, falls unconscious, or if his host body is killed, the psychic's consciousness instantly returns to its own body. If the psychic is forced to return to his body, he suffers -2 on Skill rolls for 2d10 minutes while recovering from severe disorientation. Should the psychic's body be killed while his consciousness inhabits another body, the psychic dies and the control of the host body returns to the Subject.

## Omniscience

**Subject:** Group

**Range:** Radius of 200 feet x the telepath's Will

**Trigger:** Passive

**Description:** When a psychic reaches the apex of his power, his consciousness bleeds into the surrounding area and influences those around him. Individuals who are regularly exposed to the psychic's presence may begin to think like him and to take on his tastes and mannerisms. Furthermore, the psychic can sense every mind within blocks of his location and knows his relative distance from every spirit, living, and half-lifer character within the Range of this power. Unless he takes the time to count every mind in the area, his best estimate of their number will be fairly rough. The psychic also knows when individuals leave and enter the Range of this power.

By focusing his mind on a Subject within the Range of this power, the psychic can learn the Subject's identity and read his surface thoughts. However, the psychic can only read the thoughts of a single Subject at a time. Focusing on a Subject does not require a Will roll. While reading the thoughts of a Subject, the psychic gains +1 on contested Charm and Psychology rolls against his Subject. If his Subject attacks him, the Psychic gains +2 on rolls to dodge and parry attacks made by the Subject.

While focusing his mind on a living or half-living Subject, the psychic can borrow the Subject's senses, effectively enabling him to see what the Subject sees and hear what the Subject hears. If the Subject leaves the Range of this power, the psychic will be cut off from borrowing his senses until the Subject returns to the affected area.

While maintaining this power, the telepath can use other psychic powers on Subjects he detects as a result of this power as though he could physically see them.

This power affects spirits. However, if there are any spirits in the Range of this power while it is maintained the character gains one Instability Point.

### **Puppet Master**

**Subject:** Group

**Range:** Radius of 50 feet radius x the telepath's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The telepath can take control of the minds and bodies of whole groups of people at a time. For example, with a mere mental command, the character can cause everyone in his vicinity to go blind, dance like idiot marionettes, or fall asleep on their feet.

When the telepath uses Puppet Master, he makes a Will roll. Separate contested Will rolls are made for each character in the affected area. If a Subject wins, he is not affected by the power. If the telepath wins, the Subject is affected by the psychic's broadcast.

If the psychic can see an individual, he can make a control check to prevent that character from being affected by this power. If he succeeds, that character is not affected.

When the telepath uses this power, he broadcasts Pain Induction, Psychosomnia, or Overmind. Anyone affected by Puppet Master suffers the effects of the power broadcast.

When the psychic uses this power, he gains one Instability Point.

## **Psychokinetic Devotions**

Unlike the ephemeral effects of more subtle psychical talents, psychokinetic powers bend reality itself with the force of the psychic's will. Such powers can be horrifically destructive and unpredictable. Those possessing these powerful and volatile gifts tend to be violently insane, succumbing to madness more quickly than other psychics.

Most often, psychokinetic powers surface spontaneously under highly traumatic circumstances, and the emergence of a psychokinetic power is usually marked by the onset of some profound psychosis. Many psychokinetics go irredeemably insane and either find themselves permanently institutionalized long before their gift can be fully developed or end their lives in disasters of their own creation.

Despite the raw power of psychokinetic Devotions, psychics possessing these talents are seldom capable of holding steady employment. These psychics are notoriously violent and antisocial. Spontaneous and destructive manifestations of psychical power are common among psychokinetics, particularly during emotional outbursts or periods of stress. A psychokinetic lashing out with his powers to defend himself against the dream-figures of a hallucination is a danger to everyone and everything around him.

In light of the dangers surrounding psychokinetic Devotions, parapsychologists avidly seek the secrets of these powers. If the tremendous power of these Devotions could be harnessed, it would alter the face of the world. However, research into these Devotions has been rife with tragedy. An untold number of research facilities and private medical institutions have been completely destroyed as a result of such experimentation.

### **Rare Talents**

Though the three Devotions described below are the most common varieties of psychokinesis, others may exist. For decades, parapsychologists have researched every report and rumour of so-called cryokinetic and hydrokinetic talents, but with little avail. Though these talents and more have been hypothesized, neither the capacity for the creation of cold nor the mental shaping of water has been satisfactorily proven to exist in a laboratory setting.

## **Psychokinetic Rules**

### **Psychokinetic Ranged Attacks**

Some psychokinetic powers require a successful attack roll to hit their targets. Psychokinetic ranged attacks suffer the same modifiers as ordinary ranged attacks (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 168). The psychic must be able to see a Subject within the



Range of the power to target the Subject with the attack. However, the psychic can use other psychical powers to allow him to “see” the Subject without relying on physical vision. When the psychic makes a psychokinetic ranged attack, he makes the attack roll using his Wit instead of a Combat Skill. The character cannot use Combat Skill Stunts when resolving this attack. A psychic making a psychokinetic attack during combat must spend an action to make the attack. If the psychic has been injured, apply his die roll wound penalties to his psychokinetic ranged attacks.

## Psychokinesis and the Undead

Because their effects are physical rather than mental, most psychokinesis powers affect the undead. If a psychokinesis power does not work on the undead, it is noted in that power’s description.

## Electrokinesis

The electrokinetic is a living galvanic generator capable of unleashing terrifying displays of galvanic fury. Supremely adapted to the wonders of the Neo-Victorian world, electrokinetics can manipulate, power, or overload galvanic devices by the force of their will alone.

Most electrokinetics are coldly dispassionate individuals with indomitable wills. Though they are no less divorced from reality than other psychokinetics, electrokinetics seldom exhibit the depths of rage embodied by most pyrokinetics and telekinetics. Instead, Electrokinesis may be thought of as pure mind over matter, a mathematical route toward apotheosis. Many electrokinetics have studied the natural sciences and apply the principles they have learned toward the manipulation of physics. Rather than relying on the tools of science to effect change, the psychic becomes the instrument of change directly.

The cerebral nature of the electrokinetic talent grants these psychics a great deal of control over their powers. Electrokinetics prefer to keep their minds sharp and their bodies pure to maintain clarity, which forms a stark contrast to emotional, self-medicating empaths and precogs who seek enlightenment through the fruits of the poppy.

However, those who manifest this Devotion are prone to a strange malady. While in the early stages of their psychical development, many electrokinetics develop a powerful curiosity concerning life’s many mysteries. For some, this curiosity becomes an obsession with the vastness of the space between the stars. The afflicted claim to hear entropic voices calling to them from the void and tempting them toward annihilation. Those who succumb to these voices inevitably descend into dementia and catatonia before taking their own lives.

Adventurous electrokinetics are often hired by expeditions travelling beyond the walls of the metropolis. Because electrokinetics are able to keep galvanic equipment functioning beyond the reach of the city’s Tesla array, their presence can be invaluable when travelling the wastes. In the past, even the Deathwatch has unofficially experimented with contracting civilian electrokinetics for support during reclamation missions.

Electrokinetics are known for producing dazzling electrical light shows capable of blinding spectators with their brilliance. Though

an electrokinetic is never harmed by the galvanic energy he generates, he has no such resistance to the effects of the flashes of light resultant from these dramatic displays. Thus, most electrokinetics who regularly make use of their powers wear photo-reactive goggles to shield their eyes, especially at night.

## Playing an Electrokinetic

Electrokinetics are notoriously stoic individuals with temperaments more suited to the sterile environs of the laboratory than the streets of the metropolis. Most electrokinetics prefer to dissect the world around them rather than interact with it directly. Though they may sometimes seem socially awkward, these psychics possess powerful personalities and exude a depth of self-assuredness that mark them as individuals not to cross. All varieties of Drive Corruption Paths come naturally to such calculating and obsessive creatures.

Electrokinetics are often distracted or preoccupied because their minds continually wander through the mysteries of the universe. The worst cases may lose all capacity for sleep and gaze for hours at shapes in the night sky that are perceptible only to their eyes. Some claim to feel celestial bodies rotating around them and tugging at their spirits.

It is said that electrokinetics inevitably hear the call of entropy. For many, cold and darkness are not merely natural states but rather reminders of failure, death, and dissolution. As a result, no few electrokinetics suffer from an acute phobia of the dark formed from their dread of entropy. Refusing to succumb to such madness, some electrokinetics seek to protect themselves with rituals of mathematics and engineering, often going so far as to cover their homes and bodies with sigils and equations that they hope will insulate them from the forces of entropy. Even those electrokinetics not prone to these obsessions show signs of compulsive behaviours associated with their talents, such as reciting litanies of mathematical formulae while using their psychical powers.

## Electrokinetic Rules

### Temporary Blindness

A number of electrokinetic powers are capable of generating potentially blinding flashes of light. Anyone, including the electrokinetic, who is looking at either the psychic or his target when such a power is used, will be temporarily blinded for  $d5$  rounds (see *Blind*, *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 146). A character who either knows to close his eyes in advance or who is wearing photo-reactive goggles will not suffer temporary blindness. If the psychic closes his eyes when using an electrokinetic power that requires a psychokinetic ranged attack roll, he suffers  $-4$  to his attack roll.

## Electrokinesis Powers

### Level 1

#### Bio-Charger

**Subject:** Multiple objects

**Range:** Touch

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The psychic can use this power to transform himself into a living electrical generator capable of powering galvanic devices by touch. This power causes the air around the psychic to hum and fill with the smell of ozone as his body flickers with pulses of electrical energy.

While this power is maintained, any galvanic devices touched by the psychic will draw energy directly from him instead of either the Tesla array or the devices' own capacitors. Galvanic weapons and devices fuelled by this power will remain charged as long as this power is maintained.

Likewise, the capacitors of devices touched by the psychic while he maintains this power are quickly recharged. A device with a small capacitor, such as a galvanic weapon or radio transmitter, is completely recharged over one minute. At the Narrator's discretion, larger devices can take much longer to recharge.

### Electromagnetism

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Radius of 3 feet x the electrokinetic's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The psychic can use this power to generate a magnetic field around his body. Small metal objects within the range of this power will be drawn to the psychic. Metal objects weighing less than one pound fly directly at the psychic while heavier objects, weighing up to the psychic's Will in pounds, will slide towards him. When the psychic uses this power, he must take care to keep flying objects from bruising or injuring him as they move toward his body.

While this power is maintained, the electrokinetic's body will cling to metallic surfaces giving him a  $+3$  bonus on Coordination – Climbing rolls when climbing metal surfaces (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 159 – 160).

The character can also use this power to repel metal objects. Small metal objects within the range of this power will be propelled directly away from the psychic. At the Narrator's discretion, if there are a large number of metallic objects weighing less than one pound within the affected area, others in the area will be pelted by metal objects and suffer a  $+1$  damage roll.

While maintaining this power to repel metal objects, when the psychic is hit by a metal weapon or projectile, he is considered to have  $+1$  point of armour on all body locations.

### Power Vacuum

**Subject:** Multiple objects

**Range:** Radius of 5 feet radius x the electrokinetic's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The electrokinetic can use this power to manipulate the flow of energy to devices around him. When the psychic uses this power, he can choose to dissipate the radiant energy of the Tesla field, weaken the electrical charge stored in capacitors, or overload galvanic devices.

This power generally affects all objects within range, but the psychic can choose to keep specific objects in his field of vision from being affected.

The psychic must make a control check when he uses this power. Whether or not he succeeds, he can use this power normally.

When the psychic uses this power, choose one of the following effects:

- **Dead Zone:** The psychic cuts off radiant energy to the affected area. Galvanic devices in the Range of this power cease to draw energy from the Tesla array. Devices that rely entirely on the array for power will not function as long as they remain within the affected area. The capacitors of affected devices cannot be recharged as long as they remain within the Range of this power while it is maintained.

- **Overload:** The psychic overloads galvanic devices, causing those in the Range of this power to suffer critical damage. This power burns out capacitors, bursts light bulbs, and damages sensitive parts, rendering affected devices inoperable until repaired. Repairing a device damaged by this power requires replacing key components, no less than thirty minutes of labour, and a successful Galvanics Skill roll (DR 14 or greater depending on the complexity of the device).
- **Power Drain:** The electrokinetic removes the charge from galvanic devices in Range. When he does so, the capacitors powering the affected devices are immediately drained of energy and will not begin to recharge as long as this power is maintained and the devices remain in the area affected by this power.

## Level 2 Electrical Discharge

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** Touch

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** When the psychic uses this power, he builds up an electrical charge within his body that can be unleashed to shock a Subject. Once the character activates this power, the charge remains built up until the psychic releases it or he ceases to maintain this power. While Electrical Discharge is maintained, the psychic's hair stands on end and his body flickers with pulsing electrical energy.

This power can be an extremely effective means of securing release from a grappling opponent. The Subject of this power suffers an

electrical shock damage roll with a damage modifier equal to the psychic's Will (See Electrical Shock, *Unhallowed Metropolis* page 178 – 179). Anyone in contact with the Subject or the psychic when the charge is released also suffers the electrical shock damage roll.

The psychic can also discharge this power as part of an unarmed attack or as part of an attack with a melee weapon that can conduct an electrical charge. Discharging this power as part of an attack does not require an additional action. If the psychic discharges this power as part of an attack, the target suffers an electrical shock damage roll in addition to the damage roll for the attack.

The psychic can also discharge this power while touching a galvanic device, in which case the device will be destroyed. At the Narrator's discretion, some objects may not be completely ruined by this power due to electrical insulation, large size, or other integral defences.

Once the character discharges this power, it immediately ceases to be maintained, and he must spend another action to use this power again to build up another charge.

## Galvanic Manipulation

**Subject:** Single object

**Range:** 5 feet x the electrokinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** This power can be used to manipulate the function of a single galvanic device within the psychic's field of vision and in the



Range of this power. The psychic can use Galvanic Manipulation to either activate a device or to prevent it from functioning. For example, the psychic can use this power to cause a galvanic weapon to suddenly discharge or not to fire when its trigger is pulled, or he may cause an electrical engine to begin operation or slow to a halt. The psychic can only maintain this power as long as the device remains within the Range of this power and in his line of sight.

Note that this power is electrokinetic in nature and not telekinetic. A device that is activated by this power is not actually switched on and will immediately stop functioning if the psychic ceases maintaining this power. Similarly, while the character can activate a device, he cannot control it. *For example, weapons firing as a result of this power cannot be aimed, speeding trains cannot be steered, and the frequency of radios cannot be changed.*

The psychic must make a control check when he uses this power. Whether or not he succeeds, he can use this power normally.

### **Static Emitter**

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Radius of 150 feet x the electrokinetic's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The electrokinetic can use this power to generate a disruptive but harmless field of radiation capable of scrambling radio broadcasts and reception. As long as this power is maintained, radio transmissions made in the affected area will be garbled and receivers will pick up only static.

## **Level 3**

### **Electrical Blast**

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the electrokinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** With a crackling roar and a brilliant flash of light, the psychic can generate potentially lethal blasts of energy from his fingertips. When he uses this power, the psychic makes a psychokinetic ranged attack roll (see pages 95 – 96) against his target. If the attack hits, the target suffers an electrical shock damage roll with a damage modifier equal to the psychic's Will (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 178 – 179).

If a galvanic device is the target of this power, the device will likely be destroyed by the electrical pulse. At the Narrator's discretion, some objects may not be completely ruined by this power due to electrical insulation, large size, or other integral defences.

If this power is used in darkness, it can cause temporary blindness (see page 97).

The psychic must make a control check after he uses this power.

### **Galvanic Field**

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Radius of 10 feet x the electrokinetic's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The electrokinetic can generate a field of energy around himself that is capable of powering galvanic devices. While Galvanic Field is maintained, galvanic devices in the

Range of this power draw energy from the psychic instead of the Tesla array or their own capacitors. Galvanic weapons fuelled by this power can be used to make attacks indefinitely, and galvanic devices will remain fully charged for as long as this power is maintained.

The capacitors of devices within the Range of this power are quickly recharged. A device with a small capacitor, such as a galvanic weapon or radio transmitter, is completely recharged over one minute. At the Narrator's discretion, larger devices can take much longer to recharge.

While this power is maintained, the air around the psychic smells of ozone, crackles, and flashes with ambient electricity, giving the character a +1 on Charm – Intimidation rolls (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 162).

The psychic must make a control check when he uses this power. Whether or not he succeeds, he can use this power normally.

### **Radio Transception**

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Radius of 1 mile x the electrokinetic's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The electrokinetic can psychically broadcast, receive, and decipher radio transmissions with his mind. The psychic can receive any signal that reaches his physical location, and radio receivers within the range of this power can receive his broadcasts. Transmissions received by the psychic are "heard" with great clarity. However, the psychic's own electrokinetic broadcasts sound tinny, distant, and hollow, and have little in common with the character's true voice.

When using this power to broadcast radio transmissions, the psychic can broadcast at any frequency or over many frequencies simultaneously. The psychic may need to experiment with a radio receiver in order to learn proper broadcast frequencies.

An electrokinetic without the Silence Mental Discipline Stunt cannot use this power to receive radio transmissions because he will not be able to separate actual transmissions from background electromagnetic static. If a psychic without the Silence Mental Discipline Stunt uses this ability, all he will receive is an Instability Point and a terrible headache.

## **Level 4**

### **Electrical Storm**

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Radius of 10 feet x the electrokinetic's Will

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** The electrokinetic can use this power to generate a destructive field of electrical energy. When the psychic uses this power, every other character within the radius of this power suffers an electrical shock damage roll with a damage modifier equal to the psychic's Will (see *Unhallowed Metropolis* page 178 – 179). Galvanic devices within the affected area immediately overload and may catch fire. If this power is used in darkness, it can cause temporary blindness (see page 97).

If the psychic can see a Subject, either an individual or object, he can make a control check to prevent that Subject from being affected by this power. If he succeeds, the Subject is not affected.

Galvanic devices damaged by this power become inoperable until repaired. Repairing a device damaged by this power requires replacing

key components, no less than thirty minutes of labour, and a successful Galvanics Skill roll (DR 14 or greater depending on the complexity of the device).

The psychic gains one Instability Point when he uses this power.

### Machine Mind

**Subject:** Multiple objects

**Range:** Radius of 15 feet x the electrokinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** Machine Mind enables the electrokinetic to fuel, activate, or suppress the function of multiple galvanic devices simultaneously. When the psychic activates this power, he chooses one object in his field of vision and in the Range of this power and decides how that object is affected. While maintaining this power, the character can spend actions to have this power affect additional objects in the affected area. Objects continue to be affected as long as this power is maintained and they remain within the affected area.

Devices are affected by this power on a case-by-case basis at the whims of the electrokinetic. He can prevent some devices from functioning while activating others. Alternatively, rather than causing a device to cease functioning altogether, he can manipulate the flow of energy to the device, potentially causing electrical lamps to flicker or dim or electrically powered trains to slow.

Note that this power is electrokinetic in nature and not telekinetic. A device that is activated as a result of this power is not actually switched on and immediately stops functioning if the psychic ceases to manipulate it or it leaves the Range of this power. Similarly, while the psychic can activate a device, he cannot control it. For instance, weapons fired as a result of this power cannot be aimed, trains cannot be steered, and the frequency of radios cannot be changed.

Anyone within the Range of this power will feel the electrical charge in the air; their hair will stand on end, and they may hear an electrical pulse emanating from the electrokinetic.

The psychic must make a control check when he uses this power. Whether or not he succeeds, he can use this power normally.

### Synaptic Overload

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the electrokinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The psychic can use this power to manipulate the flow of energy through the neural network of his Subject. As a result, the Subject experiences a violent synaptic overload capable of inducing seizures, paralysis, or death. This power has no effect on the undead.

When the psychic uses this power, he makes a contested Will roll against double his Subject's Vitality. If the Subject wins, he resists the psychic's electrokinetic assault and the psychic gains one Instability Point. If the psychic wins, he chooses one of the following effects:



- **Death:** The Subject's synapses are rapidly burned away, killing him instantly.
- **Paralysis:** The Subject's muscles seize, which causes his body to contort painfully. The Subject will continue to grasp any objects in his hands. As long as this power is maintained, the Subject can take no action, including speaking.
- **Seizures:** The Subject suffers convulsions that throw him to the ground where he spasms grotesquely as long as this power is maintained. The Subject can take no action. Even after the psychic ceases to maintain this power, the Subject's fits continue for an additional d5 minutes. Unless the Subject is restrained during these fits, he suffers a +0 damage roll. Subtract the Subject's Vitality from this roll.

Once this power has affected the Subject, the psychic is not required to keep a line of sight to his Subject to maintain it. The Subject continues to be affected by this power as long as it is maintained and he remains within the Range of this power.

This power can affect animals but has no effect on the undead.

## Level 5 Electrocutioner

**Subject:** Group

**Range:** Radius of 15 feet x the electrokinetic's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The electrokinetic can overload the synapses of every living or half-living individual within the Range of this power.

When the psychic uses this power, he chooses one of the Synaptic Overload effects (see above) and makes a single Will roll. Separate contested rolls are made for each Subject in the affected area, adding double the Subject's Vitality to the roll. If a Subject wins, he is not affected by this power. If the psychic wins, the Subject is affected.

If the psychic can see an individual, he can make a control check to prevent that character from being affected by this power. If he succeeds, that character is not affected.

This power affects animals but has no effect on the undead.

When the psychic uses this power, he gains one Instability Point.

## Entropy

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Radius of 30 feet x the electrokinetic's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The psychic can use this power to draw the heat and energy from the affected area. Galvanic devices exposed to this power cease to function, and their capacitors empty of power within seconds. Fires within the affected area dim and are rapidly extinguished. While this power is maintained, temperature within the affected area drops rapidly and liquids begin to freeze.

Living and half-lifer characters in the area, including the psychic, become uncomfortably cold and suffer -2 on Skill and Attribute rolls while they remain in the area. After five minutes of exposure, affected characters suffer a damage roll equal to the psychic's Will. After every additional minute of exposure, affected characters suffer an additional damage roll. Characters wearing insulated clothing can endure exposure for twice this length of time before suffering a damage roll.

When the psychic uses this power, he gains one Instability Point.

## Ion Blast

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 15 feet x the electrokinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** The psychic can unleash catastrophic blasts of energy capable of annihilating crowds, blasting holes in the earth, and demolishing whole buildings. When the psychic uses this power, everything, including the very earth around his Subject, explodes in a flash of blinding light. Ion blasts are so dangerous that the psychic can easily destroy himself in the resulting explosion. In fact, when the character uses this power, he must make a control check. If he fails, he becomes the epicentre of the blast and is atomized in the process.

When he uses this power, the psychic makes a psychokinetic ranged attack (see pages 95 – 96) against a target in his field of vision. If the attack hits, the target disassembles explosively, leaving behind a crater with a diameter of 3 feet x the psychic's Will. Anything within this blast radius suffers a damage roll with a modifier equal to double the psychic's Will. Any character suffering a Fatal Wound is reduced to ash. Those surviving the blast are thrown clear of the crater and are knocked down; flammable items on their persons are set on fire (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 177 and 180 – 181).

If the attack misses, the epicentre of the blast is 2d10 feet from the intended target.

Anyone witnessing this blast will suffer temporary blindness (see page 97).

If the psychic survives using this power, he gains one Instability Point.

## Pyrokinesis

Pyrokinetics are individuals who, after suffering years of pent-up rage and fear, develop the ability to ignite fires with their minds. Pyrokinetic powers are fuelled by catastrophic emotional duress, and inevitably, these psychics learn to channel their anguish outward, unleashing torrents of fiery devastation.

Pyrokinetics tend to live on the fringes of society. Not only do their troubled minds and explosive tempers keep them from remaining employed, but their dangerous talents also have few marketable applications outside demolition, extortion, and criminal enforcement. However, some pyrokinetics make a living as Undertakers by pitting their psychological talents against the horrors of the metropolis.

Because this Devotion is a manifestation of rage, pyrokinetics risk losing control of their powers when they are injured, experience intense emotions, or are confronted with a seemingly insurmountable obstacle—whether physical, social, or emotional. As a result, pyrokinetics are notoriously dangerous, especially within the crowded confines of Neo-Victorian cities. Many in the health and law-enforcement communities consider pyrokinetics a risk to the wellbeing of the citizens of the metropolis. Therefore, pyrokinetics who are convicted of even minor crimes are likely to be committed to a mental institution. Ungovernable pyrokinetics will almost certainly be lobotomized.



Some anarchist cells have attempted to recruit dangerously alienated pyrokinetics. Once such a psychic is identified, he is quickly indoctrinated into the group, who prey on his anger, fears, and insecurities to refine him into a weapon against the state. A living time bomb, the psychic is unleashed upon the metropolis at a time and place of his cell's choosing.

### Playing a Pyrokinetic

Pyrokinetics tend to be socially awkward and dangerously unstable. They are seldom comfortable in a crowd, and most prefer to spend their time in isolation. When provoked, they respond with dire consequences. As a result, pyrokinetics tend to be outsiders who avoid close relationships with others. Because these psychics have too often witnessed the sorrow their powers can bring to those around them, most are unwilling to trust themselves with external connections.

Pyrokinetics are prone to developing Desire Corruption. Many become addicted to setting fires or abusing substances as a means of escaping their misery. The most terrifying pyrokinetics are those with the Defiler Affliction. These psychics exhibit sadomasochistic tendencies, regularly burning themselves to experience the sting of the flame and finding exhilaration in the terror their powers induce in others. They delight in wanton property destruction and extreme displays of psychical force.

Many pyrokinetics exhibit antisocial behaviour, and no small number are given to pyromaniacal tendencies. Even the best

adjusted pyrokinetics tend to stare longingly at open flames. In extreme cases, pyrokinetics are known to weep while in the presence of truly spectacular conflagrations, whether they caused them or not.

## Pyrokinetic Rules

### Explosive Temperament

When a pyrokinetic is injured or becomes angry, frustrated, or simply overwhelmed by emotion, he can lose control of his powers with potentially disastrous results. A pyrokinetic who experiences strong emotion or suffers a Serious Wound or worse must make a Will roll (DR 14). If the character succeeds, he retains control over his powers. If the character fails, his next action must be to target the source of his frustration with his most destructive pyrokinetic ability.

A character with the Silence Mental Discipline Stunt is not affected by Explosive Temperament.

## Pyrokinesis Powers

When this power first develops, a psychic is limited to setting small fires and manipulating existing flame. As the pyrokinetic grows in power, he will be able to ignite conflagrations, cause his enemies to spontaneously combust, and unleash terrific firestorms. At their most destructive, pyrokinetics can create infernos capable of gutting whole buildings at a time.

## Level 1

### Fanning the Flames

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the pyrokinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The pyrokinetic can manipulate an existing fire within his field of vision and in the Range of this power. He can cause the fire to burn out, flare brightly, or smoulder to conserve fuel.

When the pyrokinetic causes a fire to flare, it triples in size and can spread quickly, though it rapidly burns available fuel. Anyone caught within the area of a flaring fire is set on fire (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 180 – 181).

### Ignite

**Subject:** Single object

**Range:** 5 feet x the pyrokinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** By focusing his will on an object, the psychic can cause it to grow hot or even burst into flames. The psychic can use this power to heat meals, warm his flat, cause metal objects to become uncomfortably warm, or set small fires. Flammable materials will be quickly ignited by this power. Once a fire is ignited by the psychic, it will burn normally unless affected by another pyrokinetic power.

If the psychic heats up a metal object held in another character's hand, after thirty seconds the character holding the object must make a Will roll (DR 11 + the psychic's Will). If he fails, the character drops the object. If he succeeds, the character keeps his grip on the object, but suffers a Flesh Wound to his hand. If the burned character continues to hold the object, he must make another roll every ten seconds or at the beginning of each of his turns in combat to continue to hold onto the object for as long as this power is maintained and the target remains within the Range of this power.

The psychic must make a control check after he uses this power.

### Radiance

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Self

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The psychic can use this power to generate a warm glow around his body. This glow may be as dim as the psychic wishes or bright enough to light a large room. While this power is maintained, the psychic will be comfortably warm regardless of the ambient temperature around him. Likewise, anyone within five feet of the pyrokinetic will also be kept warm by the psychic's radiance. The psychic will be hot to the touch but will not set fires on contact.

Anyone targeting the psychic with a ranged attack while the psychic is maintaining this power, gains +2 to the attack roll.

## Level 2

### Fire Charmer

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the pyrokinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The psychic can use this power to manipulate the behaviour and, to a lesser extent, the shape of a fire in his field of vision and in the Range of this power. He can cause the fire to move

in any direction he chooses, provided it has fuel to burn. He can cause its flames to change direction, become contained, spread in a controlled fashion, or strike like a serpent. He can even cause flames to take any shape he desires, including spelling out words or creating images. Once the psychic stops maintaining this power, the affected fire reverts to its natural behaviour.

While affecting a fire, the psychic can cause it to lash out at those within three feet of the fire; in combat this requires the expenditure of an action. The psychic must succeed in a psychokinetic ranged attack roll (see pages 95 – 96) against his Subject. If the attack hits, the target is set on fire (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 180 – 181).

The psychic must make a control check when he uses this power. Whether or not he succeeds, he can use this power normally.

### Firewalker

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** Self

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** While this power is maintained, the psychic, his clothing, and anything or anyone held in his arms cannot be harmed by natural fire. If the psychic uses Firewalker while holding a burning object or individual, the flames are immediately extinguished. This power only protects against the heat related effects of flames. It does not protect against explosions, smoke inhalation, falling debris, or lack of oxygen.



If another psychic targets a pyrokinetic with a Pyrokinesis power while he is maintaining this power, subtract the Will of the pyrokinetic maintaining this power from the damage roll.

### **Torch**

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Self and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The pyrokinetic can cause a visible part of his body or the working end of a melee weapon he holding to burst into blazing flames. Though this fire will not harm the psychic or the object held, it will inflict terrible burns on anyone coming into contact with the flames. In addition to its attack potential, the psychic can use this power for light or incinerate any flammable objects held in his hand.

If the psychic exposes a Subject to the flame or hits a target with a blazing melee or unarmed combat attack while maintaining this power, in addition to any other damage from the attack the target suffers a damage roll with a modifier equal to the psychic's Will and is set on fire (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 180 – 181). Subtract the target's Vitality and armour from this damage roll.

If the psychic uses this power to ignite a weapon, it will remain blazing, without damaging the weapon, as long as it is held and this power is maintained. If the weapon is flammable and the psychic does not cease maintaining this power before letting go of the weapon, it may start to burn as if exposed to a natural fire.

### **Level 3 Burning Man**

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Self

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** With a sudden burst of flame, the pyrokinetic can set his entire body ablaze. As long as this power is maintained, the psychic resembles nothing so much as a man-shaped column of fire. These flames do not harm the psychic though they will burn off his clothes and incinerate anything flammable on his person.

While this power is maintained, anyone striking the psychic with an unarmed attack will suffer a damage roll with a modifier equal to the psychic's Will and be set on fire (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 180 – 181). Subtract the attacking character's Vitality and armour from this damage roll.

When the psychic hits a target with an unarmed or melee attack, in addition to any other damage from the attack, the target also suffers a damage roll with a modifier equal to the psychic's Will and is set on fire. Subtract the target's Vitality and armour from this damage roll.

Animates will not attack the psychic while this power is maintained.

A character targeting the psychic with a ranged attack while the psychic is maintaining this power gains +2 to the attack roll.

The psychic gains an Instability Point each time he uses this power.

### **Eruption of Flame**

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the pyrokinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** The psychic can cause the air itself to ignite explosively around a target in his field of vision and in the Range of this power. When the psychic uses this power, he makes a control check. If he fails, the he cannot muster the force of will to ignite the blast. If he succeeds, the Subject is the epicentre of the blast.

The Subject and anything within 3 feet of him suffers a damage roll with a modifier equal to the psychic's Will and is knocked down and set on fire (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 177 and 180 – 181). If a character is further than 3 feet from the blast, the damage roll is modified by -1 for every additional full 3 feet the character is from the epicentre. At this range, a character suffering a Serious Wound or worse will be knocked down and be set on fire. Subtract the character's Vitality and armour from this damage roll. Anyone suffering a Serious Wound or worse from the blast will have most of his clothes burned off and will be concussed (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 176).

This power will also affect the psychic if he is caught within the blast radius.

### **Flame Jet**

**Subject:** Group

**Range:** 5 feet x the pyrokinetic's Will

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** The pyrokinetic can produce a sustained jet of flame from his outstretched arms. The jet has a circumference of 8 inches x the psychic's Will. The jet can hit multiple targets within the Range and circumference of the blast. When the psychic uses this power, the Narrator determines how many potential targets are in the path of the jet of flame. The psychic then makes a psychokinetic ranged attack (see pages 95 – 96) against each Subject potentially hit by the flames. Anything hit by the flames suffers a damage roll with a modifier equal to double the psychic's Will and is set on fire (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 180 – 181).

The psychic must make a control check after he uses this power.

### **Level 4 Blazing Aura**

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Radius of 3 feet x the pyrokinetic's will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** Among the most scientifically baffling of psychical powers, Blazing Aura allows the pyrokinetic to generate an intense wall of heat around himself. Flammable material within the area affected by this power will catch fire, but the psychic and his clothing are not affected. Bullets targeting the psychic will be incinerated before making contact with him, effectively making the character immune to gunfire.

Anyone entering the Range of this power while it is maintained will suffer a damage roll with a modifier equal to the psychic's Will and be set on fire (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 180 – 181). Subtract the character's Vitality and armour from this damage roll. During combat, any character that starts his turn within an area affected by this power suffers this damage and is set on fire.

If the psychic can see an object or individual, he may make a control check to keep that character from being affected by this power. If the control check succeeds, that character is not affected by this power.

While this power is maintained, animates will close around the psychic but will not move into the Range of this power.

When the psychic uses this power, he gains one Instability Point.

### Psychic Crucible

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the pyrokinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** The pyrokinetic can use this power to superheat an area up to a 2 feet x his Will in diameter. Anything flammable in this area will be incinerated within seconds. Iron and steel become molten after two minutes. Even stone and marble crumble after three minutes of exposure.

Individuals within the area are set on fire (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 180 – 181) and will immediately attempt to throw themselves from the affected area. Anyone who cannot escape will be killed within ten seconds and completely reduced to ash after thirty seconds.

After resolving the effects of this power, the psychic must make a control check.

### Spontaneous Combustion

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 15 feet x the pyrokinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** The psychic can cause a living or half-living Subject in his field of vision and in the Range of this power to spontaneously combust.

When the psychic uses this power, he makes a contested Will roll against double his Subject's Vitality. If the Subject wins, he resists the psychic's pyrokinetic assault and the psychic gains one Instability Point. If the psychic wins, the Subject bursts into flames and is rapidly reduced to a charred skeleton. Anyone within 3 feet of the Subject when he erupts into flames is set on fire (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 180 – 181).

### Level 5 Conflagration

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Radius of 50 feet x the pyrokinetic's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The pyrokinetic can cause every fire within the Range of this power to flare up or die at will. He can change the direction of moving flames so that they spread or take on any shape he desires. The psychic can choose to have every fire within the area of this power affected the same way, or he can individually manipulate fires within his field of vision.

Rather than extinguishing the fires within the Range of this power, the psychic can also choose to contain the flames within the affected area. The contained fires will burn themselves out as soon as available fuel is consumed. This power allows a pyrokinetic to utterly gut a structure with fire while leaving nearby buildings untouched.

Some pyromaniacs have learned to use this power to concentrate and superheat fires before explosively releasing them to consume everything in their path. Affected fires can also be temporarily contained and then released to maximize fire-related casualties. During the Reclamation, the most powerful pyrokinetics employed by Project Valkyrie used this method to decimate the animate populations of cities by containing conflagrations until animates concentrated in a nearby area and then unleashing the blazes to consume them.

While maintaining this power, the psychic can make a control check to prevent an object or individual within his field of vision and in the Range of this power from being burned or set on fire. If he succeeds, that object or individual will not be burned or set on fire as long as this power is maintained, the psychic wills the target to be safe, and the target remains with the area affected by this power.

When the psychic uses this power, he must make a control check. If he fails, the power does not take effect, but he can try again.





## Firestorm

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Radius of 50 feet x the pyrokinetic's Will

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** When the pyrokinetic uses this power, he causes the air around him to combust explosively, creating a fiery blast capable of levelling buildings and incinerating anything in its path. Anyone other than the psychic who is within the Range of this power suffers a damage roll with a modifier equal to double the psychic's Will, is concussed, knocked down, and set on fire (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 176, 177, and 180 – 181). Subtract the affected character's Vitality and armour from the damage roll. Characters suffering Fatal Wounds are reduced to ash by the blast.

The firestorm continues to burn the very air for some time after it is unleashed. As a result, while living and half-lifer characters, including the psychic, remain in the blast radius, they must make a Vitality roll (DR 14) every round. If the character succeeds in his Vitality roll, he holds his breath that round and suffers no additional damage. If the character fails a Vitality roll, he chokes on flames and superheated air and suffers a damage roll with a +5 modifier. Subtract the character's Vitality from this damage roll. If a character within the blast area attempts to speak while the storm is still burning, he suffers this damage roll. The storm dissipates after three rounds.

When the psychic uses this power, he makes a control check. If the roll fails, the psychic is unable to protect himself from the blast and suffers the full effects of this power like anyone else caught in the blast radius.

## Spontaneous Devastation

**Subject:** Group

**Range:** Radius of 30 feet x the pyrokinetic's Will

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** When the psychic uses this apocalyptic power, he attempts to cause every individual within the Range to suddenly combust. The psychic makes a single Will roll. Separate contested rolls are made for each living and half-living character in the affected area, adding double the character's Vitality to the roll. If a Subject wins, he is not affected by this power. If the psychic wins, the Subject bursts into flames and is rapidly reduced to a charred skeleton. Anyone within 3 feet of the Subject when he erupts into flames is set on fire (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 180 – 181).

If the psychic can see a Subject, the psychic can make a control check to prevent that Subject from being affected by this power. If he succeeds, that character is not affected.

When the pyrokinetic uses this power, he gains one Instability Point.

## Telekinesis

Telekinesis is the psychic ability to generate kinetic force with the mind. The stronger the will of the psychic and the more developed his Telekinesis Devotion, the greater the mass his mind can move. The true power of this Devotion is limited only by the imagination and willpower of the mind that wields it.

Of all psychokinetic Devotions, Telekinesis is the most closely tied to madness. Ordinary lunatics, unable to articulate their

overwhelming sense of pain and horror, often manifest these destructive capabilities when they unwittingly degenerate into hopeless insanity. Worse, there is some aspect of this power that is profoundly destabilizing to the human mind and results in all manner of megalomaniacal delusions.

The genesis of this terrifying power is usually rooted in a lifetime of pent-up aggression and suffering. Unable to contain the pain and anger welling up within him, the psychic lashes out at the external world with catastrophic results. Most telekinetics discover their psychical powers during early adolescence, though some develop their talents earlier or later in life. There are few things more terrifying than a child beginning to manifest telekinetic powers. Woe to anyone who draws the wrath of such a vengeful and easily provoked god.

The onset of this Devotion is generally marked with an eruption of raw psychical energy that is invariably devastating to life and property. Many young telekinetics are killed outright in this initial burst when the force of their own minds literally tears them apart. Those who survive this ordeal usually lose all recollection of this traumatic event. Telekinetics who do not undergo this sort of psychic reckoning instead go through a period of uncontrollable psychokinetic activity in which their powers manifest erratically. In times of duress, furniture in the psychic's presence may be unintentionally moved, glass shattered, or small objects crushed. When the mind of such a psychic wanders, objects around him may float through the air or suddenly crash to the ground. The telekinetic may not even realize he is the cause of such disturbances until he develops rudimentary knowledge of his powers.

Those telekinetics who developed their powers more gradually tend to have more control over themselves than those who develop them spontaneously.

Some telekinetics find solace in eastern mysticism, utilizing meditation to focus their minds and govern their tempers. However despite illusions to the contrary, beneath the cool *façade* of even the most seemingly serene telekinetic is a torrent of aggression that renders the psychic dangerously unpredictable. The most proficient telekinetics learn to channel their rage into their powers while maintaining control over themselves, a difficult balancing act at even the best of times.

## Psychic Reckoning

A devastating psychical explosion generally marks the moment most people discover their telekinetic powers. This psychic reckoning is more common among adolescent telekinetics than those who discover their powers at an earlier or later age. This event invariably occurs while the psychic is under extreme duress, and the explosion is dangerous to the psychic and everything within several feet of him. The wave of destruction can blow out walls and windows, break bones, and generally wreak havoc.

When the fledgling telekinetic undergoes a psychic reckoning, he must make a Will roll (DR 14) to take control of his powers. If the roll succeeds, the psychic is not harmed by the blast which will still cause moderate damage to the surrounding area. If the roll fails, the character is the epicentre of a psychical explosion. The explosion has a damage modifier equal to the psychic's Will (see Explosives, *Unhallowed Metropolis* pages 179 – 180). Even if the psychic survives the blast, he could still be crushed or trapped beneath falling debris resulting from the explosion.

Most psychics lose all memory of this explosion. The trauma inflicted by the release of so much pent-up rage mercifully obliterates every detail of the event.

The unique capabilities of these psychics are in great demand. Those telekinetics who remain even marginally in command of their faculties can find employment in the factories of the metropolis. The most powerful are able to command fantastic wages in the field of industrial manufacturing, ship assembly, and mining. In case of an accident, these telekinetics may be more valuable than a hundred or even a thousand sleeper workers, turning certain tragedy into improbable salvation.

## Playing a Telekinetic

Telekinetics are notorious for the scope of their egos and their ungovernable tempers. Even seemingly stable telekinetics tend to have an inflated sense of self born from the potential to move mountains with their minds. The most degenerate telekinetics place no value on human life and believe all the world to be their playground. A frightfully high percentage of Neo-Victorian mass murderers are telekinetics.

Many telekinetics suffer psychological breakdowns before manifesting their powers. Among these psychics, dementia, paranoia, and compulsive disorders are extremely common. Amnesia tends to occur among telekinetics who develop their powers in adolescence. These psychics not only block out the memories of their first telekinetic experiences but also large portions of their youth.

Over time, a telekinetic will come to rely more and more on his powers in daily life, often to the detriment of his health and wellbeing. He may lose all interest in menial tasks and physical exertion. Such a psychic will take no action with his hands if it could be performed with his mind. Unless he takes care to maintain his body's musculature, it will atrophy. Despite obvious physical weakness, the psychic feels incredibly powerful and inhumanly strong. Psychics prone to such behaviour may suffer from any number of Physical Impediments.

Those telekinetics who retain control over themselves tend to be consummate professionals who exude a forced sense of calm. Such individuals seldom drink alcohol or give in to any form of excess. These psychics know all too well that the dilution of their mental faculties could prove disastrous by upsetting the delicate balance of their mind.

# Telekinesis Powers

Telekinesis is a power that takes some imagination to use. A telekinetic can make a projectile of nearly any object in his vicinity; he can potentially move through the air with unparalleled mobility, and he can kill by exerting the minutest amount of pressure on the body of another.

It should be kept in mind that if a telekinetic loses consciousness he ceases to maintain his powers. For instance, if the telekinetic falls asleep or is knocked unconscious, objects held in the air by the psychic's mind will immediately fall to the ground.

## Level 1 Force Blow

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 5 feet x the telekinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** The telekinetic can strike physical blows with his mind. However, this psychical attack is unfocused and easily deflected by armour.

When he uses this power, the psychic makes a psychokinetic ranged attack (see pages 95 – 96) against his target. If the attack hits, the target suffers a damage roll with a modifier equal to the psychic's Will. Subtract the target's Vitality and double the value of his armour from this damage roll. If the attack misses, nothing happens.

If a Force Blow attack hits the head of a target and results in a Serious Wound or greater, the target has a chance of being knocked out (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 177).

The psychic must make a control check after he uses this power.

## Strong Arm

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Self

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The telekinetic can use this power to supplement his physical strength. When determining his weight allowance, making a strength-based Vitality roll, or rolling melee and unarmed combat damage while maintaining this power, use the psychic's Will in place of his Vitality score if his Will is higher (see Vitality – Carrying and Vitality – Feats of Strength rolls, *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 158 – 159). If his Will is equal to or lower than his Vitality, the character is considered to have +1 Vitality as long as this power is maintained.

Additionally, the psychic does not suffer Coordination penalties for wearing armour while maintaining this power.

## Telekinetic Manipulation

**Subject:** Single object

**Range:** 3 feet x the telekinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The telekinetic is capable of moving and manipulating small objects with his mind. While maintaining this power, the psychic can move one object in his field of vision and in the Range of this power weighing no more than two pounds. He can cause the object to float in the air, move about, or be propelled as if thrown by hand. Thrown objects can travel beyond the Range of this power.

Telekinetically moved objects act as though they were being manipulated by hand, though these movements will be slow and clumsy by comparison. Thus, the psychic could open or slam a door, turn the pages of a book, or move an apple from across the room but should not expect much success at telekinetic painting or surgery.

The psychic could use this power to reach out and pat someone on the shoulder, trip him, crack glass, or damage sensitive pieces of machinery. The amount of telekinetic force exerted by this power is insufficient to directly cause harm to another character. However, this power could be used to grip a victim's throat, causing it to constrict in a frightening manner. This constriction is not strong enough to choke the victim, but it will feel unpleasant.

Note that while the psychic can only manipulate one object each time he uses this power, he can activate and maintain this power multiple times in order to manipulate multiple objects simultaneously.

## Level 2 Force Hammer

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the telekinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** The psychic can inflict grievous bodily harm with his mind. His mental blows strike with the force of a sledgehammer and can shatter brick and stone as easily as the human body. When the telekinetic uses this power, he makes a psychokinetic ranged attack (see pages 95 – 96) against his target. If the attack hits, the target suffers a damage roll with a modifier equal to double the psychic's Will. Subtract the target's Vitality and double the value of his armour from this damage roll. If the attack misses, nothing happens.

If a Force Hammer attack hits a target's head and results in a Serious Wound or greater, the target has a chance of being knocked out (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 177).

The psychic must make a control check after he uses this power.

## Pin

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 5 feet x the telekinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The psychic can use this power to generate sufficient force to grapple a Subject (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 167 – 168). The Subject can be held in place, pressed to the ground, or forced up against another object.

When the telekinetic uses this power, he makes a psychokinetic ranged attack (see pages 95 – 96) to psychically grab the target. If he misses, nothing happens. If the psychic hits, the target is grappled with the same result as a standard grapple attack. While maintaining this power, the psychic can psychically strangle a Subject once he has been grappled or use him as a human shield.

When resolving contested rolls to strangle the target, pin his arms, or prevent him from breaking free, add the psychic's Will + Concentration to the roll instead of adding his Coordination + Unarmed Combat or Vitality + Unarmed Combat as described in the grapple rules.

The psychic must make a control check when he uses this power. Whether or not he succeeds, he can use this power normally.

## Telekinetic Shield

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Self

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The psychic can surround himself with a field of kinetic force. While maintaining this power, the psychic's mind will subconsciously add to the protective qualities of this shield by diverting incoming objects.

When the psychic uses this power, he must make a control check. If he succeeds, this power activates normally. If he fails, he gains an Instability Point but does not summon sufficient force of will to use the power.

While this power is maintained, the psychic gains a number of armour points determined by his Will to all locations of his body (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 191 – 192). A telekinetic with Will 1 or 2 gains 1 point of armour. A telekinetic with Will 3 or 4 gains 2 points of armour. A telekinetic with Will 5 or more gains 3 points of armour. These armour points are in addition to any points the character gains from wearing conventional armour. Electrical shock damage (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 178 – 179) ignores armour gained from this power.

Armour gained from this power is never reduced due to damage. For example, if the psychic is wearing conventional armour while maintaining this power and suffers an Incapacitating Wound, the value of his conventional armour will be decreased by one (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 192) while the armour gained from this power will remain as its full value.

The character's Telekinetic Shield can also keep him dry in the rain and prevent his clothes from being stained by the smogs.

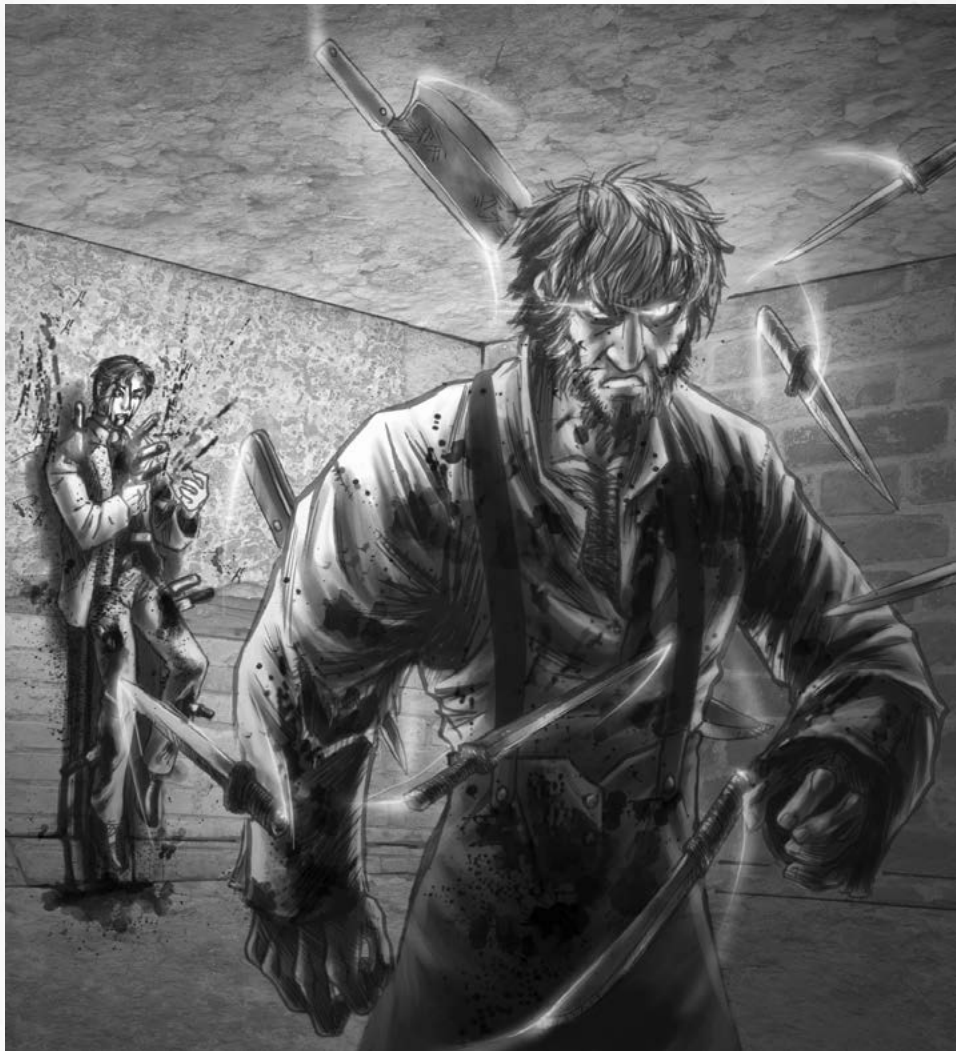
## Level 3 Bone Snapper

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the telekinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** With a thought, the psychic can apply enough telekinetic force to strip flesh, pulverize bone, crush organs, or tear away portions of a Subject's anatomy. Should the telekinetic focus his will on the destruction of another, the results are limited only by his anatomical knowledge and attention span. When properly riled, the telekinetic can reduce his victim to a fine pulp over the span of several minutes.



When he uses this power, the psychic makes a contested Will roll versus double the Subject's Vitality. If the Subject wins, he feels a tremendous pressure around the area of his anatomy the psychic is assaulting but is otherwise unharmed. The psychic, however, gains one Instability Point. If the psychic wins, the Subject immediately suffers one complication chosen by the psychic (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 171 – 178).

Rather than tearing his Subject limb from limb, a telekinetic with Medicine 4 or greater can use this power in more subtle ways. After succeeding in the contested Will versus Vitality roll, the psychic can choke off the flow of blood, cause organ failure, induce myocardial infarction, or kill a Subject in a multitude of ways virtually undetectable to medical science.

After successfully using this power on an undead Subject, the psychic can destroy the creature by crushing its skull or other major anatomical components, such as the heart of a vampire. At the Narrator's discretion, the psychic can also inflict relevant complications on the undead.

## Greater Manipulation

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the telekinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The psychic can use this power to manipulate objects of great weight with ever-improving speed and precision. Though the psychic's telekinetic movements lack the subtle muscle control of the human hand, his manipulations can exhibit a surprising amount of dexterity. Of course, surgery and fine detail work is out of the question, but the psychic could telekinetically drive a cart, unscrew a bolt, or operate a galvanic device.

The psychic can activate and maintain this power multiple times in order to manipulate multiple objects simultaneously, one object per instance of the power. The psychic can manipulate objects only while they are within the Range of this power though he can throw objects out of this Range. The psychic can also use this power on other characters as well as inanimate objects.

When the psychic uses this power, he must make a control check. Whether or not he succeeds, he can use this power normally.

To determine the maximum weight of each object the psychic can manipulate, see the Greater Manipulations Weight Table. If the psychic attempts to lift a Subject beyond his weight limit, he fails.

If the psychic lifts another character off the ground, he can use this power to limit the character's mobility or to transport him from one location to another. When the psychic uses this power on an unwilling Subject or an inanimate object, he must make a psychokinetic ranged attack (see pages 95 – 96) to psychically grab the Subject. If the psychic hits, he grabs his Subject and lifts him into the air. If he misses, nothing happens.

Once held, a character is at the psychic's mercy. He cannot take any action as long as this power is maintained. If a character whom is held by this power is targeted by an attack, the DR for the attack is 11. In this situation, do not add the character's Coordination to the DR of the attack. The psychic can move a held character at will.

In combat, each time the psychic wishes to manipulate an individual or object he is holding, he must use an action. If the psychic simply lifts a Subject into the air, it will be held in the air as long as the psychic maintains this power. If the psychic later wants to move the Subject or cause it to be thrown away from him, he will have to spend another action.

The psychic must take care while moving living and half-living Subjects unless he intentionally wishes to do them harm. Rapidly moving a solid object is one thing, but keeping living creatures safe during such manipulations is another. A psychic can safely move a living or fragile Subject up to triple his Will in feet each turn.

The psychic can also fling a Subject about violently, shaking it or slamming it into solid objects. If the psychic thrashes a character about, the Subject and anything it collides with are knocked down (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 177) and suffer a damage roll with a modifier equal to the psychic's Will.

The psychic can throw a Subject up to 10 feet x the psychic's Will. The Subject and anything it collides with are knocked down and suffer a damage roll with a modifier of double the psychic's will.

In any case, subtract the injured party's vitality and double the value of his armour from damage rolls resulting from Greater Manipulations.

Finally, the psychic can also lift a Subject into the air and drop him to his death. The Subject suffers a damage roll based on the height from which he was dropped (see *Falling*, *Unhallowed Metropolis* page 160).

The psychic can use this power to move small objects at terrific velocities. Propelled fragments of metal or broken glass can be devastating weapons that result in wounds not unlike a shotgun blast. Using this power in this fashion produces a spray of projectiles 5 feet in diameter with a range of 5 feet x the psychic's Will. The psychic requires access to a large amount of suitable material, such as metal debris or glass shards, to make an attack of this sort. When the psychic uses this power, the Narrator determines how many potential targets are within the area of the spray. The psychic then makes a psychokinetic ranged attack against each target potentially hit by the spray. Anything or anyone hit suffers a damage roll with a modifier equal to the psychic's Will.

### Telekinetic Showdown

When two telekinetics use their powers in directly opposed ways, such as the when manipulating the same object or in the case of one telekinetic using Greater Manipulations to restrain another, the psychic with the highest Telekinesis Devotion level automatically wins the contest. Otherwise, their powers function normally.

### Levitation

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Self

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The telekinetic can lift himself off the ground with the force of his mind. He can use this power to mimic flight or to hover stationary in the air. While levitating, the psychic can move up to his Will x 3 feet each turn. The psychic can lift himself to great heights, but risks exposure to the elements while doing so. The psychic is particularly in danger of being blown off course by powerful winds or suffering extreme cold or windburn. Should the telekinetic lose consciousness while flying, he will plummet helplessly to the earth.

### Level 4

#### Force Barrier

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the telekinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The psychic can generate invisible yet impenetrable barriers of force with his mind. This telekinetic barrier prevents any physical object from passing through it. It can deflect bullets or derail speeding trains, and thus it effectively makes those within unassailable to most attacks made by those outside the barrier. The

#### Greater Manipulation Weight Table

Psychic's Will	Maximum Weight
1	10 pounds
2	40 pounds
3	100 pounds
4	220 pounds
5	460 pounds
6+	940 pounds

barrier is not airtight or sound proof, and it will not keep out heat, cold, or electrical energy. So while the barrier itself cannot be damaged in any way, psychical and galvanic attacks can damage those within the barrier normally.

The psychic can generate a barrier with a diameter equal to his Will x 3 feet. A barrier can be placed anywhere in the psychic's field of vision and in the Range of this power. The barriers will conform to the space in which they are placed. For example, if the psychic places a Force Barrier in a doorway, the barrier will conform to the dimensions of the doorway. The psychic can use this power to create a bubble of force, a wall, or any other shape required.

If an explosion occurs outside the barrier, the blast cannot harm those within the barrier. If an explosion occurs inside the barrier, the barrier is considered an enclosed space (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 180) and will not harm those outside the barrier.

The psychic must make a control check when he uses this power. Whether or not he succeeds, he can use this power normally.

Spirits cannot pass through the barrier or target those within it with their powers of manifestation.

### Mass Manipulation

**Subject:** Group

**Range:** Radius of 15 feet x the telekinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** While maintaining this power, the psychic can manipulate any number of objects in his field of vision and in the Range of this power. Though manipulating each object still requires the psychic to spend an action, each object manipulated no longer requires him to maintain a separate instance of this power.

The maximum weight of each object the character can manipulate depends on his Will (see the Mass Manipulation Weight Table). Except for these two differences, this power functions identically to the Level 3 power, Greater Manipulations.

The psychic must make a control check when he uses this power. Whether or not he succeeds, he can use this power normally.

### Wrecking Ball

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 15 feet x the telekinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Thought



**Description:** The psychic is capable of generating blasts of tremendous force capable of punching holes through inches of plate steel. The psychic could easily use this power to bring down whole buildings by blasting apart foundations and supports.

When he uses this power, the psychic makes a psychokinetic ranged attack (see pages 95 – 96) to hit his Subject. If the attack misses, the explosion still occurs, but its epicenter is d5 feet from the intended target. If the attack hits, the target is the epicenter of a telekinetic blast. In any case, this power generates explosions that inflict a damage roll with a modifier equal to twice the psychic's Will at their epicenter (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 179 – 180).

Note that the telekinetic that detonated this psychical blast has no natural protection against it and will suffer its effects if he is within the blast radius. The safest way to use this power is from behind a force barrier.

#### Mass Manipulation Weight Table

Psychic's Will	Maximum Weight
1	20 pounds
2	80 pounds
3	200 pounds
4	440 pounds
5	920 pounds
6+	1880 pounds

The psychic must make a control check when he uses this power. Whether or not he succeeds, he can use this power normally.

## Level 5

### Massacre

**Subject:** Group

**Range:** Radius of 30 feet x the telekinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** The telekinetic can use his formidable psychological powers to rip apart the bodies of every individual within his field of vision and in the Range of this power.

When the telekinetic uses this power, he makes a single Will roll. Separate contested rolls are made for each character in the affected area. Add double the character's Vitality to the roll. If a Subject rolls equal to or higher than the telekinetic's roll, the target is not affected by this power. If the telekinetic rolls higher than a Subject, the Subject suffers a complication chosen by the psychic (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 171 – 178). This power cannot be used more surgically.

After successfully using this power on an undead Subject, the psychic can destroy the creature by crushing its skull or another major anatomical component, such as the heart of a vampire. At the Narrator's discretion, the psychic can also inflict relevant complications on the undead.

If the psychic can see a Subject, the psychic can make a control check to prevent that Subject from being affected by this power. If he succeeds, that character is not affected.

When the psychic uses this power, he gains one Instability Point.

### Total Control

**Subject:** Group

**Range:** 150 feet x the telekinetic's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** At the pinnacle of his power, the telekinetic can now manipulate objects of tremendous weight and size with devastating speed and force. The character can manipulate any number of objects within his field of vision and in the Range of this power. Though manipulating each object still requires the psychic to spend an action, each object manipulated no longer requires him to maintain a separate instance of this power.

To determine the maximum weight of each object the psychic can manipulate, see the Total Control Weight Table.

When the psychic uses Total Control to throw a Subject, the Subject is tossed up to 150 feet x the psychic's Will. Anyone hit by an object thrown by the psychic suffers a damage roll with a modifier equal to the psychic's Will x 3.

The psychic can use this power to perform any actions he could by hand. If the character performs an action requiring a Skill roll, he suffers -3 on the roll. The Narrator can increase this penalty based on the character's field of vision in relation to the objects being telekinetically moved.

Except for alterations above, this power functions identically to the Level 3 power, Greater Manipulations.

### Total Control Weight Table

Psychic's Will	Maximum Weight
1	50 pounds
2	200 pounds
3	500 pounds
4	1100 pounds
5	2300 pounds
6+	4700 pounds

The psychic must make a control check when he uses this power. Whether or not he succeeds, he can use this power normally.

### Tremor

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Radius of 150 feet x the telekinetic's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The telekinetic can literally move the earth with his mind. When this power is used, the area within Range of the psychic begins to shake violently. Anyone standing in this area suffers a damage roll with a modifier equal to the psychic's Will and is concussed and knocked down (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 176 and 177). Characters who have been knocked down cannot stand up while this power is maintained. In addition to the damage inflicted by the tremor itself, survivors may be further injured by falling debris and collapsing buildings.

This power causes tremendous damage to buildings in the affected area. If it is maintained for three seconds, the resulting tremor will crack walls and break windows. A ten-second tremor will cause serious structural damage to most buildings within the affected area. Less structurally sound buildings may lose floors or collapse entirely. A twenty-second tremor will inflict irreparable damage to buildings within the Range of this power. The Narrator determines the exact effects of this power. The stronger and more structurally sound a building is, the longer it can resist the effects of Tremor.

The psychic can protect himself from some potential damage and being knocked down by using Levitation in advance of generating the tremor. The psychic cannot make a control check to limit the effect of this power.

Using this power within the metropolis is sure to draw the attention of Psychic Branch.

When the psychic uses this power, he gains one Instability Point.

## Psychosurgery

Psychosurgery has a long and venerable history in Britain as a therapeutic procedure intended to treat mental illness by modulating brain performance. In 1888, Dr. Gottlieb Burckhardt pioneered the partial lobotomy, removing portions of the frontal lobes of several psychiatric patients with mixed results. Later investigators refined and expanded upon the concept of behavioural neurosurgery, developing more refined and precise techniques, but it was not until after the Plague that real progress would be made in developing psychosurgery's full potential.



Dr. Thomasse Sebastiaan Jansen, a private physician and researcher in the reclamation years, began experimenting with psychosurgery as a method of treating psychical abnormalities. His initial forays into psychosurgery were little more than variations on the lobotomy used in the pre-Plague era to subdue violent psychotics, and that procedure remained the mainstay of his practice until his death in 1986, but his research laid the foundations for an entirely new type of psychosurgery.

Though Dr. Jansen had been involved in surgical experiments on psychics since 1962, the main lines of his research focused on the psychosurgical control of the insane. To this end, in 1970, Dr. Jansen began human trials of a new technique, more delicate than the wholesale prefrontal cauterizations in vogue at the time, intended to modify certain brain centres believed to have a role in personality development. The procedure was intensive, involving rigorous mental and physical therapies applied over a period of weeks as well as a series of operations. Of thirteen original Subjects, all chronically insane, three died of asphyxiation or fits during isolation treatment, four died of complications following the procedure, four made varying degrees of recovery and were ultimately released from chronic care, and two spontaneously manifested psychical talents. In the two cases of unplanned surgical apotheosis, the first on record, there were some side effects—one patient suffered from a near-total loss of memory after the surgery, the other from periodic uncontrollable rages—but their psychical capabilities proved stable.

This accidental discovery sparked the field of psychical induction. Over the next several decades, correlations between apparently spontaneous manifestations of psychical ability in the insane, similar happenings documented in unrelated psychological experiments, and anecdotal reports of psychical abilities emerging under stress, allowed physicians

to assemble a coherent theory for intentional psychical induction. The most efficacious methods involved a combination of physical and mental stress and psychosurgery, a treatment intended to break down the architecture of the mind in a targeted manner. This research, however informative, necessitated extreme methods in dealing with Subjects; the practice of psychosurgical induction was banned in 2016.

Psychosurgery as a whole, however, retains a respected place in the medical pantheon. Lobotomies remain popular in the treatment of the incurably insane, particularly those prone to violent episodes, and it is not uncommon to treat an intractable psychic of unexceptional talent by excising the gift before proceeding with conventional therapies. A standardized set of equipment known as the psychosurgery operating kit (see page 178), designed specifically for applications in behavioural and psychical neurosurgery, is available to modern researchers and clinicians.

Despite psychosurgery's remarkable success in the treatment of a multitude of psychological disorders, especially those related to schizophrenia and psychical talents, inappropriate behaviour and reduced impulse control have been observed to increase in some Subjects following treatment. Furthermore, some patients exhibit decreased mental function, problem solving, and planning abilities.

The most common psychosurgical procedure is the lobotomy: a quick and simple method of rendering the most dangerous violent cases docile and harmless. Lobotomies are an especially common treatment for removing the threat posed by psychokinetics who prove unresponsive to medication. At some publicly funded institutions, lobotomies are seen as an inexpensive and permanent alternative to costly sedatives and psi inhibitors.

One of the few areas of psychosurgery that has actually undergone a resurgence in popularity is psychical induction, or forced apotheosis. Devotees of this revolutionary and outlawed area of experimental research believe that psychosurgery has the potential to initiate spontaneous human evolution in the form of psychical awakening. Though the procedure is illegal and documented attempts at psychical induction have met with catastrophic failure and widespread denunciation, experiments are ongoing.

## Corrective Surgery

The majority of psychosurgical procedures are intended to induce behaviour modification, treat mental illness, or remove psychical abilities. The adherents of psychosurgery point to the simple, undeniable fact that such methods have the advantage of effecting immediate and permanent results. Even a technically botched operation may be perceived to have a positive outcome: a failed surgery resulting in a permanent vegetative state or irreparable brain damage is preferable to leaving wholly intact the mind of a lunatic electrokinetic with an increasing resistance to pharmaceutical treatments. Some physicians, especially the overworked and under-compensated employees of public institutions, prefer to intentionally inflict such conditions rather than performing time-consuming surgeries or risk an unsuccessful treatment.

Before attempting psychosurgery, the physician performing the procedure must first identify the ailments he is treating. Generally this involves a psychological examination of the patient, but if the operating physician intends to remove his patient's psychical abilities, he must also first grade the patient's psychical powers. Once prepared, the physician will trepan his Subject's skull to gain access to the brain. Though such procedures were initially quite haphazard, Neo-Victorian medicine has advanced to the point at which minute and seemingly harmless alterations to the psyche are not only possible but the expected outcome of such treatments. Of course, surgeons intentionally inducing a vegetative state can proceed with a minimum amount of preparation, foregoing evaluation and simply hammering an ice pick through the skull above the tear duct and moving it back and forth to achieve the desired effect (see Lobotomy below).

Many would-be middle-class psychics choose to have corrective psychosurgery to remove their unwanted talents. These individuals believe that their powers are a curse that will lead to weakness of the mind. They fear that these deficiencies will develop into erratic behaviour that could jeopardize their livelihoods, reputation, and family name.

## Corrective Surgery Rules

Corrective procedures are intended to remove psychic Devotions and to treat Mental Disorders and some Mental Impediments. Mental Impediments treatable by these procedures are Amnesia (if it is psychological and not neurological in nature), Fastidious, Hypersensitive, Melancholy, Night Terrors, Sleepwalker, Uncontrollable Temper, and Weak Willed. Other Mental Impediments are beyond the scope of this procedure.

Before a physician can attempt a corrective psychosurgical procedure, he must first identify the conditions he is attempting to treat. Treating Mental Impediments or Mental Disorders requires the physician to succeed in a psychiatric diagnosis of the patient. The treating physician

must spend at least six hours evaluating the patient and then succeed in a Psychology Skill roll against a DR of 10 + the Subject's Will. Attempting to remove a patient's psychical powers requires the physician to succeed in grading the psychic's powers (see page 61). If the physician fails this roll, he can attempt it again after the necessary observation time has passed. Should the physician proceed after failing a diagnosis or with no diagnosis at all, the corrective surgery automatically fails.

The procedure should take place in a sterile environment, and the patient must be strapped down or sedated before undergoing the operation. The operation requires a psychosurgical operating kit (see page 61). When the physician performs a corrective psychosurgery, he must state the conditions he is attempting to treat. Each condition must be treated separately and requires a separate Skill roll, but the operating physician may treat several conditions with a single procedure. The procedure takes one hour per condition treated. To determine the success of each condition treated, the physician makes a Medicine Skill roll versus DR 11 + the patient's Intellect and Wit. Each condition may be treated once per procedure. If the physician fails to treat a condition, he can attempt the procedure again once his patient has fully recovered and has been re-evaluated.

Time and circumstances can affect the success of the surgery. If the physician takes a great deal of care, doubling the length of the operation, he gains +2 on his Skill roll. The physician can also choose to cut a large hole in his patient's skull, leaving a lasting scar but allowing for greater ease in operating, giving the physician +1 on his Skill roll. If the physician is rushed, he can perform the operation in half the time, but suffers -2 to the Skill roll. If the physician is forced to conduct the procedure in a less than sterile environment or with inappropriate tools, he suffers -2 to the Skill roll.

If the roll succeeds, the condition treated is removed. If the physician was treating the patient's psychical abilities, all his psychical Devotions are permanently lost and he cannot develop new ones. If the physician was treating a Mental Disorder or Impediment, it is removed. If the roll fails or the operating physician proceeded with a misdiagnosis or no diagnosis at all, the treatment fails and the Narrator rolls on the Failed Psychosurgery Table to determine the effect of the procedure.

After corrective psychosurgery, the patient requires aftercare to ensure an infection-free recovery. The patient requires thirty minutes of care from a physician with Medicine 2 or greater each day for a week or he will suffer an infection. Every twenty-four hours after getting an infection, the patient suffers -1 Vitality until his infection is treated with a successful Medicine Skill roll (DR 14). Each attempt to treat the infection takes four hours. If the patient's Vitality is reduced to less than 0 as a result of an infection, he dies.

*For example, Nicci's character, Dr. Fell, performs corrective psychosurgery on Brad's Aristocrat, Sir Adrian Quinn. Sir Quinn has Intellect 2, Will 3, Night Terrors, minor Narcolepsy, and chronic Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder. Dr. Fell decides he will treat each of Sir Quinn's three conditions. Normally, the procedure would take one hour per condition treated, but Nicci decides Dr. Fell will take his time and make a day of it. The operation will take six hours and Dr. Fell gains +2 on his Medicine Skill rolls. Nicci begins by describing Dr. Fell's preoperating procedures just to see Brad turn pale at the thought of his character's skull being opened so that Sir Quinn's brain can be exposed to Dr. Fell's tender ministrations. Nicci decides to begin with curing Sir Quinn's Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. Nicci must roll against DR 16 (11 plus Sir Quinn's Intellect 2 and Will 3). Mercifully, Nicci rolls a 14, adds Dr. Fell's Medicine Skill of 4, and the +2 modifier for the careful operation for a total*



of 20; Sir Quinn is cured of his obsessions through the miracles of science. Next Nicci declares Dr. Fell will remedy Sir Quinn's Night Terrors. This time Dr. Fell's skill fails; Nicci rolls a 7 for a lacklustre total of 13. Her Narrator then rolls on the Failed Psychosurgery Table, resulting in 15. The Narrator secretly notes that while Quinn survives, he will now suffer terrible bouts of Melancholy in addition to his Night Terrors. Finally, Dr. Fell moves on to Quinn's Narcolepsy. Nicci throws the dice again and scores a meagre 5 for a total of 11. As Nicci apologises for the cruel turn of fate, the Narrator secretly rolls on the Failed Psychosurgery Table and rolls a 9; rather than curing Sir Quinn of his disorder, Dr. Fell's botched attempt increases the severity of Sir Quinn's Narcolepsy to chronic. Dr. Fell writes Sir Quinn a bill for services rendered and leaves the invalid to his convalescence.

## Lobotomy

The lobotomy is a procedure intended to induce docility in a patient. The operation, less of a medical treatment and more of a wilful mutilation of the brain, involves drilling a hole in the skull, inserting a blade, and cutting or destroying the connections from the prefrontal cortex to the rest of the brain.

### Lobotomy Rules

Unlike corrective psychosurgery, the lobotomy requires no diagnosis or lengthy observation time, just a hammer, an ice pick, and two minutes of labour. The "operating physician" makes a Medicine Skill roll (DR 14) to determine the success of the procedure. There are no modifiers for lobotomy rolls.

If the physician succeeds in the roll, the patient's Wit is reduced to 1 and his Will and Charm are permanently reduced by 1. If the patient had psychological Devotions, he permanently loses them. The patient will be rendered docile and unlikely to act violently. If the patient's Will or Charm is reduced to 0 or less as a result of this procedure, the patient enters a permanent vegetative state. If the roll fails, the Narrator rolls on the Failed Psychosurgery Table.

A patient may eventually recover Attribute points lost due to this procedure with the expenditure of experience points. However, a lobotomized character's Wit cannot increase beyond 2, and his Will and Charm cannot increase beyond 4.

Lobotomies are physically easy to recover from. The most obvious sign marking the body after a lobotomy is a black eye. Assuming the procedure was carried out with sterile equipment, there is little chance of infection.

## Psychic Induction

Psychic induction is a combination of psychological methodologies and psychosurgery intended to destabilize the human mind in such a way as to cause a Subject to spontaneously manifest psychical powers. These techniques are characterized by extreme mental and physical abuse including, but not limited to, starvation, sleep deprivation, degradation, isolation, and torture. Subjects may be forced to take psychoactive drugs or undergo invasive experimental surgeries intended to further impair their grasp on reality and trigger a psychical response. Subjects with the strongest wills, while taking the longest to break, are the most likely to result in favourable outcomes.

These procedures can be incredibly dangerous. The most likely result is the untimely death of the test subject. In cases where these procedures meet with a modicum of success, subjects most often manifest uncontrollable psychokinetic powers. Knowing only pain and suffering, they turn their new found psychical talents on their tormentors, innocent victims, and their own bodies. The handful of experiments that have resulted in even partially positive outcomes have proven impossible to duplicate.

Obviously, such procedures are amoral and unquestionably illegal. However, despite the risks, private research into all areas of psychic induction continues. Many medical professionals question the



commitment of the government to enforce its own moratorium on such research.

## Psychic Induction Rules

Psychic induction procedures may be carried out by a single physician or by a qualified group. For the experiment to have any chance of success, each physician taking part in the experiment must have at least Medicine 3, Parapsychology 3, and Psychology 3. One character is designated as the head physician and will oversee the experiment and be responsible for its ultimate success or failure. Though other characters may devote time to the experiment, the head physician will be the character that makes the Skill rolls throughout the experiment.

The physicians taking part in the procedure are the only people who may be in contact with the patient. Psychic induction requires that the subject remain completely isolated throughout the duration of the experiment. If the subject has any contact with anyone not directly involved in the experiment, the experiment automatically fails.

When conducting this experiment, the head physician must describe the methods of induction his character uses. Depending on the techniques used, psychic induction may require access to some or all of the following elements: a great deal of specialized equipment, including a psychosurgical operating kit (see page 178); an operating room; a torture chamber; an isolation chamber; or access to pharmaceuticals, including psychoactive drugs.

Regardless of the methods attempted, psychic induction is invariably time intensive for the physician conducting the experiment and potentially fatal to the subject. Round-the-clock care and observation is vitally necessary to ensure the survival of the subject. The subject must undergo two hours of life-sustaining care each day. The character attending to the subject does not have to be the head physician; any physician involved in the experiment can treat the subject. At the end of the week, the head physician makes a Medicine Skill roll versus DR 16 minus the subject's Vitality. If the subject does not receive this medical attention each day that week or if the treating physician fails the Skill roll, the subject suffers -1 Vitality. If the subject is reduced to less than 0 Vitality, he dies.

Psychic induction further requires that the head physician spend at least six hours per day observing and performing procedures on the subject intended to accelerate the process of the disintegration of the subject's ego. After a full week of oversight and experimentation, the head physician makes a contested Will roll versus the subject. Depending on the psychic induction technique used, the head physician will add his Medicine, Psychology, or Torture Skill to this roll. If the subject wins the roll, nothing happens. If the head physician succeeds in this roll, the subject suffers -1 Will. If one or more qualified characters are spending a combined total of six hours per day aiding the head physician, the head physician gains +2 to his roll.

Once the subject's Will has been reduced to 0, the experiment reaches its conclusion. The Narrator secretly makes a roll on the Psychic Apotheosis Table to determine the outcome of the experiment.

After the experiment, the subject regains lost Will and Vitality at a rate of one point per week until he is fully recovered. If the experiment is halted for any reason, it automatically fails but can begin again once the subject has fully recovered his Vitality and Will.



Attempts to induce physical talents in half-lifers, the undead, or anathema automatically fail. Psychic induction has no effect on characters who already have physical powers.

## Hypnotic Induction

Neo-Victorian parapsychologists have met with some success inducing a temporary physical response in an otherwise normal mind through hypnosis. The intention of such experiments is to unlock the physical potential in the mind of a sleeper. While under hypnosis, the alienist or parapsychologist conducting the experiment attempts to trick the mind into manifesting physical powers while in a deep trance.

The results of experiments, which date back to the last century, have been encouraging but not overwhelming. Physical powers manifested through hypnotic induction tend to be weak and function erratically. The untrained minds of sleepers seem to have great difficulty in controlling the powers manifested, perhaps due to being in a trance. Most often, this phenomenon is limited to the most basic and well-documented of physical powers.

### Hypnotic Induction Rules

A character attempting to hypnotically induce a physical response in another must have at least Hypnosis 4 and Parapsychology 3. The subject must be a living human sleeper. Attempts to induce a physical response in the undead, half-lifers, or anathema automatically fail.

The hypnotist must first put his subject in a trance (see Hypnosis, *Unhallowed Metropolis* pages 104 – 105). Once the subject is in a trance state, the hypnotist can begin the process of untethering the subject's mind through hypnotic suggestion.

After a half hour of preparation, the hypnotist makes a contested Hypnosis roll versus the subject's Will. If the subject wins, he slowly comes out of the trance without manifesting a physical power. If the hypnotist wins, the subject manifests a physical power. Generally the subject will manifest Empathy or Telepathy at level 1, but the hypnotic induction of other powers is not unknown.

If the hypnotist wishes the subject to manifest a particular physical power, after succeeding in the contested Hypnosis roll, the hypnotist can make an additional Parapsychology skill roll (DR 20). If the roll succeeds, the hypnotist can cause the subject to manifest any physical devotion at level 1.

The hypnotist can make additional Hypnosis Skill rolls (DR of 11 plus the subject's Will) to cause the subject to use his powers. If the hypnotist succeeds, the subject uses his induced physical powers as directed by the hypnotist. If the hypnotist fails this roll, something goes wrong. The subject may use his power in an unintended way, suddenly wake up, or manifest another physical power. The Narrator determines the exact effects of the failed experiment.

On a critical success or failure, the subject manifests a much more powerful physical ability than intended. For example, if the subject is being guided to read the emotions of an audience member, he could accidentally manifest a pyrokinetic power and unleash a firestorm through the lecture hall in which the experiment is taking place.

When performing an action with hypnotically induced physical powers, the subject makes all related rolls.

If the subject wakes up from his trance for any reason, the experiment ends and the subject immediately loses any induced physical powers.

## Failed Psychosurgery Table

When a physician fails a corrective surgery or lobotomy Medicine Skill roll, the Narrator rolls 2d10 and consults the Failed Psychosurgery Table below. The Narrator should keep the result of the roll secret until the patient has been thoroughly examined.

Roll            Effect

### 2            Spontaneous Psychological Ability

The botched procedure results in spontaneously awakening the patient's mind. The patient gains one psychological Devotion at level 1 and a Latent Insanity (see page 66) chosen by the Narrator.

### 3            Permanent Vegetative State

The character enters a permanent vegetative state.

### 4            Impaired Faculties

The character's Will is reduced to 1. Over time, the character can spend experience points to increase his Will. However, the character's Will cannot exceed 3.

### 5            Neurological Damage

The botched procedure results in the character suffering permanent neurological damage. Roll a d10. On a roll of 1-4, the character becomes blind (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 146). On a roll of 5-7, the character goes deaf (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 146). On a roll of 8-10, the character becomes a mute (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 148).

### 6            Severe Fits

The subject gains the 4-point version of the Fits Physical Impediment (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 147). If this result is rolled again or if the character already suffers from the 4-point version of the Fits Impediment, he suffers no additional adverse effects from the failed psychosurgery.

### 7            Amnesia

The subject gains the Amnesia Mental Impediment (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 149). The first time the character suffers this effect, he gains the 1-point version of the Impediment. If the character already suffers from this Impediment, his Amnesia worsens by one step.

### 8            Not Right

After the procedure, the character is never quite the same again. The character's eyes take on a vacant quality, and he speaks in low, uneven tones. He loses all Mental Qualities and suffers -1 on non-Intimidation Charm rolls when dealing with characters without Mental Disorders.

### 9            Mental Disorder

The character suffers further deterioration of his mental health as a result of the procedure. If the character was being treated for a minor Mental Disorder, the disorder becomes chronic. If the character was being treated for a chronic Mental Disorder or any other condition, he gains a new minor Mental Disorder chosen by the Narrator.

### 10          Partial Success with Complication

The treatment results in a partial success. If the patient was being treated to remove psychological abilities, he loses one level from each of his Devotions. If the patient was being treated for a Mental Impediment, the Impediment is removed. If the character was being treated for a chronic Mental Disorder, the disorder becomes minor. If the character was treated for a minor Mental Disorder, the disorder is removed. If the character was undergoing a lobotomy, he gains a black eye but is otherwise unaffected.

The character also suffers an additional side effect of the procedure. Roll again on this table. Reroll a result of Death, Partial Success, or Partial Success with Complication.

11 **Partial Success**

The treatment results in a partial success. If the patient was being treated to remove psychical abilities, he loses one level from each of his Devotions. If the patient was being treated for a Mental Impediment, the Impediment is removed. If the character was being treated for a chronic Mental Disorder, the disorder becomes minor. If the character was treated for a minor Mental Disorder, the disorder is removed. If the character was undergoing a lobotomy, he gains a black eye but is otherwise unaffected.

12 **Partial Success with Complication**

The treatment results in a partial success. If the patient was being treated to remove psychical abilities, he loses one level from each of his Devotions. If the patient was being treated for a Mental Impediment, the Impediment is removed. If the character was being treated for a chronic Mental Disorder, the disorder becomes minor. If the character was treated for a minor Mental Disorder, the disorder is removed. If the character was undergoing a lobotomy, he gains a black eye but is otherwise unaffected.

The character also suffers an additional side effect of the procedure. Roll again on this table. Reroll a result of Death, Partial Success, or Partial Success with Complication.

13 **Sickening**

The character's body is wracked by the failed procedure. If the character had the Able Bodied, Ambidextrous, Haunting Beauty, Light Sleeper, Long Lived, or Strong Man Physical Qualities, he now loses them.

14 **Illiterate**

The character permanently loses the ability to read and write and gains the Illiterate Mental Impediment (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 150).

15 **Melancholy**

The character gains the Melancholy Mental Impediment (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 150).

16 **Loss of Muscle Control**

The character suffers constant muscle spasms resulting in a -2 penalty to his Prowess.

17 **Uncontrollable Temper**

The character gains the Uncontrollable Temper Mental Impediment (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 150).

18 **Loss of Motor Control**

The character permanently suffers -1 Coordination. If the character's Coordination is reduced to 0 or less as a result of this procedure, he is permanently paralyzed and becomes a paraplegic.

19 **Brain Damage**

The character's Intellect is reduced to 1. Despite this reduction, the character's Academic Skills are not reduced, but the character cannot increase his Academic Skills beyond their current levels and any new Academic Skills the character learns will be limited by his new Intellect. Over time, the character can spend experience points to increase his Intellect. However, the character's Intellect cannot exceed 3.

20 **Death**

The patient dies due to complications from the procedure.

## Natural Induction

Occasionally a sufficiently catastrophic event will unlock a living sleeper's psychical potential. This event must be damaging enough to permanently destabilize the character's mind and can only happen in times of extreme duress.

When the Narrator believes there is a chance for natural induction to occur, the character makes a Will roll (DR 20). If the character fails, nothing happens. If he succeeds, the character's trauma unlocks his psychical potential. The character gains one Devotion at level 1 and a Latent Insanity (see page 66) chosen by the Narrator.

Once a character undergoes natural induction, he can spend experience points on additional Devotion levels, but the character cannot develop the Psychic Calling's Mental Discipline Stunts.

Natural induction should be a very rare dramatic tool. There is no shortage of pain and misery in the metropolis, but very few events trigger a psychical response.

## Psychic Apotheosis Table

When the subject's Will is reduced to 0 as a result of psychic induction, the Narrator secretly rolls 2d10 and consults the Psychic Apotheosis Table below. Add the subject's base Will to this roll. The Narrator should keep the result of the roll secret until the subject undergoes a full medical examination and psi grading (see page 61).

If the subject develops psychical powers as a result of psychic induction, he can spend experience points on additional Devotion levels, but the character cannot develop the Psychic Calling's Mental Discipline Stunts.

Roll	Effect
------	--------

8 or less	Death
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The subject expires as a result of the experiment.

9–10	Catastrophic Failure
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Though the experiment succeeds in fracturing the subject's ego, it fails to induce psychical manifestation. Instead the subject suffers a number of permanent side effects as a result of the experiment. Roll three times on the Psychic Induction Side Effect Table below. The subject can undergo the process of psychic induction again once he has fully recovered.

11–14	Failure
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The experiment fails to induce a psychical response in the subject. Roll once on the Psychic Induction Side Effect Table below. The subject can undergo the process of psychic induction again once he has fully recovered.

15–16	Psi Null
-------	----------

The experiment is an utter failure. Instead of producing a psychic, the subject instead gains the Psi Null Supermundane Quality (see page 49). Roll once on the Psychic Induction Side Effect Table. Any further attempts to induce a psychical response in the subject automatically fail.

17–18	Deranged Talent
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While the experiment yields some encouraging results, the subject suffers horrific psychological damage. The character gains one Devotion at level 1 and a Latent Insanity (see page 66) chosen by the Narrator. Roll three side effects for the subject on the Psychic Induction Side Effect Table below.

19–20	Partial Success
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The experiment is a partial success. The character gains one Devotion at level 1 and a Latent Insanity (see page 66) chosen by the Narrator. Roll once on the Psychic Induction Side Effect Table below.

21–22	Flawed Apotheosis
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The experiment results in producing a psychic of immense power. Though the psychic induction was unquestionably successful, the subject is left extremely unstable as a result. The character gains one psychokinetic Devotion at level 3 and a Latent Insanity (see page 66) chosen by the Narrator. Roll three times on the Psychic Induction Side Effect Table below. The first sign of the experiment's success will likely be the subject unleashing his full potential upon his former tormentors.

23–24	Success
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The experiment was a success. The character gains one Devotion at level 3 and a Latent Insanity (see page 66) chosen by the Narrator. Roll once on the Psychic Induction Side Effect Table below.

25+	True Apotheosis
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The experiment is an unparalleled success. Not only does the subject manifest extremely powerful psychical abilities, but the long-term side effects of the induction process are limited. The character gains one Devotion at level 4 and a Latent Insanity (see page 66) chosen by the Narrator. Roll once on the Psychic Induction Side Effect Table below.

## Psychic Induction Side Effect Table

As a result of the psychic induction process, the subject experiences one or more side effects. To determine the side effects the subject experiences, the Narrator rolls 2d10 and consults the Psychic Induction Side Effect Table below.

Roll	Effect
2	Unlocked Potential

The terrible experiments the subject is forced to endure unlock the hidden potential of his mind. The character gains the Photographic Memory, Savant, and Synaesthesia Mental Qualities (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 148 – 149). If this result is rolled again, the character experiences no additional effects.

**3 Permanent Physical Damage**  
As a result of the extreme physical and mental punishment the subject underwent during the experiment, his body suffers permanent damage. The character suffers -1 Vitality and Coordination. If this result is rolled again, its effect is cumulative. If a character's Vitality or Coordination is reduced to 0, he is paralyzed. If his Vitality or Coordination is reduced to less than 0, he dies.

**4 Total Amnesia**  
The rigors of the experiment completely erase the subject's memories. The character gains the 5-point version of the Amnesia Mental Impediment (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 149). If this result is rolled again, the character suffers no additional adverse effects.

**5 Severe Fits**  
The subject gains the 4-point version of the Fits Physical Impediment (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 147). If this result is rolled again, the character suffers no additional adverse effects.

**6 Evil Eye**  
The experiment deeply unhinges the subject. The severe pain inflicted on his mind and soul is reflected in his tormented eyes. The character gains the Evil Eye Physical Impediment (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 147). If this result is rolled again, the character suffers no additional adverse effects.

**7 Psychological Scars**  
The subject gains the Night Terrors Mental Impediment (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 150). If the character had the Resolve Mental Quality, he loses it. If this result is rolled again, the character suffers no additional adverse effects.

**8 Hypersensitive**  
As an effect of the experiment, the subject's senses are painfully sharpened. The character gains the Hypersensitive Mental Impediment (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 149 – 150). If this result is rolled again, the character suffers no additional adverse effects.

**9 Melancholy**  
The subject gains the Melancholy Mental Impediment (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 150). If this result is rolled again, the character suffers no additional adverse effects.

**10 Mental Damage**  
The subject experiences a reduction in his mental faculties as a result of the experiment. The character suffers -1 Intellect and Wit. If this result is rolled again, the effect is cumulative. If a character's Intellect or Wit is reduced to 0 or less, he enters a permanent vegetative state. The character's Academic Skills can be reduced as an effect of decreased Intellect.

**11 Unsound Mind**  
The subject's sense of self and wellbeing are damaged by the experiment. The character suffers -1 Will. If this result is rolled again, its effects are cumulative. If a character's Will is reduced to 0 or less, he becomes completely unresponsive to outside stimuli and spends the rest of his days staring blankly.

**12 Uncontrollable Temper**  
The subject gains the Uncontrollable Temper Mental Impediment (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 150). If this result is rolled again, the character suffers no additional adverse effects.

**13 Dispassionate**  
Following the experiment, all life seems to leave the subject's eyes. He takes on a coldly dispassionate demeanour. The character suffers -1 Charm. If this result is rolled again, its effect is cumulative. If a character's Charm is reduced to 0 or less, he becomes completely unresponsive to outside stimuli and spends the rest of his days staring blankly.

**14 Blind**  
The subject gains the Blind Physical Impediment (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 146). If this result is rolled again, the character suffers no additional adverse effects.

**15 Mute**  
The subject gains the Mute Physical Impediment (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 148). If this result is rolled again, the character suffers no additional adverse effects.

**16 Deaf**  
The subject gains the Deaf Physical Impediment (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 146). If this result is rolled again, the character suffers no additional adverse effects.

**17 Lame**  
The subject gains the Lame Physical Impediment (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 147). If this result is rolled again, the character suffers no additional adverse effects.

**18 Unhinged**  
The subject becomes mentally unstable as a result of the experiment. The character permanently suffers -2 on Mental Disorder control checks (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 151). If this result is rolled again, the character suffers no additional adverse effects.

**19 Accelerated Decreptitude**  
The subject gains the Accelerated Decreptitude Physical Impediment (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 145). If this result is rolled again, the character suffers no additional adverse effects.

**20 Eye of the Abyss**  
Though he may seem normal on the outside, the subject's mind has been terribly distorted as a result of the experiment. Virtually inhuman, the character can never develop the Empathy and Telepathy Devotions and becomes immune to their effects. A character who uses an Empathy or Telepathy power within thirty feet of the subject must make a control check.



# CHAPTER FOUR: GHOSTS OF LONDON

From *The Properties of the Aetheric World*,

by Jonathan Alexander Stark, 2097

*Beyond the physical reality immediately visible to our eyes lie other worlds, the closest and most often viewed of which is the aetheric plane. Man, and any other physical being, possesses a gross physical form as well as an aetheric body on this plane. The material of the aetheric plane, the low-frequency "luminiferous aether" of the physicists, pervades that of the physical plane as water does a sponge. The luminiferous aether spreads through the lower levels of physical matter, transmitting energy through solid mass without disrupting it.*

*The theories of Theosophy comprise the most complete set of speculations involving the aetheric world and its relation to physical reality. Though, in truth, little is known of the mechanisms involved in this process, and nothing whatsoever can be said concerning the fate of the spirit once it vanishes from the aetheric plane. According to spiritualist ideas, the invisible world, to which the soul is believed to depart at the time of death, is a plane of reality that interpenetrates the physical plane and also extends beyond it into the places where only the aetheric human form may go. Here the spirit learns to dissociate itself from the things tying it to the physical world; until, free of attachments, it is able to leave its old life behind without regret. Those that enter the realm of death with extraordinary evil on their soul or those that suffered extremely in dying, may take centuries to pass out of the astral realm. The medium is able to make contact with only those spirits that still reside within the aetheric plane. Those that have passed from the astral realm are beyond the reach of any human concern.*

*Explorers of the aetheric realm report a world very like the physical world. However, colours and shades there, they say, are made in emotion rather than with light, and living and nonliving things carry the impressions of the emotions to which they have been exposed. Investigators involved in the diagnosis and resolution of malevolent hauntings report a different aspect of the aetheric world. These investigators often report a world shrouded in darkness and a sensation of density, of pushing one's way through some black, viscous substance. Encounters with aetheric entities in this portion of the aetheric world are universally unpleasant.*

*It is theorized that there are still farther realms as yet unknown to science, but any regions that may lie beyond the low-frequency aether are not accessible to the supernormal senses and aetheric technologies*

## World of the Aether

*It was thus described four thousand years ago in the Egyptian papyrus of the Scribe Ani: "What manner of place is this unto which I have come? It hath no water, it hath no air; it is deep, unfathomable; it is black as the blackest night, and men wander helplessly about therein; in it a man may not live in quietness of heart." For the unfortunate entity on that level it is indeed true that "all the earth is full of darkness and cruel habitations," but it is darkness which radiates from within himself and causes his existence to be passed in a perpetual night of evil and horror...*

—C. W. Leadbeater  
"The Astral Plane," 1895

Before the advent of aetheric monitoring, scientific recording and quantification of spiritual phenomena was all but impossible. Observation was limited to the testimony of reputable mediums and ordinary people who were unfortunate enough to stumble across a spiritual manifestation. However, these reports were subject to the vagaries of individual interpretation as well as the distortions and mental fabrications of the trance state. Technologies designed to circumvent this limitation, such as the spirit photography that achieved periodic popularity during the pre-Plague years, were notoriously unreliable, unable to produce consistent results, and wholly non-quantitative even at their best.

The breakthrough discovery made by Dr. Elspeth Vreemd in 1935 provided the first solid clue in the search for a psychical physics. Vreemd found that supernormal manifestations—psychical and spiritual—register in a range of low-energy aether. By contrast, the Tesla fields used to provide power are classified as high-energy-aether phenomena. The original 1935 "aetheric monitor" made use of this correlation, receiving information from the pervasive low-energy aether and using perturbations in the information flow to indicate activity.

Aetheric scanning has confirmed some commonly held spiritualist beliefs. Spiritualists have historically described the spirit world as pervading the physical and taking structure from it, and that does appear to be the case to some extent. Modern aether photographs reveal a landscape heavily influenced by the physical composition of the area, with buildings and the like reproduced more or less faithfully in the low-frequency aether. However, the composition is not strictly limited to the current physical architecture. These photographs also reveal confused composite landscapes wherein features long since vanished in the physical world retain their imprint on the aether. Recent events, particularly those of high emotional impact, tend to be recorded with higher clarity and veracity.

This supports the traditional spiritualist view of the near-aether as the "emotional plane." Powerful emotions can create an aetheric object or give an existing aetheric object greater solidity. This has been observed any number of times with inanimate objects: a treasured item that is physically battered and worn will appear as new in an aether image; a missing ring will be photographed in place on its owner's finger; a recently burned home appears standing and whole.

With active aetheric entities, the role of emotion is less clear. A spirit can be maintained to some extent by the continued emotional investment of the living, whether by attention from the grieving, the voyeurism of *séance* participants, or the collective fear and trauma of those subjected to an active haunting. Mediums have long maintained that it is harmful to the spirits of the departed to continue calling them back into *séance*, as this will prevent them from going to their final rest. Scientists have documented that continual *séance* involvement results in increased aetheric density of a spirit when compared with controls.

Under some circumstances, the emotions of the living can even create a haunting. One case, documented in Stepney in the late 2040s, remains the textbook example of this phenomenon.



Following the disappearance of the landlady's husband in 2044, a rooming-house suffered a lengthy and severe haunting that resulted in the eventual abandonment of the house. The landlady, Mrs. Abigail Geschadet, called parapsychological investigators onto the scene in 2048 after even she could no longer remain on the premises. Investigators extensively documented the scene and the manifestations, which included phantom voices, footsteps

in the night, and psychokinetic activity such as upset furniture and small objects being thrown across the room. Aether photography succeeded in capturing images of the spectre—manifestly Mr. Geschadet, a sallow, bulky man, similar in appearance to photographs taken before his disappearance and with no marks of violence on the spectral body. Mediums attempting to make contact reported feeling the presence of the spirit, and even making visual contact in a deep trance, but no communication took place. The epicentre of the haunting seemed to be the downstairs parlour, but no evidence of a crime could be found, either physically or astrally, and no physical remains were ever located on the premises. Months later, after Mrs. Geschadet died from illness, the haunting began finally to subside, and it resolved entirely by December 2049, at which point the house was claimed by the couple's adult daughter and reopened as a boarding house. Within a week, while sorting her parents' old belongings, Miss Geschadet discovered her mother's journals and therein the cause of the haunting: in 2044, Mr. Geschadet, a known drunkard, had apparently succeeded in drinking himself to death, and his wife, suffering financial

hardships from her husband's dissipation, had sold the body to the medical schools in secret. Her journals after that point were a chronicle of guilt and reflected a deeply held belief that her husband's spirit would be unable to rest after what she had done. As the haunting did not appear to be sentient, the death itself was uneventful, and resolution occurred only *after the death of Mrs.*

## Aetheric Photography

Images of phantoms captured on film have fascinated viewers since the early Victorian era. This phenomenon has only increased since the Plague Years, when the deaths of countless millions created the psychical cacophony described by contemporary paranormal researchers. Differing from the indistinct images of the nineteenth century, modern ghost photography can be extremely graphic in its clarity: clean walls may appear splattered in spectral blood of long-forgotten crimes and dismembered or fragmented spirits may stand in deathly attention, wordlessly conveying their tales of woe. The most striking images are of poltergeists, virtually indescribable in their horrifically elongated and alien forms. Even the weakest spirits can be recorded as shadowy impressions receding into darkness.

Locations haunted by powerful spirits are most likely to yield aetheric imprints on film. In some places, the camera is bound to record some spirit activity no matter in which direction it points. In places of slaughter, the victims desire nothing so much as to leave a record of their passing, and the camera is all too willing to oblige.

Most spirit photographs are taken with psychoactive photo plates specially designed to capture the spirit world. However, sometimes spirits are caught on ordinary film. Some places and individuals seem naturally suited to spirit photography. Those blessed with the gift are able to record the faintest of ectoplasmic vapours. Some mediums with this talent make their livings photographing family members in the company of deceased loved ones. There are also individuals to whom spirits are inexplicably drawn, photos of whom often document a ghostly visitation.

Over the past centuries, spirit photography has been refined to a fine art. Celebrity photographers may be booked years in advance, and galleries devoted to spirit photography have opened throughout the metropolis. The phenomenon is so widespread that enthusiasts, whether criminologists, historians, parapsychologists, or photographers, gather weekly to share their findings and photographs.

*Geschadet*, the parapsychologist heading the investigating team concluded that the haunting was due largely, if not entirely, to an apparition created by the living wife. Mrs. Geschadet did not display any mediumistic abilities or psychical manifestations, despite repeated screenings by the parapsychological team, and the apparent spirit registered as authentic to monitors and mediums alike.

Conversely, some astral entities appear to be nearly permanent despite both the passage of time and an absence of continued emotional investment from the living. Spirits tied to objects tend to have characteristics of this type. Some speculate that the tethering objects act as a sort of aetheric “battery,” sustaining the spirit’s existence with a duration dependent on the strength of the initial investiture.

Other spirits appear to possess the ability to go dormant for periods of time, becoming undetectable to mediums and aetheric monitors alike. This may explain the phenomenon of recurrent hauntings, in which a haunting will manifest again after a silent period of months or years. Some speculate that intelligent spirits may have the ability to sense the living while in this dormant state, explaining why some spirits remain quiescent during containment periods only to return undiminished when containment fails. These spirits are invariably highly potent and are, in the main, very dangerous. Still other apparently perpetual hauntings involving very powerful and intelligent spiritual entities continue despite having no apparent means of sustenance.

## Neo-Victorian Spiritualism

*Man doth not yield himself to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.*

—Joseph Glanville,  
*The Vanity of Dogmatizing, 1661*

Despite the dangers posed by the spectral world and the fear they often cause, the inhabitants of the metropolis have exhibited a fascination with spirits since the Victorian era. In addition to being drawn to them, most in the modern age regard spirits with equal parts stoic pragmatism and natural fear. There has been a resurgence of traditional superstition among the lower classes, who must live constantly in the presence of the discarnate dead. Mirrors and photographs of the deceased are often left covered for a time after a death in the home out of fear that the dead will use them as conduits to possess the living. For the upper classes, superstition takes many forms, from elaborate Neo-Victorian funeral rites intended to appease the spirits of the departed to amusements born of almost-callous familiarity with the dead. Many of the finest households keep shadow galleries, menageries of confined spectres held in spirit lamps, essence chambers, and private aether vaults. Though religious leaders decry the exhibition of captured spirits as cruel and blasphemous, many showmen have made their fortunes presenting sideshows featuring bottled spirits, psychokinetic ghosts, and mediumistic handlers.

Spirits offer the scientifically minded a unique opportunity for forensic anthropology. Many parapsychologists have devoted their lives to the study of the ancient spirits lingering within London and make it their lives’ ambitions to make their way through the forgotten burial grounds, plague pits, and monuments that litter the metropolis. These ancient spirits may reveal valuable historical clues to the city’s past.

The scientific community has raised the ire of the major Neo-Victorian faiths with its willingness to experiment on spectral bodies. Researchers routinely trap, investigate, and interrogate spiritual entities to gain insights into existence on the aetheric plane. Religious elements object to the use of the human essence as an object for experimentation, claiming that researchers do not see their subjects as human souls and cannot offer them the dignity and consideration they deserve.

If the indignities of experimentation were not sufficient to outrage the religious, some researchers have begun experiments into the use of aetheric entities as a potential source of energy. Though early experiments have yet to produce a major breakthrough, developments such as the aether converter, now in its second generation, have been promising. Following public disclosure of such experiments, a number of research facilities have been bombed by religious zealots. However, research is ongoing.



Spiritualist circles have proliferated in Neo-Victorian society since the Reclamation and thousands of adherents from the middle and upper classes attend weekly *séances*. Neo-Victorian spiritualism came into widespread acceptance following revelations in the 1970s that no less a personage than Queen Victoria II herself privately consulted with well-known mediums throughout her reign. Since that time, the curious among the aristocracy have competed to privately employ the best names in the field of transaetheric communications.

Neo-Victorians seeking contact with the dead tend to do so for one of three reasons: a sentimental longing to reconnect with departed loved ones, the desire for a transcendental experience, or an intellectual hunger for the secrets of the dead. It is a common practice to attempt communication with a departed loved one soon after their death to ensure that if they are still lingering about the physical world, then they are as comfortable as possible. Family members and close friends may take it upon themselves to attempt to help lay spirits to rest, resolving the earthly concerns that bind the spirit to the physical world.

Many people are even proactive in their approach to post-mortem communication. Spiritualist cults promoting life after death through consciousness-preserving rituals have experienced a rise in popularity. These groups claim to have secret meditations that can be used at the time of death to ensure the dying individual remains earthbound. While such methods may have merit to those seeking to outlive their flesh, they are far from certain and hinge on the mental fortitude of the soon to be departed at their most desperate hour.

Modern science has provided answers for those who wish to take no chances. There are a number of devices capable of removing a spirit from a living body and containing it. Though the body will soon die, the spirit is preserved. Obviously such procedures are only legally undertaken in cases in which the individual is terminally ill and approaching the moment of death. Unfortunately, the spirits produced under these conditions lack the ties to the physical world appreciated by naturally occurring spirits and thus often fade into nonexistence after a scant few months.

Despite those who seek to continue their life after death, most Neo-Victorians have learned to manage their expectations concerning contact with the dead. Most people understand that not all the departed return as spirits and that those that remain bound to the physical world do so for a reason. It is common knowledge that even if a spirit does result from a death that it may be incapable of communication because it is weak, disoriented, or lost. Few spirits retain a complete memory of their mortal lives, and many forget whole aspects of their former selves.

## The Role of the Medium in Society

Few adherents of spiritualism are themselves gifted with the second sight, and most must rely on the talents of a medium. It is notable that the most talented mediums are seldom highly skilled or well educated. In fact, many of the most celebrated mediums in London hail from the working classes. Despite their generally

humble beginnings, talented mediums tend to be respected for their gifts and appreciate an elevated station in Neo-Victorian society similar to that reserved for the most popular entertainers and gifted artisans.

Scotland Yard will occasionally consult mediums during criminal investigations. There is no doubt that spectral evidence has led to a number of convictions in violent crime cases. Of course, spiritual evidence is not presently admissible in court, but the information unearthed through conversations with the spirits who perished in violent crimes can allow the police to pursue avenues of investigation that would otherwise not have been evident. Unsolved crimes are more likely to result in the persistence of a spirit than those in which the victim sees justice, and the conviction and punishment of a murderer often results in the cessation of hauntings at the locations of his crimes.

The great firms of the City also employ a small, professional class of mediums who contact advisers retained beyond the grave. These corporations require senior staff members to sign contracts stipulating allowances for *post-mortem* contact. These contracts are intended to ensure that the signer's spirit lingers after death for a period of time specified in the contract, generally fifty years or more. Such clauses are known to have extremely high success rates. The act of signing the contract and the signer's awareness of the weight of his responsibility seems to create the conditions required to ensure that the signer will manifest as a ghost powerful and coherent enough to be useful to the company and honour the terms of the contract. The spirits of these departed partners, financiers, and business prodigies ensure the continued prosperity of the corporation. Payment for the term of *post-mortem* service is rendered over the course of the living employee's tenure, solidifying the sense of indebtedness and helping to ensure the return of the valued employee after death.

It has become the custom for firms maintaining such arrangements to erect elaborate chapels within their corporate headquarters. The remains of those individuals obligated to respond to the summons of industrial mediums are kept within vaults at these chapels. To maintain a connection with the physical world, the firm employs professional weepers and wailers, generally from among the poorest classes, to publicly mourn the dead and to pray for their departed souls, thus keeping them tied to the hallowed halls of the corporate tombs. Most mediums consider communing with these spirits to be tedious drudgery, but it pays far better than most private practice and is respectable.

Less-talented mediums must rely on other methods to secure paying clients. Since the Victorian era, an aura of mystery and ethereal sensuality has surrounded the medium. Many adventuresses serving the tastes of the upper classes take up the occupation of medium and rely on the well-established confidentiality of the trade to obfuscate their clandestine trysts. With few assets beyond a pretty face and a powerful network of friends, these mediums are generally despised by their peers, especially those with true talent and less shapely forms.

Some highly paid mediums specialize in turning their bodies over to spirits so that lovers separated by death may renew their passions in the flesh. Wealthy aristocrats have been known to retain such mediums full-time so that they may regularly contact their departed husbands or wives. Mediums kept for this purposed are



provided room and board within the aristocrat's household. Neo-Victorian society recognizes the role taken on by these men and women, elevating them above the common paramour.

Regardless of the capacity in which they operate, those mediums serving the interest of the aristocracy must dress impeccably, be discreet, know their place, and have sterling reputations. The upper class value little above their privacy and pay handsomely to keep their secrets, especially where their dead are concerned. The mediums in the employ of the elite are bound by oaths of silence that are often backed by the blade of the family mourner.

A middle-class medium must also know how to cater to the tastes of her clientele. Middle-class spiritualism draws heavily upon the trappings of the Church, and its adherents prefer mediums who mix religion into their work. Spiritualist congregations are often even more conservative than typical church goers. Some spiritualist gatherings resemble religious revivals more closely than they do traditional *séances*.

A minority faction of self-described occult philosophers has evolved on the fringe of middle-class spiritualism. These libertines live Bohemian lifestyles in the slums of the metropolis. Most of them are pleasure seekers attracted to adventure and the thrills of human experience as much as they are interested in the implications of the spirit world. Among their number they count many artists, dreamers, anarchists, enlightened lunatics, and slumming aristocrats.

The prevalence of hauntings in London's worst areas has ensured a steady income for back-alley speakers of the dead. Unable to pay expensive elimination fees, the lower classes are left to contend with hauntings as a fact of life. Many lower-class households maintain makeshift shrines devoted to deceased members of their families as well as the previous occupants of their hovels in hopes of appeasing the spirits that dwell there. Many of the worst areas of the slums are so haunted that they cannot be inhabited even by the most hopeless. While other mediums are more driven by the call of wealth, there are also those working-class mediums who act in service to their communities. Though these mediums lack the polish of their higher-class peers, they are often every bit as talented. Occasionally members of the upper classes seeking an honest voice unmotivated by ambition and aloof from the machinations of the aristocracy will make their way to the slums to consult with a renowned medium.

Many mediums develop cults of followers who hold them in exaggerated esteem. Surrounded by a close cabal of trusted confederates, these mediums are able to sway thoughts, affect local politics, and destroy reputations. Often mediums who attain this degree of success become mired in caustic infighting with their competitors, each struggling to discredit the others and attain some new advantage to expand her influence. Often the animosity among such mediums spills over to their followers who fight proxy battles in the haunted streets. It is not uncommon for the agents of one medium to go across town to interfere with the *séances* of another. In the most extreme cases, these conflicts have turned deadly.

## The Séance

During a *séance*, the medium channels spirits, allowing them to speak directly through her to those gathered at the circle. A medium's talents may also enable spirits to visibly or audibly manifest in her presence. Generally, *séances* are the only means for those lacking mediumistic talents to contact spirits without the aid of expensive and complicated aethertech devices. Those attending a *séance* may do so with the intention of contacting a specific spirit, to obtain some piece of information from the spirit world, or for the sake of entertainment.

It is customary for *séances* to be conducted, as much as is possible, in solid darkness; heavily curtained rooms are preferred due to the muffling effects of the cloth. Participants other than the medium are expected to remain seated and still in the darkness until the *séance* is called to a close. Some mediums prefer to receive questions for the departed before beginning the *séance*, while others allow the sitters to interact directly with the spirits. Spirits called forth are customarily expected to answer questions to prove their identity. Often lovers, friends, and business associates memorize codes and key phrases before death to facilitate *post-mortem* identification.

Since the Reclamation, the *séance* has become something of a national pastime. Though Neo-Victorian *séances* may have any number of sitters, and indeed some are quite large, the traditional number is eight. The largest *séances* have more in common with a carnival than a quasi-religious rite and exist purely for the entertainment of the attendees. Indeed, the most famous mediums are more known for their showmanship than their supernatural

talents. Individuals seriously seeking contact with the dead tend to do so for extremely personal reasons and would never dream of doing so before an entertainment-seeking audience. The only exceptions to this rule are the industrial mediums employed by the firms of the City.

When a matter of importance requires the attention of the spirits held under corporate contract, a *séance* is held in which the living representatives of the company meet with the dead. Throughout these gatherings, the departed speak through mediums acting as their vessels, with each spirit speaking through an individual medium assigned to it. These gatherings are carried out with the stifling airs of a corporate board meeting and none of the wonder, showmanship, or affectations associated with those *séances* intended to entertain the masses.

## Bad Medicine: The Spiritualist Cults of London

In addition to the generally accepted forms of Neo-Victorian spiritualism, there are a number of spiritualist organizations that operate beyond the pale. Some are merely criminal, others more sinister. Though these cults are too numerous to catalogue in any meaningful fashion, any discussion of Neo-Victorian spiritualism would be incomplete without at least touching upon the most notorious. Collectively, they make up a sordid supernatural element within London's teeming underworld.



Shadowy cults devoted to ancestor worship and service to the dead have taken root throughout the metropolis. Drawing the bulk of their membership from the hopeless, bereaved, and desperate, these dark congregations gather in the warrens of the Underground and the confines of the worst rookeries. Such organizations are often led by malefic spirits inhabiting the bodies of misguided cultists. Offshoots of these blasphemous cults are said to have even infiltrated the ranks of the aristocracy.

One such bizarre cult is the Adepts of Perpetuity, an insidious group spreading through the medical community of the metropolis, with branches reaching deep into the death-fearing aristocracy. The adherents of this movement seek to perfect the means of permanently preserving the aetheric essence of an individual through mechanical means. These are individuals whose horror of death has long since outstripped their rationality. Virtually all of them are at or near the limits of the anti-agapic therapy available to them. The aged and infirm members of this cult undergo their final initiations toward the end of their mortal lives. Strapped to sophisticated aetheric transmogrifiers, the essence of these cultists is stripped from their failing flesh. Those whose spirits survive are provided with living bodies to possess that are acquired illegally, often from the lower classes or the catatonic wards of the hospitals. Following possession, the newly en fleshed cultists are “adopted” by a family within the Adepts. The partial failures—the semisentient and damaged spiritual entities and those that have diminished over time—are collected in specially modified essence chambers that are then placed in an honoured location among their peers in the hidden halls of science.

Ostensibly a spiritualist sitting circle, the Invisible College was a cabal of ruthless young mediums and professionals devoted to furthering their own ends at any cost. Under the guidance of medium Cynthia Worrall and her husband, R.S. Cochrane, the influence of the circle waxed through the judicious application of murder and extortion. The College is known to have blackmailed a number of aristocratic families with secrets acquired through the interrogation of the dead. Each member of the circle is believed to have contributed the names of three spirits for potential contact, and most of the spirits questioned were friends or family of College members or associates recruited into the circle for that purpose. The group officially disbanded following the suicide of Benjamin Hull, a young doctor of noble birth so guilt-stricken by his actions while a member of the circle that he took his own life. Hull’s suicide note catalogued the College’s exploits and led directly to the arrest and subsequent convictions of Cochrane, Worrall, and a number of lesser College associates in 2104. The lurid coverage of the trial has ensured that a generation of imitators will plague the metropolis for years to come.

Among the most dreadful of the cults of London is the Daughters of Ammit, an outlawed sect of female apothecaries who seek to distort the advances of technology for their own diabolical ends. Setting themselves apart from the rest of humanity, the Daughters believe themselves to be the disciples of Ammit, *She Who Devours*, the ancient Egyptian personification of divine retribution. These necrophagous alchemists distil and consume the essences of the living and the dead to perpetuate their own lives and power. The Daughters believe that their actions ensure not only immortality but also a path toward true divinity. This cult is characterized by the fanaticism of its membership and

the willingness of its hierarchy to turn to violence and terror to remove threats to the organization. Special Branch has investigated reports of the Daughters’ activities for decades and has compiled a considerable dossier on the cult. They have found that most of its members are upper- and middle-class women descended from reputable families. Only the most promising and ruthless minds are admitted into the organization. Those who join are expected to maintain the cult’s tradition of secrecy under the threat of annihilation.

A cult of homeless beggars and invalids, the Blackthorn Covenant draws its membership from the lowest and most wretched citizens of the metropolis. The members of this cult revere the ghosts of the city and make regular pilgrimages into the most spirit-thronged parts of the slums, seeking to give themselves over to a possessing spirit. For such wretches, possession represents an escape from the miseries of life and an opportunity to serve a higher power. The group is led by a small band of mad prophets known as the Rag Men: inhabiting intelligences that pass through the membership like a psychic infection. The ultimate goal of the Covenant is not known, though Scotland Yard believes their numbers are growing.

## Spectral Investigations & Eliminations

Since the end of the Reclamation, an entire industry has developed around capturing, containing, and quarantining spirits. Though many citizens of the metropolis seek to contact the dead, the majority of Neo-Victorians fear and dread the presence of spirits. While most spirits are little more than a nuisance, others are capable of spreading disease, deadly psychokinetic effects, or seizing control of the bodies of the living. For those who have suffered the indignity of possession, the sense of violation is complete.

Places haunted by aetheric entities are generally considered to be unclean by those less spiritually inclined. Even the most benign hauntings are generally an embarrassment for the household they occupy. Spectral manifestations are notorious for drawing attention to all manner of grievances, accusations, and secrets. For this reason, outsiders tend to politely avoid visiting haunted residences until the matter has been resolved. Amongst the middle class, keeping one’s home free of spiritual inhabitants is a mark of respectability akin to keeping a house tidy and well stocked. Only the lower classes, unable to pay the expense of spectral elimination and administered to solely by overworked exorcists and street mediums, are forced to dwell amongst spirits. However, some eccentric aristocrats also tolerate the spectral presence of well-mannered representatives of the family’s ancestors, even using them proudly as proof of the antiquity of the family line.

There are few known methods of laying a spirit to rest. Though the spirit is nonmaterial and cannot be harmed by physical means, if the spirit’s Haunt can be destroyed, the spirit’s link to the physical world will be severed and it will pass entirely into the realm of death. A Haunt is a person, place, or object that was important enough to the spirit in life that the spirit remains bound to the physical world through it. In practice, determining a spirit’s Haunt



and destroying it can be an extremely challenging and time-consuming process. Obviously, if the spirit's Haunt is a living person, that individual's destruction will seldom be an option. Likewise, if the Neo-Victorians destroyed every haunted building in London, there would not be a stone left standing.

However, there are a number of more practical methods for dealing with unwanted spectral effluvia, including exorcism, capture and containment, quarantine, and resolving the spirit's pathology so that it may be peacefully laid to rest. Both mediums and investigating parapsychologists are adept at resolving hauntings through the alleviation of a spirit's pathology. Though putting a spirit to rest is the most humane means of resolving a haunting, it is also the most time consuming, as it involves hours of research into the possible causes for the haunting and direct contact with the spirit. In cases in which expedience is a necessity, contact with a spirit is embarrassing or impractical, or the living inhabitants of a haunted location are unwilling to wait for a spirit to be laid to rest, containment is the preferred method of resolution.

Initially, most private ghost-hunting agencies were operated by enthusiastic but woefully uninformed entrepreneurs looking to cash in on this lucrative trade. However, since the reforms mandated by the Ghost Industries Act of 2020, all spectral elimination firms are held to strict requirements and are licensed by the Metropolitan Health Department, the same agency responsible for the operation of London's crematoria and collection of the dead. Furthermore, the Act stipulates that each firm must employ at least one full-time parapsychologist, must require their employees pass a certification examination, and must regularly inspect and maintain their equipment.

There is no more industrious or pragmatic lot in the whole of the metropolis than the spectral eliminators who are paid to round up the city's ghosts. These determined men and women make their livings hunting spirits—not through an exaggerated need to keep the metropolis free of spectral predations or out of some conceit of religious piety, but to put bread on their tables and keep roofs

over their heads. With some notable exceptions, the average ghost hunter is an amateur parapsychologist with only a rudimentary understanding of low-frequency aetheric containment. Those who remain in the job quickly pick up the required tricks of the trade. The industry also attracts less talented mediums who sell their services to elimination firms as consultants. Widely considered a safer occupation than Undertaking, a small number of retired bounty men take up ghost hunting once their reflexes slow or lingering wounds hinder more physically intensive labour.

As in all things, discretion and reputation are among the chief concerns when hiring spectral eliminators. Many upper-class families have developed lasting relationships with the finest spectral elimination firms and rely on them to keep their secrets buried. Such firms maintain only a small numbers of clients and seldom add new ones. The ghost hunters employed by these firms are generally highly educated and maintain the stoic demeanour of first-class servants.

Other highly paid ghost hunters specialize in the elimination of spirits in the workplace, such as factories and construction sites. Large firms employ spectral eliminators to investigate hauntings resulting from the accidental deaths of employees, plague spirits uncovered during excavation for new construction, tenacious poltergeists inhabiting abandoned buildings, or any other spectral hazard that hinders business as usual. Industrial ghost hunters must be expeditious and professional. It is best for business when hauntings can be resolved quickly and efficiently before lost work jeopardizes profit or the matter reaches the ears of investors.

Ideally, ghost hunters arrive at the site of the haunting, locate its epicentre, generally the spirit's Haunt, and proceed to trap the spirit in a containment field before transferring it to an essence chamber for transportation back to the main office for permanent safekeeping. Every spectral eliminations firm maintains an aether vault for this purpose. In practice, eliminations seldom go so smoothly. Spirits aware of the presence of ghost hunters may use any methods at their disposal to deal with the trespassers. Poltergeists, in particular, are never so docile as to allow the living into their

### **Spectral Containment & Elimination Fees**

Unlike the bounties paid by the Office of Urban Defence on corporeal unliving threats, the fees collected by spectral eliminations are expected to come from paying clients. The government only pays for the containment and elimination of spirits haunting public property or that present an unquestionable threat to the wellbeing of the metropolis.

The rates below represent fees generally charged for spectral eliminations. The cost of permanent containment within a firm's aetheric vault is included in the cost of the job. Eliminators can charge several times the going rate for particularly dangerous or powerful spirits. Ghost hunters often scale their rates according to the means of their employers, generally charging corporate or aristocratic clients double or triple the rate paid by the middle class. Such practices are widespread and commonly accepted.

Astute landowners will request estimates from several different ghost-hunting agencies before accepting a bid on a job. A bid should detail the likely costs to be incurred in the confinement and removal of the spirit as well as any incidentals specific to the job.

Capture and Removal of an Apparition 10s

Capture and Removal of a Ghost, non-possessing £4+

Capture and Removal of a Possessing Spirit £6+

Capture and Removal of a Psychokinetic Manifestation £20+

domain without unleashing the full force of their psychokinetic powers. Powerful spirits may strain or overload containment fields. Though talented operators may be able to push fields beyond their ordinary limits, keeping strained containment fields stable requires constant attention and manual manipulations. Should the spirit escape, the results could be disastrous.

When a spirit is simply beyond the capabilities of the ghost hunters to deal with and resolution of the spirit's pathology is unlikely, the only option is quarantine. Despite the stigma of failure, quarantine remains the most reliable form of containment. Quarantine requires an order from the Metropolitan Department of Health. The Health Department's first step in ordering a quarantine is to dispatch a committee of parapsychologists to assess the threat presented by a given spirit. Once the committee submits its recommendation, if quarantine is required, the police are dispatched to cordon off the area. In times of need, this process can be greatly expedited.

Once the Department of Health has ordered quarantine, a great wall is erected around the site that may remain in place for decades. Dangerous spirits can require the closure of several city blocks until the spirit's interest in the physical world wanes and it slips quietly away into the afterlife. Depending on the location of the quarantined site, surrounding buildings may be levelled to permit construction of the containment walls. The perimeter will only come down once the Health Department determines the spirit's threat to the living has passed.

## Exorcism

Despite great advances in parapsychology and aetherotechnology, there are those who look to religion rather than to science to deliver them from the predations of the invisible world. These individuals rely on the church-appointed exorcists to protect them from spiritual menaces. It is the exorcist's duty to cast out invading spirits and lay them to final rest. To do so, exorcists rely on prayer, devotion, perseverance, and sheer force of will.

Since the Plague Years, exorcists have increased in numbers throughout Britain. Though it took years for science to come to terms with the existence of spirits, the Church of England was quick to respond to the threat posed by spectral entities. While its theologians debated the nature of these manifestations, the Church speedily inducted and dispatched armies of exorcists. However, these fledgling priests were totally insufficient to deal with the grim realities of the haunted world. Their training, quick and inadequate, focused on the importance of faith alone rather than on developing the mental discipline necessary to cast out spirits. Hundreds of exorcists perished in executing their duties, and many more went hopelessly insane.

This overwhelming failure led to serious debate concerning the origins of spectral manifestations and a broad reconsideration of the nature of the soul itself. At the time, the Church did not recognize the existence of ghosts. Anglican exorcists were trained to deal with demonic threats rather than aetheric entities. The discourse over



the source of the manifestations caused great schisms between the leaders of the various factions within the Church. In the end, it was the sheer pragmatism of the Anglicans that steered their doctrines, and they soon set about researching the new phenomena as one unique to the times in which they were living.

As a result, the concept of demonic possession was abandoned in order to deal with the true spiritual threat. It became obvious during the Plague Years that all haunting and possessing entities were manifestations of the dead rather than demons or other inhuman agencies. The exorcists' reliance on prayer came into question. Though prayer offers a valuable form of meditation and a means to focus the mind, it is not in itself a viable tool to drive out spirits. Over time, the Church concluded that that the willpower of the exorcist is more important than the faith he practices or the words he speaks.

The official stance of the Church is that spirits are human souls trapped on earth. While some are misguided, having been driven mad through the experience of death, all may be put to rest. The Church disdains the practice of spectral eliminations, believing that the containment of spirits keeps them chained to the physical world rather than allowing the soul to pass onto the next. Exorcists also take a dim view of their ghost-hunter rivals, seeing them as irreverent amateurs muddling their way through matters toward which they show an utter lack of respect or perspective.

Presently, every diocese of the Church of England employs at least one team of exorcists who answers directly to the diocesan bishop. These teams are led by senior priests and are made up of subordinate exorcists, a medium, an alienist, a physician, and a research assistant. Subordinate exorcists are always ordained priests, while the other team members may be priests or laymen. The lay members of the team are generally recruited for their faith as much as their skills.

The medium works closely with the exorcists to detect the presence of spirits and potentially converse directly with haunting entities. The alienist and physician are employed in cases of possession. It is their job to provide medical care for the victim of the possession and to establish whether the individual's complaint is spiritual in nature or the product of mental illness. In case of the later, the individual is remanded to the care of a sanatorium or asylum. Should, however, these academics discover symptoms consistent with possession, they will recommend that the bishop order an exorcism.

In cases of hauntings, the research assistant is charged with historical, anthropological, and architectural research related to the site of the haunting. The researcher may also be asked to find biographical information about the mortal lives of manifesting spirits and those closest to them. Often such details can be of great assistance in determining the origin of the spirit and likely elements of its pathology.

Once the bishop has granted his consent, the senior exorcist leads the rest of the team in the rites of exorcism. In theory, exorcisms are a free service provided by the church to the members of its congregation. In practice, exorcists are in high demand, and there are often long waiting lists for investigation. A healthy donation to the diocese can go a long way toward expediting an investigation.



# Taxonomy of the Dead

*We must remember that this earthly body we inhabit is more or less a mask, by means of which we conceal from each other those thoughts which, if constantly exposed, would unfit us for living in community; but when we die, this mask falls away, and the truth shows nakedly.*

—Catherine Crowe, *The Night Side of Nature; Or, Ghosts and Ghost Seers*, 1661

The field of parapsychology struggles to understand the origins of spiritual phenomena, but parapsychologists are the first to admit that they are still far from reaching this admirable goal. Yet, great strides toward the understanding of what was previously considered unknowable have been made in the previous two hundred years—spirits have been photographed and captured, their measurements taken, their types and behaviour painstakingly catalogued—but on many critical points of spiritual theory, little progress has been made. Nevertheless, advances in the practical understanding of the spirit world have been considerable.

Despite the relative youth of parapsychology as a legitimate field of scientific endeavour and the many unanswered questions at the roots of the science, the practitioners of parapsychology have made significant headway in categorizing and describing spirits and their abilities. A number of excellent taxonomies have been written, improving in depth and scope over the years as the body of underlying knowledge increased. More recently, the taxonomies have come to a sort of equilibrium, and a consensus has emerged. While new subtypes continue to be discovered and the fine points of classification continue to be debated as new information is brought to light from case studies, scientists have come to accept a broad standard for the classification of spirits.

Though spirits tend to be highly distinctive, they can be classified by the character and strength of their pathology and by the properties of their manifestations. The weakest spirits are apparitions, unintelligent thoughtforms or psychic impressions

resulting from terrifically traumatic events. Ghosts are classified as intelligent spirits with the capacity for independent thought. The most dangerous spirits are poltergeists: psychokinetic, rage-driven horrors. These classifications are broad, encompassing a number of subtypes and a great deal of individual variation, but useful for the purposes of the academic or the hunter seeking to understand the potential dangers of a given spiritual event.

## Properties of Spirits

For lack of a better definition, any active, self-contained aetheric force is considered to be a “spirit.” Though spirits are, for the main part, insubstantial, a semi-material substance appears in locations

where one has very recently manifested. This spectral effluvium, known as ectoplasm, is unnaturally cold to the touch and remains sticky for a short time before wholly evaporating into the air. After a person comes in contact with ectoplasm, poor health sets in, rendering the victim particularly susceptible to chills for days afterward.

It is not necessary for the entity to have a personality to be considered a spirit. While ghosts have at least some intelligence and may be capable of answering questions, making demands, and, in some cases, exhibiting a sense of humour, apparitions are little more than splinters of personality, pathology, and motivation trapped between life and dissolution.

The potency of spirits declines over time as their connections to the physical world slip away. The weakest spirits only exist

for a few months or years before vanishing beyond the medium’s reach. For apparitions, this generally involves a gradual dissipation of the emotional energy that gave them form.

Ghosts, on the other hand, may linger until they finish some great task left incomplete in death; once finished with the work that binds them to the earth, the spirit simply fades away. Others weaken more quickly, losing their will to exist as they are forced to watch the world they once knew slowly crumble around them. There are very rare ghosts with tremendously powerful personalities that do not dissipate noticeably over time. These spirits can remain tethered to the physical world for decades or centuries, until they can be contained or otherwise persuaded to depart.



## Dr. Thomas Neill Cream

In 1891 and 1892, Dr. Thomas Neill, formerly Dr. Thomas Cream, physician of the Royal College of Scotland, walked Lambeth. Ten years of his life had been spent behind bars in Illinois, USA, convicted of murder by his mistress' testimony after they poisoned her husband. Ten years of prison at a woman's word hardened a long-standing misogyny into psychotic loathing, and the fallen women of Britain became his playground and his prey.

Strychnine, a substance that causes a horrific and painful death, was the doctor's drug of choice. The drug's method is seizure and paralysis, terminating in asphyxiation. There is little effect on the consciousness until late in the drug's progress; the victim remaining aware, in terror and pain, while suffocating slowly. Dr. Cream provided strychnine pills to prostitutes he had enjoyed, telling them the pills would prevent venereal disease, then departed the scene of his crime to enjoy the thought of his victim's tortures at a safe distance. In 1892, Dr. Cream was convicted of poisoning several prostitutes and hanged within the walls of Newgate Prison.

At night, Strand residents claim to see a gentleman in fine clothes and without a respirator walking on the Embankment. The figure crosses from Southbank by way of the Waterloo Bridge, always on the darkest nights when the moon is concealed by fog. Streetwalkers will not venture over the Waterloo Bridge by night, except in pairs or groups; they say that girls have vanished on the bridge walking alone.

Spirit photographs of the bridges and the Embankment have yielded images of the spectral gentleman, a bespectacled, middle-aged entity bearing a considerable resemblance to the long-dead doctor. Mediums have attempted to contact the spirit but to no avail, though all who have tried report a feeling of tremendous cold and the imminent but untouchable presence of a vast and inhuman hatred.

Poltergeists are a constant threat to life until they eventually fade into nonexistence. These horrors seem to strengthen their bonds to the physical world with each murder they commit. Only through isolation and a cessation in killing does the spirit's power wane.

Some spirits may also go dormant after a time, seemingly ceasing to exist only to manifest weeks or years later. Those spirits that are able to enter—or, more importantly, re-emerge from—a dormant state are either extremely powerful or have long-term connections to the physical world, such as those who have a vested interest in watching over a certain place or protecting the wellbeing of a particular family or bloodline. When a spirit enters dormancy, it loses the will to manifest until it is awakened by some disturbance. Dormant spirits seem to have the natural ability to sense the living in the vicinity of the places or objects they haunt. Entering a spirit's Haunt or laying a hand on a haunted object is a certain way to awaken a spirit.

Though the frequency of hauntings has greatly increased since the Plague and thus most spirits in London date from the post-Plague era, there are older spirits that still walk the earth. Some places have been haunted since well before the Plague: spirits of long-dead lords and ladies walk the parapets of ancient castles; killers centuries dead still prowl the streets; beggar children hundreds of years gone emerge and disappear between the streetlights. There are even rumoured to be ancient spirits of tremendous power, with origins dating back a millennium, residing dormant in the city.

## Genesis

*The boundaries which divide Life from Death are at best shadowy and vague. Who shall say where the one ends, and where the other begins?*

—Edgar Allan Poe, "The Premature Burial," 1844

Spirits are generally created either as a result of death or suffering. While apparitions may be spawned by the demise of an individual or extreme emotional distress in the living, more intelligent and potentially powerful spirits are invariably the by-product of death. However, very few deaths result in the creation

of a spirit because, in most cases, the psychical energy released upon death dissipates rapidly without incident.

The deaths of those who fall victim to the predations of the unliving may result in the creation of a ghost only if the victim does not rise as an undead. There are no known instances of a death caused by the Plague or vampirism resulting in a haunting. Furthermore, those who die of other causes and rise as the undead, whether naturally or through artificial reanimation, do not produce ghosts. However, it is possible for an apparition to be left behind if the death was sufficiently traumatic. The more theologically minded believe the soul is trapped within the body of the undead creature and provides its animating force. The lack of any aetheric signature in the undead provides some evidence against the theological explanation, however. The destruction of an undead creature never results in a haunting.

## Spirit Manifestations

*Softly, softly, hear the rustle  
Of the Spirits airy wings;  
They are coming down to mingle  
Once again with earthly things,  
With their rapping, and their tapping  
Rap-tap-tap to wake our napping,  
In the restless dream of error:  
Hear the weird the Spirit brings*

—"Spirit Rappings," popular song, 1853

Spirits are normally insubstantial entities that cannot be seen or heard. However, through manifestation, a spirit may communicate with the living by making itself seen or heard, seizing control of machines, possessing a host body, spreading unnatural contagions, or igniting psychokinetic conflagrations. A spirit's ability to manifest is determined by its strength: the more powerful the spirit, the more options for manifestation it will have. Parapsychologists have catalogued a vast array of manifestations. While many spirits seem to manifest in similar ways, no two spirits manifest in precisely the same way or exhibit identical powers of Manifestation.

Few spirits are able to make themselves seen or heard by ordinary people, and unless it is manifesting, a spirit will be all but invisible, detectable only to the insights of a medium or delicate aether-tech instruments.

The weakest spirits often manifest as little more than specks of light, spectral odours, guttural moans, or queer sensations. Slightly more powerful spirits may appear as nodules of light, floating candles, or pools of spectral blood. Those that can make themselves seen through manifestation generally appear hazy, as if made up of thick vapour or fog. Some spirits are only able to appear in the reflections of mirrors; others manifest in the backgrounds of photographs, appearing only after the photograph has been developed. Only the strongest spirits can make themselves appear hale and whole. Even those spirits that are capable of complete visual manifestation usually remain insubstantial to the touch.

The appearance of a spirit often betrays clues pertaining to its life and the manner of its death. While some spirits appear as they did at the time of death, wearing the same clothes and marred with injuries, others appear in the peak of health. A spirit that is obsessed with the event of its death may take on horrific aspects of mouldering decay, such as a drowned sailor who appears as a bloated corpse dripping with brackish water. However, a ghost that refused to leave behind its earthly possessions may appear to be dressed garishly in its finest garments. The spirit of a child may still carry a favourite toy, especially if the toy was with it at the moment of its death. Apparitions invariably appear as they did at the time of their creation.

Many spirits that are capable of manifesting visibly cannot also make themselves heard. Some seem unaware of this condition and babble incessantly or silently shriek. Those ghosts intelligent enough to realize they lack voices instead rely on nonverbal forms of communication, sometimes signing messages to the living or leaving spectral "writing" on walls or mirrors.

Even when spirits are capable of making themselves heard, the quality of their spectral voices vary as greatly as the range of visible manifestation. Most spirit voices have a hollow timbre, the echo of the grave. Some are only able to talk in whispers while others may speak very slowly, as if they must concentrate to form their words. However, it is not entirely unknown for a spirit to have a hearty voice, nearly indistinguishable from that of a living person, especially if the ghost is particularly powerful.

### Animal Reaction

Animals tend to act erratically in the presence of spirits. Most animals will do just about anything possible to leave the spirit's presence. Dogs bark or howl with fright; birds launch themselves into the air, and worms pour from the earth under the spirit's ethereal steps. Attentive parapsychologists may note the response of nearby animals when investigating potential hauntings.

Parapsychologists have had some success in recording the sounds made by spirits. Recording a spectral voice requires specialized and sensitive equipment, as most recording devices are not able to pick up these emanations from across the threshold. Telekinetic knockings are another matter entirely: since the spirit actually bangs on a physical object, the noises made are simple to record.

Some half-lifers, such as ghouls, have the innate ability to sense spirits in other ways. A ghoul is able to detect spirits through smell, suffering agitation that leads to sneezing in the presence of aetheric entities. The more powerful the spirit, the more ghouls seem to sneeze.

## Possession

*Perhaps other souls than human are sometimes born into the world, and clothed in flesh.*

—J.S. Le Fanu, *Uncle Silas*, 1864

Some ghosts are able to enter the body of a living human host and suppress the native intelligence, seizing control of the victim's body for itself. While in control of a body, the confines of the host's physical form limit the possessing spirit. While possession allows the spirit to appreciate the flesh once more, it may also serve as an unaccustomed prison, making the spirit vulnerable to the weakness of a corporeal form, such as heat, cold, and pain. Most often, a spirit will depart a host after a relatively short period of time, only using the stolen body to perform a single task or slake some desire. Others, however, retain control over their host bodies for much longer periods of time. The New Society for Psychical Research has documented at least one case of serial possession in which a ghost dominated a single family line for three generations, passing repeatedly from father to son as each body wore out over time.

In cases in which the native consciousness has been suppressed for months or years at a time, extensive psychological damage is to be expected. Once restored to control of their bodies, those who were possessed for a long term invariably show signs of mental deterioration, strain, and melancholy. Many take their own lives soon after attaining freedom of will.

There are also those desperate individuals who intentionally seek out possessing spirits, freely giving their bodies to alien intelligences. Some desire personal annihilation but are unwilling to harm themselves. Others are eccentric religious fanatics. There are also those who seek to commune with the dead and believe that possession will enable them either to learn the secrets of the afterlife or to visit departed loved ones. There are even those who turn their bodies over to the ghosts of their loved ones, allowing them to carry out some vital task before departing the physical world forever. Some malignant spirits prey on such selfless individuals, claiming to be their lost loves, parents, or siblings and asking their would-be hosts to give themselves over willingly for possession.

In cases of possession, the victim lacks any memory of the spirit's actions while it was in control of his body. The memories simply do not exist and cannot be restored through any means. The victim blacks out, only waking up once the spirit has departed his body. Once a possessing entity vacates a victim's body, the victim will be highly susceptible to all manner of illness for days afterward.

## Psychosurgical Containment

In 2048, a promising alienist named Michael Allen Hall began experiments into a revolutionary method of containing possessing entities. Fascinated by the work of late psychosurgery pioneer Dr. Thomasse Sebastiaan Jansen, Hall planned to sedate and lobotomize the living host of a spirit to see if the host could act as a permanent containment vessel for the spirit. Hall confined living subjects, hopeless cases housed at public asylums and already awaiting lobotomization, in close proximity to haunts of known possessing spirits and left them to be claimed.

Hall's first experiment seemed to be a success until his subject expired ten days later, resulting in a catastrophic explosion of psychokinetic energy as the spirit dramatically freed itself. Though Hall survived the telekinetic assault, he bore the scars of the encounter for the rest of his life, losing his left eye to the experiment.

For the next five years, Hall rededicated himself to medical science, performing hundreds of lobotomies as he mastered the procedure. His initial experiment had not only proven the potential of psychosurgical containment but also that a spirit could not escape a heavily sedated host body. In 2054, Hall made a second attempt at psychosurgical containment. This time the spirit fled the body before Hall had time to complete his experiment.

Two months later, Hall conducted his third and final experiment, this time succeeding in containing the spirit. In an unprecedented success, the spirit was completely neutralized, exhibiting neither control over the subject nor the ability to manifest its supernormal powers. The subject was seemingly unaffected by the experiment, displaying no signs of reduced mental capability or personality alteration. Hall later went on to marry his subject, a destitute young woman who made contact with the parasitic spirit while acting as a servant at a stately West London manor.

What came next remains the subject of debate. For reasons not entirely understood, Hall murdered his wife with a hatchet in 2067, resulting in the spontaneous release of the spirit that had been contained within her. Though Hall again survived the incident, he was taken into custody by constables responding to the reports of Hall's neighbours who had overheard bloodcurdling screams and saw a strange glow emanating from the Hall residence. Hall himself underwent a frontal lobotomy at Bethlem Hospital in 2069, an operation that left him in a permanent vegetative state until his death in 2073.

It is easier for a spirit to possess a mind that is not in command of its full faculties. The sleeping, insane, young, addicted, and emotionally distraught are easier for a spirit to possess than a sane and rational adult. Recent evidence suggests that spirits may have an easier time possessing psychics than sleepers. The horrifying implications of this discovery are still making their way through the halls of science. At least one forward thinking alienist, Dr. Xavier McAllister, has suggested that all known psychics report weekly for an examination and evaluation to ensure they are truly themselves. Few have taken this suggestion seriously.

Determining possession can be difficult. Particularly devious spirits will watch their victims for some time before attempting possession. During this time, they will learn about their victims' lives, preparing themselves with the information necessary to avoid detection until their goals can be achieved. Even when those around the possessed notice that something has gone amiss, there are no invariable outward signs that can be used to distinguish possession from mental illness. It is often not until a possessed individual has been safely contained and observed at an asylum or sanatorium that the true cause of his abnormal behaviour can be determined.

## General Spirit Rules

There are a number of rules that all spirits share.

### Dead, But Not Forgotten

Spirits are generally believed to be created either as a result of death or, in the case of apparitions, a period of great suffering. Though science may disagree on the precise origins and implications of spirits, it is known that they are not the undead. Unless otherwise specified, rules that affect the undead do not affect spirits.

## Haunt

Every spirit has a single Haunt that tethers it to the physical world. A Haunt may be a loved one, a treasured object, the spirit's deathbed, the site of its murder, or anything else of continued importance to the spirit. The Narrator determines the nature of each spirit's Haunt. A Haunt is very personal to the spirit and should not be in the midst of a frequently populated public area, unless the spirit is an apparition that was murdered at the site.

The murdered are sometimes tied to the implements that took their lives. Some items of exceptional notoriety may tether a number of spirits; the aura around these items is sometimes perceptible even to those without supernormal sensitivities, and exposure to these items can be extremely traumatic for clairvoyants and empaths. Though most of these haunted objects are mere curiosities, some possess frightful powers brought about by their associations with desperate or malicious spirits. Despite—or, in some cases, because of—the inherent dangers surrounding these objects, they are often sought by wealthy collectors.

A spirit can generally be found in the proximity of its Haunt. The further a spirit strays from its Haunt, the weaker it becomes. Mindless spirits, such as apparitions, have no capacity to travel from their Haunts. They are localized phenomena that always occur in the same place or in close proximity to an object to which they are bound. Poltergeists lack any inclination to travel far from their Haunts, which become the epicentres of their brutal manifestations. A ghost may venture from its Haunt to pursue its own agenda, but it will be aware if its Haunt is disturbed in any way and is capable of manifesting in the location of the Haunt at will.

A ghost suffers -1 Will each time it moves more than 20 feet x its Will from its Haunt. Will lost in this way is returned at a rate of one point per twenty-four-hour period that the ghost remains exclusively within the proximity of its Haunt. A ghost can be away from its Haunt for one hour x its Will + 6d10 minutes. Once this time elapses, the ghost will instantly disappear from its current location and manifest within the confines of its Haunt.

Instead of remaining bound to the area around a small Haunt, some spirits haunt whole buildings, and while they are able to move throughout the building at will, they cannot leave it for any reason.

### Haunts and Psychometry

If a spirit's Haunt is a place or object, it is subject to the Extrasensory Perception power Psychometry (see pages 78 - 79). When a clairvoyant successfully uses Psychometry on a spirit's Haunt, the psychic immediately receives an image of the spirit and has some idea of its power level and disposition. For example, the psychic may get a sense of tremendous rage and terrifying power or an inhuman sorrow reaching beyond the grave. The image of the spirit should be the same as what a medium looking at the spirit would see.

Though the spirit will not be aware of the use of the psychical power, it will know that its Haunt has been disturbed.

### Disturbing a Haunt

Spirits are known to become restless or agitated if their Haunts are disturbed. If the spirit's Haunt is a person, it is disturbed when that individual experiences an extreme emotion, such as when his life is jeopardized. If the spirit's Haunt is an object, it is disturbed anytime the object is touched, moved, or otherwise handled. If the Haunt is a place, it is disturbed anytime a living or half-lifer character enters the Haunt.

When a spirit's Haunt is disturbed, it immediately becomes aware of the disturbance and regains one point of Will. The spirit regains its Will even if it is dormant (see below). A spirit may regain up to one Will point per day as a result of its Haunt being disturbed. If the spirit is away from its Haunt when the Haunt is disturbed, it can instantly transport itself to its Haunt.

### Destroying a Haunt

If a spirit's Haunt is a person who dies or an object or place that is destroyed, the spirit's connection to the physical world is severed. In the case of an apparition, the spirit is immediately put to rest (see At Rest, below). A ghost or poltergeist can remain in the physical world for a short time after losing its Haunt but can no longer regain lost Will through any means.

## At Rest

A spirit that loses its connection to the physical plane or that finds peace in death will depart the world of the living forever and cannot return or be contacted through any means. Such spirits are considered to be at rest.

A spirit may be laid to rest during play when its purpose for remaining in the physical world is resolved, an event that gives the spirit an overwhelming sense of peace comes to pass, or the other obstacles that keep the spirit from finding rest are removed.

Most spirits are also laid to rest when their Wills are reduced to 0.

### Dissolution

Unless their bonds to the physical world are continually renewed, spirits naturally grow weaker over time until they eventually lose their connection to the physical world entirely. This process may be accelerated with the loss of the spirit's Haunt, the deaths of loved ones, or the resolution of events that dominated the spirit's existence.

After the passage of each month, a spirit must make a Will roll (DR 11). If the roll succeeds, nothing happens. If the roll fails, the spirit suffers -1 Will.

### Dormancy

At the Narrator's discretion, when a ghost or poltergeist of



exceptional power is reduced to Will 0, instead of going to rest, it may become dormant. Apparitions and spirits without a Haunt never go dormant. While dormant, the spirit effectively ceases to exist: it has no ability to interact with the physical world, cannot manifest, and loses all perception of the world around it. However, it no longer suffers the effects of dissolution.

A dormant spirit may awaken if its Haunt is disturbed or if it is summoned by a medium. If the spirit is dormant when its Haunt is disturbed, it must make a Will roll (DR 20) to awaken. If it succeeds, the spirit awakens. If the roll fails, the spirit remains dormant, but regains one Will point.

Some spirits have an easier time awakening on days of great personal significance, such as on the anniversary of its death or on the day of some important event linked to its mortal life. On such a day, the DR for awakening is reduced to 16.

Some spirits are able to automatically awaken at certain times or when certain events come to pass. A spirit may awaken one day per year, once per decade or century, whenever a thunderstorm ignites the sky, when a loved one dies, when a family member gives birth, if its name is spoken aloud, or in the event of any other occurrence determined by the Narrator. In such cases, the spirit is likely to be active only for a short time before returning to its dormant state.

When the spirit awakens from dormancy, it will generally be confused and extremely hard to reason with, especially if it has been dormant for a long time.

## Psychical Barriers

When a living or half-living character intentionally creates an enclosed barrier to protect himself from a threat, such as by slamming a door or window, his emotional state creates a low-frequency aetheric vibration that resonates in the spirit world as a psychical structure. It is exceptionally difficult for spirits to move through or manifest within an area enclosed by such a boundary.

A psychical barrier can only be created within a confined area with walls, doors, and windows. The character creating the barrier must intentionally close all the doors and windows to enclose the space. If a door or window is opened or a wall penetrated, the psychical barrier will be destroyed. From a young age, children are taught that if they are confronted by a harmful spirit, they must slam doors behind them to bar the spirit's pursuit. When creating a psychical barrier, many people pray aloud, cross themselves, or invoke any number of superstitious actions. Though such acts may aid in focusing the mind, they do not directly aid in the creation of the barrier.

The barrier lasts for a number of hours equal to the Will of the character who created it. While the barrier exists, a spirit attempting to exit, enter, or manifest within the enclosed area must make a Will roll (DR 11 + double the creating character's Will). If the spirit fails, it suffers -1 Will and cannot exit, enter, or manifest within the enclosed area for one hour. If it succeeds, it manages to overcome the effects of the boundary and can ignore the boundary thereafter.

If the spirit's Haunt is within the enclosed area and the spirit is outside the area, it can still transport itself to its Haunt without first overcoming the boundary, though it may not be able to manifest in the area.

## Attributes

Spirits are incorporeal entities and thus lack both Vitality and Coordination. A spirit's psychical strength and its connection to the physical world are both measured by its Will. The higher the spirit's Will, the more powerful the spirit and the greater its ability to manifest. In addition to its Will, spirits have Wit, Intellect, and Charm Attributes.

## Cause Fear

Spirits are naturally frightening entities. When a human or half-lifer confronts a spirit, he must pass a Will - Fear roll or flee (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 161). The DR for this roll depends on the appearance of the spirit. A spirit that looks basically human and relatively intact requires a roll against DR 11. A spirit that is clearly dead, aggressive, or grievously injured is DR 14. An alien monstrosity capable of inducing primal horror at a glance may require a Will roll against DR 16 or more.

## Secondary Manifestations

A number of secondary manifestations often accompany the presence of a spirit. These unintentional supernormal phenomena are active whether or not the spirit is otherwise manifesting and can be detected by any character whether he has mediumistic abilities or not. Some secondary manifestations only occur when a spirit is angered or becomes aggressive.

Most spirits have at least one secondary manifestation, and spirits with three or more are not uncommon. The Narrator should determine what secondary manifestations a spirit possesses. These manifestations do not change over time and should be considered signatures of the spirit's presence.

Secondary manifestations have a radius equal to the spirit's Will x 5 feet. This area doubles when the spirit is agitated. If the spirit is occupying a room, these effects are generally limited to the area of that room and will not expand beyond its boundaries.

### Aetheric Disruptions

The spirit causes minor disruptions to galvanic devices in its presence. While in the affected area, galvanic devices will neither function nor recharge. Radio receivers in the area affected by the spirit's secondary manifestation receive only static.

### Darkness

The area around the spirit takes on an unnatural darkness. Light sources in the spirit's presence grow dim and shadows grow deeper. Anyone in the affected area suffers -1 on Will - Fear rolls (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 161).

### Ectoplasm

Traces of ectoplasm are left behind wherever the spirit goes, whether it manifests or not. This substance remains sticky for a short time before evaporating into the air. Anyone coming in

contact with ectoplasm will suffer -2 on Vitality rolls to avoid illness, infection, or the effects of poison for twenty-four hours.

### Hallucinations

The presence of some spirits can cause graphic visual and auditory hallucinations. These hallucinations generally take the form of horrific visions of death and pain. An affected character may see himself grow deathly pale in a mirror, his food crawling with insects, or a sea of wriggling bodies in their death throes. While within the affected area, living and half-lifer characters suffer -2 on perception-based Wit rolls, including ranged attack rolls.

### Mists

A thick, chilling ectoplasmic fog clings to the area around the spirit. Those within the mist will feel unnaturally cold and uncomfortable. Any living character who touches or breathes in this mist will suffer -2 on Vitality rolls to avoid illness, infection, or the effects of poison for twenty-four hours.

### Noises

The spirit's presence is marked by unnatural, barely audible noises. Perennial favourites include laboured breathing, child's laughter, dragging chains, rasping or scraping sounds, screams, wolf's howls, or any other frightful or disturbing sound. Anyone in the affected area suffers -1 on Will - Fear rolls (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 161).

### Smells

Some spirits are constantly accompanied by the scent of decay, charred flesh, burnt hair, river water, fresh dirt, offal, smoke, or another odour. This odour will grow stronger as the character comes closer to the spirit's location.

### Spectral Glow

Many spirits are accented with a pale glow. Some spectral visitors are even accompanied by glowing ectoplasmic mists or orbs of light that trail from its form and follow as it moves. Those who have witnessed such manifestations invariably describe the light as "cold." If the spirit is not actively manifesting visibly, this glow is limited to a silhouette that reveals the spirit's presence but will not give away any other details of its appearance.

### Strange Feeling

People will suffer chills, nausea, or a disconcerting tingling sensation in the presence the spirit.

### Temperature Change

The ambient temperature in the vicinity of spirits has been known to drop noticeably or become stiflingly hot. Should the spirit become angered, the variation in temperature will grow more extreme.

## Spirit Categories

### Apparitions

Apparitions are the weakest class of spirit. Most parapsychologists agree that apparitions are not even spirits at all but instead psychical imprints or thoughtforms caused by extremes of emotion. These researchers describe apparitions as "echoes" imprinted on the malleable medium of the aether that are doomed to replay scenes of great trauma until the impression fades forever. Certainly, most apparitions are created at the moment of a distressing death, but science has proven that any sufficient infusion of human emotional energy is capable of marking the aether, causing an apparition to form.

The apparition will reflect the source of the strong emotion. For example, an apparition created at the time of a murder will replay the events of the murder through the senses of the creating character and informed by his emotional state. In visual manifestations, the assailant may have exaggerated or terrifying features, a reflection of how he appeared to the victim at the time the apparition was created.

Weaker apparitions take the form of less clear impressions of the triggering event. Some apparitions are nothing more than a cry in the night, the sound of laboured breath, or a pool of phantom blood that vanishes in a faint whiff of ectoplasm when touched. As an apparition fades, its visual and auditory manifestations become increasingly less substantial and distinct. Spectral sounds may seem to become more distant, trailing off into the aether.



## Apparition Rules

Apparitions are never sentient entities and have no true ability to interact with the living. They do not react or respond to communication.

### Attributes

An apparition's only Attribute is its Will. At the time it is created, an apparition has a Will equal to the character whose emotional response created it.

Over time, an apparition's Will will be reduced as a result of dissolution (see page 138).

**Vitality:** –

**Coordination:** –

**Wit:** –

**Intellect:** –

**Will:** 3 (1–10)

**Charm:** –

**Prowess:** –

**Actions:** –

### Skills

Apparitions have no Skills.

### Features

**Appearance** – An apparition's appearance is generally determined by its Will at the time of its creation. In most cases, apparitions with higher Will ratings have more fully realized appearances, though parapsychologists have documented a number of extraordinarily well-preserved apparitions apparently resulting from the deaths of seemingly weak-minded individuals. However, no matter how fully realized the apparition's appearance is, without the ability to manifest, only those with Second Sight or who are equipped with sensitive aether devices will be able to see the spirit (see Manifestation below).

An apparition with Will 3 or greater at the time of creation will be very detailed and include an auditory as well as a visual component. Apparitions created with Will 2 or lower are much less complete and will generally be limited to a partial figure or elements of the scene that created the apparition. These apparitions may be limited to sounds, pools of blood, or chilling sensations.

In addition to the visual and auditory manifestation of a spirit, the Narrator should also consider the scene the apparition portrays. When a more fully realized apparition manifests, it may play out the scene of its murder, reveal the details of its mortal death throes, or replay an event of startling horror. Less-realized apparitions may simply manifest as rapidly expanding pools of blood, severed body parts, incorporeal sobs, or harrowing screams. Once this scene is determined, it never changes. Every time the spirit manifests, it plays out the same scene.

**Creation** – Any powerful release of emotions by a living character, never half-lifers or the undead, can create an apparition. When the Narrator believes that a suitable triggering event has occurred, he should make a Will roll for the character that is the source of the emotional response (DR 20). Do not add the character's Concentration Skill to this roll. If the roll succeeds, an apparition is created. If the roll fails, nothing happens. If the triggering event

involved the death of the creating character, add +3 to the roll. A freshly created apparition has a Will Attribute equal to the character whose emotional response created it.

Critical successes and failures both result in the creation of exceptionally powerful apparitions that could take years to fade. In the case of a critical roll, the apparition will have a Will equal to double that of the creating character.

**Manifestation** – Apparitions are very limited in their methods of manifestation and can only be seen, heard, or felt. When an apparition's Haunt is disturbed, there is a chance it will manifest. At this time, the Narrator makes a Will roll for the apparition (DR 14). If the roll succeeds, the spirit manifests. If the roll fails, the spirit cannot manifest again until 3d10 + 12 hours pass.

When an apparition manifests, it plays out its predetermined scene and stops only at the conclusion of the scene. If the spirit currently has Will 5 or greater, it is perceptible to everyone in the area. If the apparition has Will 3 or 4, characters with Second Sight (see pages 151 – 157) will automatically perceive the apparition, but other characters in the area must make a Wit roll (DR 20) to see the spirit. Add the spirit's Will to the roll. If the roll fails, nothing happens. If the roll succeeds, the character catches a glimpse of the manifestation. Those characters failing this roll may still perceive fleeting images of the spirit in the corner of their eyes or may sense a sub-audible sob. If the apparition has Will 2 or less, its manifestation is only perceptible to characters with Second Sight.

If the spirit's visible manifestation is particularly disturbing, humans and half-lifers confronting it make a Will – Fear roll (DR 14) (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 161).

**Attacks:** None

### Notes

It may help some Narrators to think of an apparition as a broken record, an event frozen in time that exists to draw attention to itself, the final desperate attempt of a dying personality to tell its story before being extinguished forever.

Apparitions can be used as storytelling tools that give players clues to the events of the scenario. An apparition may reveal the horrid details of a crime, give the location of some sought after prize, implicate another individual of wrongdoing, or reveal any other piece of a mystery the Narrator wishes to tell. Apparitions offer investigators a unique method of gathering evidence.

While apparitions are often created in death, this is not always the case. The mind of a lunatic could spawn all manner of grotesque thoughtforms that terrorize the local population. Ghost hunters could be hired to remove such spirits only to find themselves faced with the deranged killer that is their true source.

Apparitions could also gather near to the Haunt of a powerful poltergeist that has been killing large numbers of terrified victims. In this scenario, the painful and terrifying deaths of these victims have spawned a legion of apparitions that reveal the spirit's location.

# Ghosts

In some cases, the deceased will retain enough of its intelligence and personality to linger at the threshold of death. These spirits, known as ghosts, are able to communicate with the living. These entities' ability to interact consciously with the physical world while forming new memories, maintaining deceptions, and pursuing their own agendas can make them extremely dangerous. However, ghosts are only shadows of their former selves, spectral manifestations of will and obsession. As much the products of the crucible of their creation as of their mortal lives, ghosts are likely to be emotionally and mentally unstable, the foundations of their mind disrupted irreparably by the transition into death. Though their personalities may remain largely intact, most ghosts have, at best, incomplete memories of their mortal lives. Freed from the concerns of the physical flesh, some ghost are actually more mentally stable in death than they were in life.

Rarely, ghosts are able to interact physically with the world of the living. In cases where physical manifestation occurs, these spirits are sometimes capable of manifesting themselves with high veracity, maintaining a detailed visual manifestation of their living physical form that even allows for nuances of facial movement and conversations with living persons in a recognizable human voice. The visual manifestation is generally not corporeal, however, and even the sturdiest visual manifestations are characterized by a slight wavering at the edges that betrays the nonphysical nature of the ectoplasmic body.

Though normally incorporeal, ghosts are capable of extremely distressing and even dangerous behaviour. The most powerful of these entities are intelligent, canny, and as capable of making plans

and altering their behaviour to obtain their goals as any living person. Some, particularly those with the ability to affect matter directly through physical manifestation or psychokinesis, will sooner or later become decidedly proactive about eliminating intruding living presences from their territory.

Some ghosts are capable of possessing living bodies, particularly when the mind is unguarded during sleep. Possessing entities tend to use a host body for a short time before discarding it, usually after perpetrating some mischief or reliving an aspect of their mortal lives. Some, however, are obsessed with what they have lost. Serial body snatchers are seldom without a borrowed form and often spend months or years in stolen flesh.

Observations of the most severe malignant hauntings have raised the possibility that some ghosts actually retain the psychological abilities they possessed in life after death. Though this theory has proved extremely difficult to confirm or even test due to the rarity of hauntings of this severity, it has received a great deal of serious attention. It is notable that some of the most notorious examples of such hauntings are associated with the deaths of individuals who were not known to possess psychical powers. It is speculated that latent psychical abilities of the human mind may be released by the trauma of death. Empathy and Telepathy, being the most common latent talents, are likely to be the most common manifestations of psychical ability in ghosts according to this theory; this would account for the heightened fear and hopelessness, strange impulses, and loss of memory encountered by victims of severe malignant hauntings.



## Ghost Rules

### Attributes

A ghost is likely to have the same Wit, Intellect, Will, and Charm that it had in life. As a result of the trauma of death, ghosts may suffer damage to their mental faculties or lose aspects of their personalities, causing a reduction of Wit, Intellect, or Charm.

When determining a ghost's Prowess, double its Wit.

Over time, an apparition's Will will be reduced as a result of dissolution (see page 138).

**Vitality:** –

**Coordination:** –

**Wit:** 2 (1–5)

**Intellect:** 2 (1–5)

**Will:** 3 (1–5)

**Charm:** 2 (1–5)

**Prowess:** 4 (2–10)

**Actions:** 1 (1–3)

### Skills

A ghost generally retains all the Skills it had in life. Ghosts that suffer damage to their mental faculties may lose some or all of their Skill levels.

A ghost's Concentration Skill is added to its Will rolls normally.

## Features

**Appearance** – A ghost’s appearance is a reflection of its mental state at the time of its creation. The ghost may appear precisely as it did in life, as a walking corpse complete with the injuries it suffered at the time of death; as an idealized version of itself; as an alien horror barely recognizable as humanoid; or anything in between.

A ghost’s appearance may change slightly over time, becoming more or less distinct as the spirit’s Will fluctuates. The ghost’s appearance may also soften as it feels more at peace and closer to rest. Tattered and filthy clothing may appear fresher, and a deathly pallor may be replaced with the illusion of life.

Remember that, for the most part, only a medium will be able to perceive the spirit’s true appearance. Anyone else will be limited to seeing the spirit as it manifests (see the Visibility Manifestation, below).

**Corruption** – A ghost has the same Corruption ratings and Afflictions as it did in life, and a ghost’s Corruption ratings seldom change after death. These Afflictions may take on new aspects as they are retranslated in death. However, a spirit with the Monstrous Affliction will always look hideous, and accidents will still occur in the presence of a spirit with the Cursed Affliction. A spirit with the Illness Affliction will appear sickly and may believe itself ill even in death.

### Anhedonia, Or the Living Death

**The death of a character with the Anhedonia Affliction never results in the creation of a ghost. These characters simply let their lives pass without a whimper.**

**Creation** – A ghost may be created when a living character—player or otherwise—dies. The creation of a ghost is at the Narrator’s discretion, and a ghost will only be created if the deceased character’s mental and emotional state would not allow him to rest peacefully at the time of his death. If a character dies with major goals unfinished or some other pressing reason to remain on the mortal plane or if the character’s death is exceptionally horrific, the Narrator may decide the character is a candidate for becoming a ghost.

When such a character dies, the Narrator may either make a Will roll for the character (DR 20) or just decide the character automatically returns as a ghost. If the Narrator makes a roll to determine if the character returns as a ghost, add the character’s highest Corruption rating to the roll, but do not add the character’s Concentration Skill. If the roll succeeds, the character returns as a ghost. If the roll fails, the character does not return.

Ghosts should rarely be created during play and then only as a major plot point. Ghosts are always non-player characters.



While the creation of a ghost can only happen at the time of death, it could be days or weeks until the ghost first manifests and interacts with the living.

When a ghost is created, the Narrator determines the ghost’s appearance, pathology, and its powers of Manifestation.

**Manifestation** – A ghost has a number of primary methods of Manifestation equal to its base Will. The Narrator chooses these powers when he creates the spirit. These Manifestations are not lost when the spirit’s Will is reduced.

Note that in addition to these primary methods of Manifestation, the ghost will also have one or more secondary methods of manifestation (see pages 139 – 140).

- **Audibility:** The ghost has the power to make itself heard at will. The spirit has a voice and can generate spectral sounds. A spirit can choose to whom it makes itself audible: it can select individual characters or make itself heard by whole groups. Characters with Second Sight can hear the noises made by a spirit with this Manifestation whether it is attempting to make itself audible to those characters or not.

When a ghost attempts to manifest audibly, its ability to be perceived is determined by its Will. If the spirit currently has Will 4 or greater, the sounds it makes will be perceptible to all characters within range of the voice as if it were spoken by a living person. If the ghost’s Will is less than 3, characters without Second Sight must make a Wit roll (DR 20) to hear the spirit. Add the spirit’s Will to the roll. If the roll fails, nothing happens. If the roll succeeds, the character hears the spirit’s audible Manifestation.

Some ghosts are prone to wailing incoherently, while others manifest distant screams. Some learn to use their powers of

Manifestation to generate spectral sounds to guide or distract the living. Humans and half-lifers hearing a wailing spirit must pass a Will – Fear roll (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 161) with a DR of 11 to avoid fleeing. Ghostly keening is not only distressing, it also can deafen those who hear it. Anyone who can hear the wailing and is within 5 feet x the spirit's Will must make a Vitality roll (DR 11 + the spirit's Will). If the character fails, he becomes Deaf (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 146) for 30 + 3d10 minutes. If the character succeeds, his ears hurt and he cannot hear anything but the sound of the wailing while within its range.

- **Corporeality:** Though it is extremely rare, there are ghosts that can create tangible physical forms. It is very draining for a spirit to generate a physical form, and ordinarily, the ectoplasmic body can only be sustained for a short period—generally just long enough to convey a single touch or perform a simple action. Even more remarkably, the ghost seems to actually have a sense of touch when manifesting physically.

To manifest physically, the ghost must succeed in a Will roll (DR 16). If there is someone in the ghost's presence yearning for its touch, the ghost gains +3 on this roll. If the roll fails, the ghost suffers –1 Will and does not manifest. If the roll succeeds, the spirit physically manifests. After every five seconds of physical manifestation, the spirit must make another Will roll. If it succeeds, nothing happens. If it fails, the spirit suffers –1 Will and its physical form dissipates.

While manifesting, the spirit has Vitality and Coordination scores equal to its Will.

A physically manifesting spirit generally looks as it did in life. The spirit will leave traces of ectoplasm on anything it touches while manifesting physically. This substance remains sticky for a short time before evaporating into the air. Anyone coming in contact with ectoplasm will suffer –2 on Vitality rolls to avoid illness, infection, or the effects of poison for twenty-four hours.

As long as it is manifesting, the ghost can be affected physically, but it is not possible to do permanent damage to the spirit by damaging its physical form. Thus, even a physically manifesting spirit does not suffer wound penalties. Instead, if the spirit suffers a Fatal Wound, it instantly dissipates into a whiff of ectoplasm. Ignore location modifiers when rolling damage on a spirit.

- **Dread:** The ghost is able to generate a field of palpable dread and sorrow about itself. When the ghost uses this ability, any living and half-lifer character within 10 feet x the spirit's Will must make a Will – Fear roll (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 161) against DR 11 + the spirit's Will. If one or more affected characters fail this roll, the spirit regains one Will point. If no one is affected by this Manifestation, the ghost suffers –1 Will.
- **Dream Communication:** Some ghosts are able to speak to sleepers as they dream. The spirit may appear in a dream or may simply send the dreamer a message. A spirit appearing in a dream will generally either look as it did in life or it will appear in its current spectral form. Some spirits assume their living form only to slowly decompose into their deathly visage. Spirits manifesting in dreams can also take on horrific or demonic aspects. The less stable the mind of the spirit, the more likely it is to take on such forms. It is theorized that this aspect of the spirit's dream appearance is created by the sleeper's subconscious as it recoils from the spirit's psychical invasion.

Some spirits have the capacity to manipulate and shape dreams at will. These spirits may communicate through symbolism rather than directly sending messages to a subject. Other

ghosts use this power to construct nightmarescapes, trapping their victim in a living hell where a thousand years of torment can be experienced between nightfall and dawn. Desire Bound ghosts (see *Pathology*, page 147) may use this power to return to their living lovers, coupling with the sleeper in dreams.

The ghost can also use this power to silently observe a sleeper's dreams, gaining insight into the mind of the dreamer. However, few spirits have the patience for such subtle use of this talent.

When the ghost uses this Manifestation, it makes a contested Will roll against its subject. If the ghost wins, it can manipulate the subject's dreams for one night. If the subject wins, the spirit suffers –1 Will.

Unless a character has the Dream Recall Quality (see page 55), his memories of what he saw and heard while dreaming will be fleeting and soon forgotten. The character can make a Will roll (DR 14) to recall his dream. If the character succeeds, he recalls every detail of his dream. If the character fails, he can only recall the dimmest aspects of his dreams as determined by the Narrator.

- **Fetch:** When a living character dies in the presence of a ghost with this Manifestation, he is certain to become a ghost himself. This power will be one of the new ghost's Manifestations.
- **Ghost in the Machine:** The spirit can manifest control over mechanical devices. It has the Electrokininesis powers Radio Transception (see page 99), Static Emitter (see page 99), and Machine Mind (see page 100). This Manifestation is common among the ghosts of factory workers who died on the job.
- **Harbinger:** The ghost is a manifestation of sorrow and misfortune. At will, it can usher in terrible calamities resulting in the destruction of life and property. The spirit can cause freak accidents, equipment failures, apparent lapses in human judgment, and a multitude of other disasters.

When a spirit uses this power, it selects a person or object in its presence to be the subject of the power. If the subject is an object, the spirit must make a Will roll (DR 14) when it uses this power. If the roll fails, the object is not affected and the ghost cannot use this power again for twenty-four hours. If the roll succeeds, the ghost can cause the device to malfunction, break down, fall apart, or be completely destroyed. If the ghost causes the device to malfunction, depending on its intention, the device may cease to function, immediately begin operation, or have its regular operation impacted in some way.

If the ghost uses this power on a character, the spirit makes a contested Will roll against the subject. If the subject wins, nothing happens and the ghost cannot use this power again for twenty-four hours. If the ghost wins, an accident befalls the individual. The ghost determines the nature and severity of the accident. It can cause a potentially fatal accident, one that inflicts injury, or a harmless accident intended to threaten the subject or to get his attention. If the attack is intended to harm, in most cases, the subject should be allowed a Coordination or Wit roll to escape the accident (DR 11 + the ghost's Will). If the character succeeds, he escapes the accident unscathed. If he fails, the accident befalls him.

Ghosts who had the Cursed Physical Corruption Affliction in life are prone to possessing this Manifestation in death.

- **Madness Induction:** The ghost is able to trigger bouts of madness in those nearby. When the ghost uses this power, any character possessing Mental Disorders within 10 feet x the spirit's Will must make control checks for each Disorder. Once a character has been affected by this power, whether he succeeded or failed his control rolls, he cannot be affected by it again for twenty-four hours.

- **Nature Manipulation:** Some spirits manifest control over animals and plants. Spirits are generally limited to controlling small animals, such as birds, insects, worms, and vermin. However, there have been recorded instances of larger animals being controlled.

Spirits exhibit varying degrees of control over animals. The animals controlled by some ghosts seem merely guided by the spirit's will. They are still prone to their natural patterns of behaviour and, if frightened, will run off. Other animals are completely dominated by the spirit and react more like intelligent beings than creatures of the wild.

The spirit can use this power to affect any animals within 30 feet x the spirit's Will. Some spirits exhibit the power to call animals from much further distances. For instance, it is not unknown for spirits to possess the power to summon wild dogs from miles around their haunts. Manipulating the natural behaviour of animals requires the spirit to succeed in a Will roll (DR 11). Utterly dominating animals requires the spirit to succeed in a Will roll (DR 16). If the spirit fails, it loses one Will.

A spirit can also use this power to either slowly manipulate the growth of plant life over time or to cause existing plants to move and strike: vines and roots can entangle victims, trees suddenly bend and break, and wood twists and warps to new shapes. In one documented case, a spirit caused the roots of an oak to slowly grow to spell out its lover's name, a lasting memorial from one world to another.

Manipulating the natural growth of a plant does not require a die roll. Mobilizing existing plants requires the spirit to succeed in a Will roll (DR 16). If the spirit fails, it loses one Will. Plants controlled by the spirit in this way have a Coordination equal to the spirit's Will, which is what the plants use to make attack rolls.

More exotic applications of this power include the creation of tangible, though grotesque, physical forms. Using this power, a spirit may create a temporary body fashioned from the living bodies of vermin, insects, or plant life. For example, a spirit could dominate a swarm of bees to create a ghastly buzzing form for itself before scattering its body to the winds. The body the spirit creates lacks the senses of a true physical form. The ghost cannot feel through this body, see through its eyes, or appreciate any other human sense as a result of this manifestation. The body has Coordination 1 and a Vitality score equal to the spirit's Will. The body does not suffer wound penalties. If the body suffers a Fatal Wound, it instantly falls apart. Ignore location modifiers when rolling damage on the body.

Creating a body requires a successful Will roll (DR 16). If the ghost fails the roll, it loses one Will.

- **Pestilence:** This Manifestation only occurs in spirits that died of contagion. The spirit now spreads filth and disease wherever it passes. The very air around the spirit smells fetid and decayed and is full of the sound of buzzing insects.

While in the spirit's presence, living characters suffer -2 on Vitality rolls to resist the effects of poison, infection, and disease. A character treating a wound in the spirit's presence suffers -2 to his die roll.

The spirit can spread the disease that killed it by making a contested Will roll against a living subject in the spirit's presence. If the spirit wins, the subject contracts the disease. If the subject wins, he successfully fights off the illness and the ghost suffers -1 Will.



- **Possession:** The ghost can inhabit the body of a living person and control it as if it were its own. While possessed, the subject's consciousness is forced to the nether regions of his mind, and the subject will recall nothing of the possession. Possession has no effect on half-lifers.

While possessing a living body, the spirit loses all of its powers of Manifestation except for its psychical powers, which can be used normally. The spirit may use its own Skills normally, but the Skills and memories of the host body are not accessible to the spirit.

The ghost must be within 1 foot of the subject to use this power. When the ghost uses this power, it makes a contested Will roll against its subject. Unconscious subjects or those who have had the consciousness strained, such as by fatigue or chemical alteration, suffer -1 on their rolls to resist possession. If the subject wins, he successfully fights off the predations of the spirit and the spirit suffers -1 Will. If the spirit wins, it takes control of the subject's body. A subject can also willingly allow his body to be possessed. In this case, no roll is necessary; the spirit takes control automatically.

While in control of the subject's body, the ghost uses its own Intellect, Wit, and Will and its subject's Vitality and Coordination. While possessing a host body, the ghost's Charm is the average of its Charm and the Charm of its host, rounded down.

Unless the spirit has some acting skill and has spent time studying its subject's mannerisms before taking control of his body, it will be obvious to those who know the subject that something is wrong. Though it is unlikely that they will realize the subject is possessed, those who know him will be aware that a change has come over him. They may believe he is ill, melancholic, worried, or simply out of sorts. In extreme cases, they may fear the character has gone mad.

The spirit can, theoretically, retain control of the subject's body as long as it wishes. However, anytime the host body loses consciousness, there is a chance that its native consciousness will regain primacy and cast out the invading spirit. When the body loses consciousness, the spirit must make another contested Will roll against the character it is possessing. If the character wins, the ghost is cast out and suffers -1 Will, and the character immediately awakens in control of his body. If the spirit wins, it retains control over its host body.

Should the host body die while the spirit is in control, the ghost suffers -1 Will and cannot use its Manifestations for twenty-four hours.

While inhabiting a subject's body, the spirit may attempt to possess a new body, but it must either leave the body it is currently possessing or make physical contact with the new body. If the spirit attempts possession through physical contact and fails the contested Will roll, it remains in control of the body it was already possessing.

- **Psychical Powers:** The spirit has one or more psychical Devotions (see pages 65 - 112). If the spirit had psychical powers while alive, it retains them. If the spirit did not have psychical powers in life, it has a number of Devotion levels equal to its starting Will that may be divided between any Devotions the Narrator chooses.
- **Spectral Vampirism:** The spirit is able to feed on the life energy of living individuals in its presence. Anyone affected by this power will feel an unnatural chill and experience a keen sense of violation.

When the spirit uses this power, it makes a contested Will roll against its subject. If the spirit wins, the subject suffers

-1 Vitality and the spirit gains +1 Will. If the subject wins, he is not affected and the ghost cannot use this power again for twenty-four hours. A ghost cannot use this power unless it currently has fewer Will points than its starting Will.

If a subject is reduced to 0 Vitality, he falls into a deep sleep from which he cannot be awakened by any means for 12 + d10 hours, after which he awakens with Vitality 1. If the subject is reduced to less than Vitality 0, he dies. A character regains one Vitality point lost due to this Manifestation for every eight hours of uninterrupted sleep.

- **Spectrivore:** The ghost is able to feed on the psychical energy of other spirits in its vicinity. When in the presence of another spirit, the ghost can make a contested Will roll against the other spirit. If the ghost wins, it gains +1 Will and the other spirit suffers -1 Will. If the other spirit wins, the initiating ghost suffers -1 Will. A ghost cannot use this power unless it currently has fewer Will points than its starting Will.
- **Tempus Fugit:** The spirit's very presence seems to accelerate decay and the ravages of time. Though its Haunt is not directly affected by this Manifestation, it will take on the appearance of great age as dust and corrosion accumulate about it. Organic matter in the spirit's presence rapidly putrefies and inorganic material suffers erosion and ruin. However, the most terrifying aspect of this power is when it is unleashed upon a living victim, causing spontaneous and rapid aging.

When the spirit uses this power, it makes a contested Will roll against its subject. If the spirit wins, the subject physically ages d10 years in a matter of seconds (see Effects of Aging, *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 117). If the subject wins, he is not affected and the ghost suffers -1 Will.

The spirit can also use this power to intentionally age non-living matter. When the ghost manifests in this fashion, all non-living matter within 10 feet x the spirit's Will begins to rapidly age. The passage of a minute affects everything touched by this power as if it were a year.

- **Visibility:** The spirit is able to manifest visibly to those without Second Sight. Spirits generally look the same every time they manifest. However, spirits are capable of grotesque transformations when angered or distraught. As they not constrained by the elasticity of the flesh, their limbs and jaws may distend, eyes bulge, and tongues lengthen. The spirit's skin may seem to fill with blood or turn jet black with aetheric bile. Some agitated spirits may appear to age rapidly, becoming increasingly gaunt and corpse-like.

Aside from variances spawned by emotional distress, few spirits have the ability or inclination to alter their appearances in any significant way. Though some vain spirits may appear to change their clothes, most spirits always appear to be in same physical condition and wearing the same garments every time they manifest.

When a ghost manifests visibly, its ability to be seen is determined by its Will. If the spirit has Will 4 or greater, it appears fully corporeal. If the ghost has Will 2 or 3, it appears to be partially transparent as though it were made of thick mist. If the spirit has Will 1, it appears as little more than a shadow. Details of a ghost's features will be extraordinarily difficult to discern in all but the most powerful manifestations.

If the spirit's visible manifestation is particularly disturbing, humans and half-lifers confronting it must make a Will - Fear roll (DR 14) (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 161).

- **Weather Manipulation:** Some spirits are able to manipulate weather in a localized area. A spirit with this power is able to unleash terrific thunderstorms, heavy rains, roaring winds,



or any other atmospheric manifestation of which it can conceive. While indoors, spirits will generally create chilling ectoplasmic mists, though distressing indoor rains, winds, and snowfall have been reported.

A spirit using this power can manipulate weather in a radius of 150 feet x its Will. The spirit becomes the epicentre of the freak weather conditions it generates. After every hour in which the spirit persists in manipulating weather conditions, it must make a Will roll (DR 16). If it succeeds, nothing happens. If it fails, it suffers -1 Will.

**Pathology** – A ghost's Pathology roughly explains its continued attachment to the physical world after death. Every ghost has a Pathology. If none of the Pathologies below are suitable for the Narrator's vision of a ghost, he should create his own Pathology for it.

- **Death Bound:** There are many ghosts that have not accepted their deaths. These spirits are known to mediums and parapsychologists as the Death Bound. They are confused and afraid, and they may lash out against those trying to contact or help them. However, if the ghost's sanity has not been irretrievably damaged by the shock of death, a strong, calm, and tenacious medium will usually be able to reach the spirit. If the spirit can be calmed and convinced of the reality of its condition, it can begin dispelling its attachments to the physical world and eventually be laid to rest. If, however, the spirit has been badly damaged or driven insane by the shock of its death, reasoning with it will be ineffective; the spirit will need to be contained, exorcised, or quarantined.

When the spirit is able to get someone to believe they are alive or to treat them as though they were a living person, the spirit regains one point of Will.

- **Desire Bound:** These spirits are kept close to the physical world by the force of some desire which, lacking a physical body, they have no means to satisfy directly. Desperate to satisfy their hungers, these ghosts will attempt to seduce or coerce victims into performing the acts they desire, which allows them some vicarious enjoyment. The most dangerous of these are the spirits of compulsive murderers who return to the physical world to exact a terrible toll on the living.

Desire Bound spirits often rely on the power of possession to use borrowed flesh to sate their appetites. The resulting excesses can easily damage or kill the possessed body. Some drive their hosts into a frenzy of dark and carnal acts, only exiting the body once their host's energies are spent to the point of catatonia. Others may force their host to continuously eat until the bodies they inhabit rupture at the seams. These spirits cannot be easily put to rest, and most must generally be contained or quarantined though they may be bargained with.

When the spirit is able to indulge its appetites, whether vicariously or through possession, it regains one point of Will.

- **Devotion Bound:** The ghost's tireless devotion to a person, place, or ideal has bound it to the physical world. The ghost may keep vigil over a family line, protect a specific individual, watch over an ancestral home or church, or devote itself to any other worthy cause. Some spirits are bound to the corporations they devoted themselves to in life. These spirits give their aid

to the objects of their devotion, coming to their defence when need be. The ghost's Haunt is certainly the thing it is devoted to.

When the ghost takes an action to aid or protect the object of its devotion, it regains one point of Will.

- **Duty Bound:** Duty Bound ghosts are tied to earth by a task left unfinished at the time of death. Spirits of this type may be suspicious and impatient, and some may engage in dangerous behaviour in an effort to draw attention to their desired goal. However, none are interested in mayhem for its own sake. Duty Bound ghosts will usually become communicative and cooperative once they are convinced of an individual's willingness and ability to help them with their unfinished task. It is possible to strike bargains with a Duty Bound spirit, usually obtaining information in exchange for aid in resolving the spirit's task. These spirits are prone to becoming world-weary and will go to rest of their own accord once their goals have been accomplished.

When the ghost is able to accomplish some goal, gain some new insight, or complete a task pertaining to its duty, it regains one point of Will.

- **Love Bound:** The ghost has a true love whom it refuses to leave even in death. The spirit now exists to watch over its love and struggles to overcome the boundaries imposed by death. Such spirits may carry out tragic love affairs with the objects of their affections, descend into the madness of obsession, frighten their lovers to wit's end, or simply watch, silently pining, from the across the threshold. Unlike Desire Bound spirits, the Love Bound spirit is not driven by the needs of the flesh. Instead, it seeks only the affection of one mortal.

If a Love Bound spirit is forced to concede its love is false or one sided, it may either lash out and attempt to destroy the subject of its previous affections or simply depart the physical world



forever. Should the ghost's love be killed, the spirit is certain to exact a terrible vengeance on the killer before departing the world. On the other hand, if the ghost's love dies peacefully, it will find rest and join its love beyond the threshold.

When the spirit shares a moment of genuine affection with its love, it regains one point of Will.

- **Madness Bound:** These terrifying entities have lost all sense of humanity. Having fallen to sheer madness, they remain bound to the physical world and are unable to find rest. These ghosts exist entirely to unleash their malice on an endless series of victims. Far from mindless, Madness Bound spirits exhibit a deadly cunning and a capacity for calculated destruction. These entities feed on the terror and agony of their victims, and they use the emotional energy given off by their torments to maintain the integrity of their aetheric forms. Madness Bound spirits are extremely difficult to control or exorcise and are virtually impossible to reason with.

Some spirits of this type are so alien that they actually learn to prey on other spirits, devouring them for their aetheric energy (see the Spectrivore Manifestation, above).

When the spirit inspires genuine terror or pain in a living victim, it regains one point of Will.

- **Sin Bound:** The spirit believes it has committed such grave and terrible acts that it cannot find peace in death. It may fear a reckoning with the Creator or an eternity in the fires of hell, or it may simply be unable to find rest due to the depth of the guilt it feels. Though the devoutly religious are more prone to this pathology than the irreligious, some crimes are too terrible for any mortal to bear. The ghost now must repent its former evils and make amends before it can find rest.

Sin Bound spirits tend to have a very black-and-white view of the world. While all go to self-righteous extremes to avoid further damnation, many are willing to invoke violence to strike down those they see as evil. Some suffer frightening religious zealotry and spend hours in prayer hoping for some sign of absolution. Only through true forgiveness will these wretched creatures ever find peace.

When the spirit is able to help a person genuinely in need or make amends in some way for the crimes it committed in life, it regains one point of Will.

- **Vengeance Bound:** The ghost is compelled to exact revenge on those who it believes wronged it in life. It may seek to avenge a murder, retrieve what was stolen from it, destroy those who ruined its life, or seek any other measure of vengeance. Spawned by unearthly rage and hatred, these spirits are devoted to the destruction of those who crossed them. It may be possible to reason with such a spirit, but it will ultimately only be interested in lashing out at the objects of its hatred. A Vengeance Bound spirit can only go to rest once it feels completely vindicated or when those who wronged it are dead.

When the ghost is able to exact some measure of revenge against one who wronged it, it regains one point of Will.

**Psychological Damage** – Most ghosts suffer extreme psychological damage as a result of their deaths. As a result, many ghosts suffer some degree of amnesia. Many are afflicted with dementia, paranoia, and extreme behavioural problems. If the spirit had Mental Disorders in life, it is certain to have the same disorders in death.

Virtually all ghosts suffer at least some damage to their personalities. The worst off are only a little more intelligent

than an apparition. It is virtually impossible to reason with such spirits. Generally, they either ignore the living completely or attempt to destroy them out of hand. The ancient spirits that sometimes awaken from dormancy in the plague pits of London often suffer this advanced deterioration.

### Attacks

Unless it is possessing the body of another, a ghost has no methods of attack aside from its Manifestations.

### Creating a Ghost

From a roleplaying perspective, ghosts are the most interesting of spirits. Certainly, they are the only spirits with which players can actually communicate. Whether driven by powerful passions, single-minded determination, or unearthly fear, spirits are entities of incredible intensity. Ghosts may be dangerous threats, unlikely allies, or storytelling devices. They are often tragic characters attempting to make sense of their present conditions in the face of an unfeeling world. Not able to communicate with more than a tiny fraction of the population, ghosts are likely to be misunderstood: even the most frightening spectral manifestations may be nothing more than an attempt at getting the attention of the living for purely altruistic intentions.

Ghosts can create unusual roleplaying situations for players. A ghost could blame a player character for its death and return to exact its revenge. A loved one or close friend could die and later manifest as a Duty Bound spirit, begging a character for help to achieve some task before it can find rest. A spirit could fall in love with a character—a hopeless and doomed affair of the heart. The spirit may seek to possess a body to consummate the affair, harmlessly watch over the character, or urge the character to quit the physical world so they can be together—the more proactive the spirit gets, the more interesting the character's life is bound to become.

Some ghosts succumb to inner darkness and lash out at the world around them. While possibly the ghosts of murderers and madmen, such spirits may have simply become deranged through the trauma of death. The worst of these spirits are the intellectually evil, dangerous men and woman who tirelessly pursued their own interests in life and now continue to perpetuate their crimes in death. Psychological vampirism is common among such creatures.

Many possessing entities are not truly villainous; rather, they are merely selfish, hungry for another taste of life. While some inhabiting spirits may lead parasitical existences, leaping from one body to another as each host expires, others may take care of their borrowed bodies. These ghosts may even seek to arrange a relationship with the consciousnesses they subvert. Some possessing spirits simply require a corporeal vessel to complete some great work before going to rest. It is not uncommon for spirits to borrow the bodies of those who were closest to them in life to complete such tasks. In these cases, the spirit will take great care to preserve its borrowed body from all harm.

Of all the spirits, ghosts are the only ones who are able to intelligently resolve their pathologies, thus enabling them to go peacefully to rest. Few spirits understand or could articulate the bonds that tie them to the physical world. Should a spirit complete its earthly works, there is no guarantee that it will

realize its purpose on the earth has been fulfilled. Often it takes the intervention of player characters, likely with the aid of a medium, to compel a spirit from the physical world.

## Poltergeists

Threats to all life, poltergeists are manifestations of suffering and rage beyond human reckoning. Mad spirits incapable of coherent thought and possessing terrifying psychokinetic powers, these spectral abominations lash out at all life, destroying everything in their path. As with a mindless apparition, it is impossible to communicate with a poltergeist. Their extreme aggression and malignance make these creatures almost impossible to exorcise or lay to rest. They never seek to redress the wrongs of their lives—their anger is directed at anyone who takes their attention. The only known strategies to combat these spectral horrors are containment and isolation. If no method for containment is possible, the best option is to quarantine the spirit and hope it eventually burns itself out. Poltergeists are so dangerous that entire city blocks have been quarantined for decades in hopes the spirit will eventually succumb to dissolution.

Fortunately, poltergeists are extremely rare. They are usually the product of either the slow and violent death of a diseased mind or a painful death in which the victim becomes a font of impotent rage. Rarer are those created when a living soul is so consumed by hatred that it cannot find peace even in death.

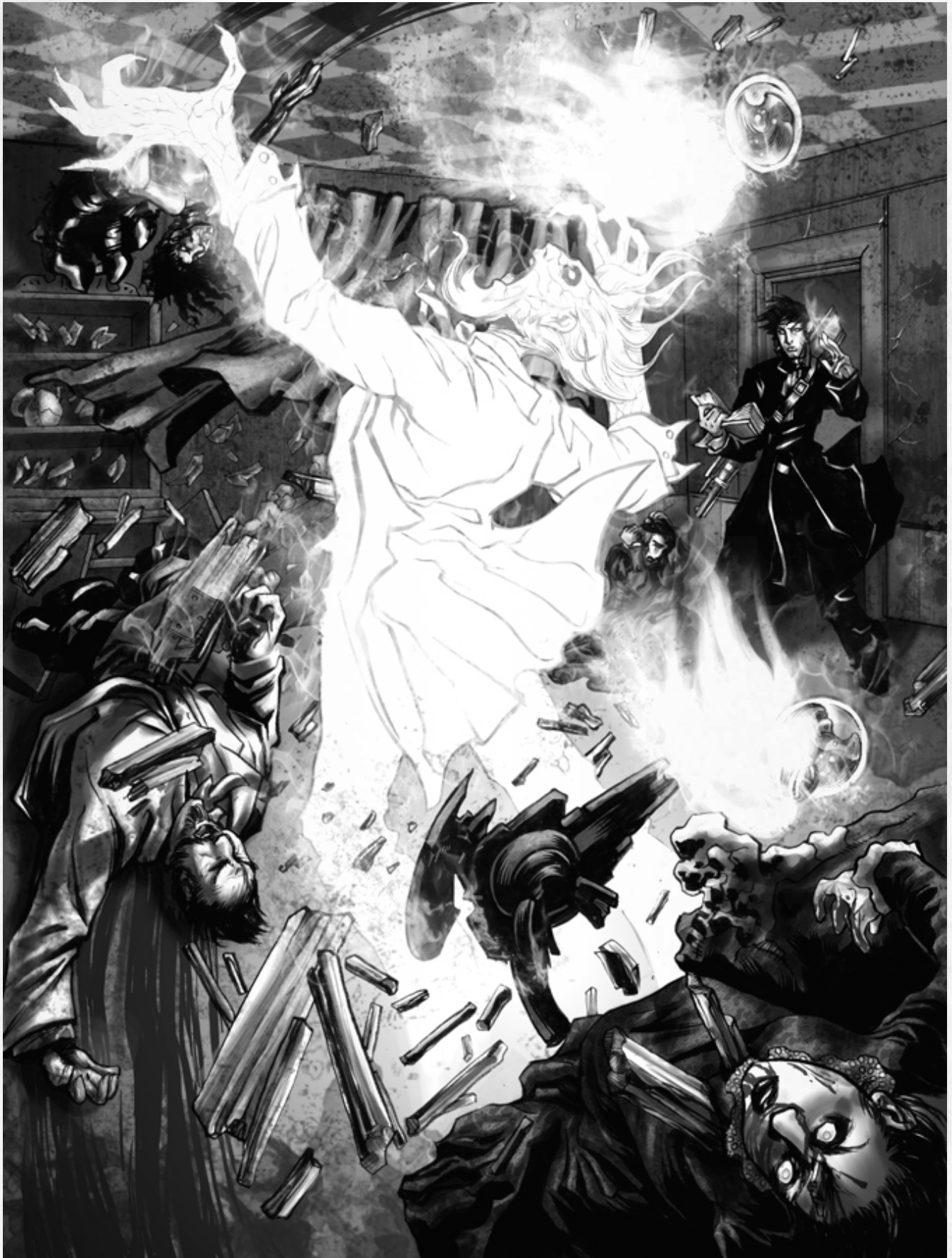
Most poltergeists exhibit telekinetic powers. However, much more rarely, a poltergeist will manifest either pyrokinetic or electrokinetic powers. Those who were burned alive are most likely to return as pyrokinetic poltergeists. There are only a few examples of electrokinetic poltergeists. Most of those resulted either from electrocution or the death of a deranged electrokinetic.

The true form of poltergeists is only discernible to those with Second Sight. A medium that looks upon a poltergeist sees a spectral monster of terrifying proportions, indescribable in its alien horror. While these entities may have human characteristics to their features, they are twisted and distorted. Sickly ectoplasmic tendrils reach out from the poltergeist in every direction, spreading its malignant touch. It is these tendrils that are believed to give the poltergeist its psychokinetic reach.

Poltergeists generally remain in the vicinity of their Haunts at all times. A poltergeist's Haunt is usually the place where its mortal life ended or the device that killed it. These creatures are not particularly protective of their Haunts. In fact, parapsychologists believe that the close association with a place of such pain and misery may actually sustain and further drive the spirit's restless vengeance. Often the only means of quickly resolving a haunting involving a poltergeist is to completely destroy its Haunt, a task sometimes accomplished by the poltergeist itself.

### Attributes

A poltergeist retains the Wit it had in life. Few poltergeists exhibit anything more than rudimentary intelligence and the Intellect of these creatures is limited to 0 or 1. When creating a poltergeist, double the Will it had in life.



To determine a poltergeist's Prowess, double its Wit.

**Vitality:** –

**Coordination:** –

**Wit:** 2 (1–5)

**Intellect:** 1 (0–1)

**Will:** 6 (2–10)

**Charm:** 0

**Prowess:** 4 (2–10)

**Actions:** 1 (1–3)

### Skills

A poltergeist retains no Skills from its mortal life.

### Features

**Appearance** – A poltergeist is invisible to those unable to see into the spirit world.

**Creation** – As described above, a poltergeist is generally the product of a long, painful death or of an all-consuming hatred. Poltergeists should be created during play rarely and then only as a major plot point. Poltergeists are always non-player characters.

A poltergeist may only be created at the time of death. After its creation, it could be days or weeks until the poltergeist first manifests and interacts with the living.

**Death Driven** – The poltergeist regains one point of Will each time a living human dies within 50 feet of the spirit's Haunt x the poltergeist's current Will.

**Hatred** – The poltergeist is a spirit utterly consumed by its hatred of all living things. When disturbed, the poltergeist lashes out with its psychokinetic powers in hopes of destroying every sentient being in its vicinity. A poltergeist cannot be reasoned with and will not stop killing as long as there are potential victims within reach. In lieu of a living victim, most poltergeists will content themselves with destroying the undead or anything else that draws their attention.

**Psychokinesis** – All poltergeists exhibit some form of psychokinetic Devotion (see pages 95 – 112). Each spirit has only one psychokinetic power, Telekinesis being the most common. The poltergeist has a power level in its Devotion equal to the Will it had in life.

Poltergeists are known for their maliciousness and sadism. These creatures exhibit terrifying ingenuity in the murderous application of their powers.

### Attacks

A poltergeist attacks through the manifestation of its psychokinetic powers.

### Poltergeists in Play

A poltergeist is an incredibly powerful spectral threat, but the scope of its actions is very limited: it kills everything in its path. When encountering such an entity, most intelligent creatures flee with all haste.

Eliminating or containing these creatures is incredibly dangerous and potentially impractical. The best players can generally hope for when their characters are confronted by a poltergeist

is to escape and later quarantine the spirit. Players could be responsible for evacuating an area nearby the spirit's Haunt or might actually be sent into the Haunt for a rescue mission.

More likely than not, player characters will encounter poltergeists accidentally, either because they mistook its nature or because they stumbled into its territory by mistake. For example, the characters could have followed a serial killer into the poltergeist's domain only to find themselves trapped after the killer is torn limb from limb. An anarchist bomb could level a portion of the poltergeist's Haunt, causing it to awaken from a long dormancy. In the midst of a Plague outbreak, the player characters may be forced to take sanctuary in an abandoned warehouse only to find it haunted by a poltergeist. Sooner or later, they will either succumb to the predations of the poltergeist or be forced to take their chances with the animates. Ghost hunters on seemingly routine elimination missions may discover the innocuous haunting they have come to resolve is actually being perpetrated by a poltergeist. Everything might go smoothly until the containment field overloads and the Tesla lamps explode, plunging the poltergeist's dingy haunt into total darkness...

When a poltergeist manifests, the results should be accompanied by grotesque injuries, cacophonous screams, and extensive property damage. There is nothing subtle about a poltergeist, and they have extensive psychical firepower to bring to bear.

## Second Sight

Second Sight is the peculiar vision that enables a medium to gaze into the spirit world and to communicate with the dead. When the mediumistic talent first manifests, the medium is able to detect spirits and feel their presence. Once the talent has been further refined, the medium can see and speak to spirits. As a medium develops her talents, she will learn to call spirits to her, to compel them to answer questions, and to banish them from the physical world.

Mediums must learn to harness their powers because spirits are naturally drawn to those who overtly acknowledge their presence. Many mediums go to great lengths to ignore spirits around them to avoid calling attention to themselves. A medium who cannot control her talents will be subject to regular intrusions by spirits determined to make their presence known. With time and training, a medium will learn to control her abilities, initiating and terminating contact with spirits at will. Until she learns this, a medium is like a radio stuck between frequencies: the constant barrage of information and static is extremely disorienting, and it can be difficult for her to make out coherent signals amidst the storm of noise.

Though the powers of Second Sight affect all spirits, mediums are most often in contact with ghosts. Not only do these spirits possess some semblance of intelligence, but they are also the most open to communication with the living.

To enhance their ability to manipulate spirits, mediums rely on a number of tricks of the trade. One of these is information. The more a medium knows about a particular spirit, the more influence she will have over it. For example, the medium may call a ghost by name and tempt it into dialogue through discussion



of its past. Ghosts are creatures riddled with pathos and are easily trapped into conversations about themselves. Furthermore, a skilled medium can use physical objects or people tied to a spirit to make contact with that entity. It is easiest to summon a spirit while in the presence of its Haunt, but a spirit may have a connection with any artefact from its moral life. Likewise, a spirit may be more tempted to speak if a loved one or close friend is present even if that individual is not the spirit's Haunt.

Though a medium can use most of her abilities while fully awake, some mediumistic powers require her to enter a trance. While in a trance, the medium can channel a ghost, allowing herself to become a vessel for the spirit and letting it speak through her. Such close contact is not without its inherent dangers. Channelling spirits opens the medium up to possession, the primary hazard of the mediumistic occupation. Should the spirit overstep its bounds or attempt to gain a more permanent foothold, a war of wills ensues for control of the medium's body. Because of this, most mediums are only willing to open themselves up to familiar spirits unlikely to betray this intimacy. Some mediums create long-standing relationships with spirits, permitting these entities to possess them regularly during trances. These spirits tend to act in predictable ways because they are anxious to preserve their relationship with the medium.

## Second Sight & Psychological Talents

Though there are those who would claim otherwise, sufficient evidence exists to suggest a connection between psychological talents and the spirit world. The medium is living proof of this connection. Some parapsychologists have even suggested that the spiritualistic manifestations during a *séance* (tappings, manipulations by unseen

hands, levitation of objects, voices, and revelations of secrets) are caused by the temporarily released psychological potential of the medium's mind rather than by outside agencies. However, while some so-called mediums are later found to be psychics lacking Second Sight, spiritual manifestation within the *séance* appears to be the rule rather than the exception.

A medium may manifest psychological abilities—usually Telepathy or Empathy—after developing their Second Sight. Psychological abilities can manifest spontaneously in previously ungifted individuals after experiences of possession or even after attending an unusually powerful *séance*, suggesting that exposure to spirits can alter the architecture of the mind in such a way that psychological talents emerge.

It is possible to use psychological gifts to affect spirits. An empath may use his gift to make contact with a spiritual entity and then perceive the emotions that motivate the spirit or use his powers to confuse the emotions of the spirit, forcing the entity into a temporary retreat. A telepath can converse with a spirit almost as if he were in contact with a living mind, save that the contact will be more tenuous and "distant" even with very powerful, intelligent spirits. A telepath may also exert control over the mind of a spirit almost precisely as in a living subject.

Despite the apparent connections between psychological talents and the abilities of the medium, there are important functional differences. First and most notably, Second Sight does not erode sanity. Second, while the psychic can control the exercise of his talents consciously, even a powerful and well-trained medium is more the vehicle for her talents than an active agent in their operation. A medium can suppress her abilities to avoid intrusions from the spirit world, but despite her ability to control her interactions with spirits, she is not able to determine with certainty how they will act or whether the messages they convey are true.

## The Rules Powers

Second Sight is divided into five levels. A character with one or more levels in Second Sight has all the powers up to her level. *For example, a character with Second Sight 3 has all Second Sight powers listed under levels 1, 2, and 3.*

## Trances

Some Second Sight powers require a character to enter a trance before the power can be activated. Powers requiring a character to enter a trance are noted in the description of the power. The rules for trances can be found on pages 66 – 67. However, it is worth noting that mediums do not gain Instability Points unless they also have one or more *psychical Devotions*.

## Characteristics

Each Second Sight power is defined by its Subject, Range, Trigger, and Description. These attributes govern how the ability can be used during play.

### Subject

The Subject is the target of the mediumistic power. Some Second Sight powers can only be used to affect a single Subject while others can affect whole groups. There are also powers that only affect the medium.

### Range

The Range of a Second Sight power describes the reach of the power: either the area affected by the power or the maximum distance the medium can be from a subject and still affect it with the power. Many powers require the character to have “line of sight,” meaning that the character must be able to see his Subject, either by physical sight or through the application of a *psychical* or *mediumistic* power. If she wishes, the medium can decide to intentionally affect a smaller area than that described.

### Triggers

Each Second Sight power has a Trigger that determines when and how the power can be activated.

### Maintained

A maintained Second Sight power may be activated at will and remains active as long as the medium concentrates on it. A medium can simultaneously maintain a number of powers equal to her *Concentration Skill*, with a minimum of one. In combat, activating a power with a maintained Trigger requires the character to spend an action.

While a maintained power that affects a group is in use, anyone moving into the Range of this power will be affected by it unless the power specifies that the medium has the option to not affect certain individuals and chooses not to affect the new arrival. This may mean that a character entering the affected area will have to make a *Will* roll to resist the effects of the power. A character affected by a maintained power who then leaves the Range of the power will no longer be affected by it. Should the character re-enter the Range of the power, he will be affected by it exactly as he was before leaving.



### Passive

Most passive powers are active while the character is awake. Some passive powers continue to function while the character is sleeping or unconscious.

### Thought

Second Sight powers with a thought Trigger may be activated at will. Thought-triggered powers take effect immediately after they are activated. In combat, activating a power with a thought Trigger requires the expenditure of an action.

### Description

This is the Description of the Second Sight power.

## Second Sight Powers

Second Sight is the medium’s ability to see into the spirit world and to communicate with the entities that dwell there. As the medium refines her powers, she will learn to summon and compel spirits to action. However, Second Sight never grants the medium complete control over the spirits she contacts. Dealing with spirits, especially ghosts, involves both finesse and delicate negotiation.

### Level 1 Death Speaker

Subject: Self

Range: Self

Trigger: Passive

**Description:** This power enables the medium to hear noises made by spirits in her presence whether or not the spirits are actively manifesting and regardless of a spirit's current Will. This power effectively gives the medium the ability to communicate verbally with spirits. Note that while the medium may be the only living character who can hear the words spoken by a spirit, the spirit can hear anything said by those inhabiting the physical world. Mediums are often put into the position of acting as interpreters between the living and the dead.

Though this power can be incredibly useful when a medium is attempting to locate or communicate with a spirit, it can also be a curse. A medium attempting to sleep in a haunted location will face a hard night full of the mutterings of mindless apparitions.

If a language barrier exists between the medium and a spirit, this power will not overcome it. Though the medium hears the words spoken by a spirit, the power does not convey the ability to interpret or understand them.

### **Ghost Sight**

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Line of sight

**Trigger:** Passive and Maintained

**Description:** The medium can see into the spirit world. She can clearly see spirits that are visibly manifesting regardless of their current Will ratings. However, unless she focuses her sight on the spirit world, spirits that are not currently manifesting appear shadowy and indistinct. This power enables the medium to recognize individuals who are possessed by spirits on sight.

When the medium chooses to, she can maintain this power to focus her vision on the spirit world. While maintaining this power, the character can clearly see the form of any spirit in her line of sight as if they were manifesting in the physical plane. However, the character will not be able to clearly see the physical landscape, just its spectral reflection.

Visions of the spirit world can be quite strange and frightening. The spirit world reflects a timeless city haunted by layers of apparitions, mingling and muttering, creating a cacophony of fading memories and traumatic echoes. Entwined with familiar landmarks are wholly aetheric structures, monuments that have long fallen to dust and ruin in the physical world but which remain towering memorials in the spirit world.

This power extends beyond the medium's mundane senses and enables the character to see into the spirit world even if she is blind or her sight is impaired. However, as mentioned above, the geography of the spirit world does not perfectly mirror the physical world. If the medium attempts to navigate her way through the physical world through the use of Ghost Sight, she is likely to walk face first into a wall or worse.

While maintaining this power, the medium perceives the physical world as a shadow laid over the spectral landscape and suffers -3 on Wit and vision rolls pertaining to the physical world.

### **Impression**

**Subject:** Group

**Range:** Radius of 10 feet x the medium's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** This power enables the medium to sense spirits around her whether she can see them or not. The medium will gain an idea of the spirits' general locations as well as their current emotional states and potential power levels. The medium can also sense dormant spirits within the affected area.

When the medium uses this power, she makes a single Will roll. Separate contested Will rolls are made for each spirit in the affected area. If a spirit wins, it is not affected by this power. If the medium wins, she can sense the presence and emotions of that spirit. The Narrator should describe the emotional terms of affected spirits in the vaguest terms possible as spirits generally have simple yet powerful emotions. The medium can maintain this power to monitor the emotional states of affected spirits over time.

The medium also learns the relative power level of each affected spirit. If the spirit has Will 2 or less, it is "weak." If a spirit has Will 3 to 5, it is "strong." If a spirit has Will 6 or greater, it is "incredibly powerful."

## **Level 2 Ectoplasmic Mist**

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Radius of 10 feet x the medium's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The medium can use this power to create a thick ectoplasmic fog around herself. This fog may be as light or heavy as the medium wishes. She can generate light mists for dramatic effect or can summon fogs to obscure, permitting a hasty retreat or some concealment in a fight. The mist is cold and unnatural to the touch. Anyone unfamiliar with the mist will find it most disconcerting.

When the medium uses this power, she determines how heavy the mists are and what area, up to the full Range of this power, they will cover. If the medium ceases maintaining this power, the mists dissipate rapidly.

While maintaining this power, the medium gains +2 on Charm - Intimidation (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 162) and Performance rolls.

When making a ranged attack while in a dense ectoplasmic mist or targeting a character within one with a ranged attack, the attacking character suffers a -2 ranged attack modifier for Poor Visibility (*Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 168).

Living characters other than the medium who are touched by or breathe in the mist will suffer -2 on Vitality rolls to avoid illness, infection, or the effects of poison for twenty-four hours.

### **Shroud**

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Radius of 10 feet x the medium's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The medium is able to manipulate the threshold between life and death. She can either make it easier for spirits to manifest by charging an area with spiritual energy or make it more difficult by generating a field of low-frequency aetheric static that weakens and disorients spirits in the affected area.



If she charges the area, spirits in the Range of this power gain +1 on Will rolls. If she generates static, spirits in the affected area suffer -1 on Will rolls.

### **Spirit Channelling**

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** Self

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The medium can channel spirits, allowing them to enter her body and to speak directly through her. The medium must enter a trance before the power can be activated. When the medium uses this power, she selects a spirit in her presence to be channelled. The medium does not have to see a spirit to channel it; she just has to be aware of its presence. Only one spirit can be channelled at a time.

Generally, mediums only channel ghosts. Though an apparition can be channelled, it will only repeat its imbedded monologue over and over again. Poltergeists cannot be channelled.

If the spirit willingly allows itself to be channelled, the medium can channel it without a roll. Ghosts often allow themselves to be channelled for the chance to communicate with the living. If the spirit does not wish to be channelled, the medium must make a contested Will roll against the spirit.

If the spirit wins, the medium suffers -1 Will. If the medium is reduced to 0 Will, she falls unconscious for d5 hours, during which

time nothing can awaken her. After this time elapses, the medium awakens with 1 Will. The medium will regain one point of Will after each additional hour of uninterrupted rest.

If the medium wins, the spirit is channelled normally.

Once a spirit enters the medium's body, it cannot leave again until the medium allows it to do so. While it is being channelled by a medium, a spirit cannot use any of its powers of Manifestation and its control over the medium's body is limited to what the medium allows it. Generally a spirit is limited to speaking through the medium and will not control the other functions of her body. A spirit may gain more control over the character's body if either the medium grants it greater control or if the spirit possesses the medium.

Some spirits allow themselves to be channelled specifically in hopes of taking control of a living body. Once a spirit has been willingly channelled by a medium, it gains +3 on contested Will rolls to possess the medium. If the medium is possessed by a spirit she is channelling, she immediately comes out of the trance and her body is under the spirit's control.

When a channelled spirit speaks through a medium, the medium's voice takes on an affected quality that reflects the personality, vocabulary, background, intellect, and education of the spirit. The voice will be a hybrid of the medium's and the spirit's. Those familiar with the spirit in life may recognize its voice when channelled. The medium and the spirit may speak in turns; mediums frequently

use this ability to ask questions of a spirit and to communicate information from the spirit's memories with a *séance* group.

A medium's recollections of the time she spends acting as a spiritual vessel will be dim and indistinct, as if she had been in a deep sleep. She will not remember any action taken or words spoken by a spirit she channels, though she will be left with a strong impression of the spirit. She will have a sense of whether it is gentle or forceful, cruel or sweet, powerful or fading. Many mediums employ confederates to record their every word while they are channelling spirits. Others are happy to leave the details of the visitation to their clients and the spirits they channel.

### Level 3 Aetheric Disruption

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the medium's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** The medium is able to generate pulses of low-frequency aetheric energy capable of partially disrupting or dissipating a spirit's spectral form. Though this power can be extremely effective in weakening a spirit, using it is not without risks. Generating aetheric disruptions can be incredibly taxing for a medium and could lead to fainting spells or worse.

When the medium uses this power, she makes a contested Will roll against a spirit in her line of sight and in the Range of this power.

If the spirit wins, the medium suffers -1 Will. If the medium is reduced to 0 Will, she falls unconscious for d5 hours, during which time nothing can awaken her. After this time elapses, the medium awakens with 1 Will. The medium will regain one point of Will after each additional hour of uninterrupted rest.

If the medium wins, the spirit suffers -1 Will and the effects of any powers the spirit was manifesting immediately end. However, this power will not eject a spirit possessing a host body. Instead it provides the opportunity for the native consciousness to make a contested Will roll against the spirit to regain control of its body.

### Compel

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 5 feet x the medium's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The medium can exert her will to command a spirit to perform a task or action for her. The spirit could be forced to manifest, speak aloud, leave an area, or anything else the medium requires.

When the medium uses this power, she makes a contested Will roll against a spirit in her line of sight and in the Range of this power.

If the spirit wins, the medium suffers -1 Will. If the medium is reduced to 0 Will, she falls unconscious for d5 hours, during which time nothing can awaken her. After this time elapses, the medium awakens with 1 Will. The medium will regain one point of Will after each additional hour of uninterrupted rest.

If the medium wins, she can command the spirit to act. The spirit will be forced to comply with the demand to the best of its ability. Obviously the spirit will be limited by its intelligence, knowledge,

comprehension, and Manifestations. If the medium ceases to maintain this power, the spirit will no longer be compelled to carry out the task demanded of it. After suffering the effects of this power, some spirits will avoid the medium while others may seek revenge.

Each time the medium commands the spirit to take an action, she must succeed in a separate contested Will roll.

The medium can only force the spirit to take an action and cannot control what it says or thinks. Should the medium force the spirit to speak, the spirit must comply, but there is no way to know if the spirit is telling the truth.

If the spirit leaves the medium's presence, it is no longer affected by this power.

This power may not be used on apparitions.

### Summoning

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** Limitless

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The medium can call spirits to appear in her presence at will. A medium must know the spirit's name, be in the presence of someone loved by the spirit, be in possession of an artefact from the spirit's mortal life, or have a photograph or other accurate representation of the spirit to summon it.

When the medium uses this power, the spirit will hear her call. If it wishes to be summoned, it appears instantly in her presence. If it does not wish to be summoned, the medium can make a contested Will roll against the spirit to force it to comply.

If the spirit wins, the medium suffers -1 Will. If the medium is reduced to 0 Will, she falls unconscious for d5 hours, during which time nothing can awaken her. After this time elapses, the medium awakens with 1 Will. The medium will regain one point of Will after each additional hour of uninterrupted rest. If the medium wins, the spirit suffers -1 Will and is summoned to the medium's presence.

Once the medium summons the spirit, she will have no control over it unless she uses another power on the spirit, such as Compel. Unless she successfully commands it to remain or restricts its range of action, the spirit may quickly return to its Haunt or unleash the full range of its spectral powers. More curious or friendly spirits will be open to conversation.

The medium cannot summon a dormant spirit unless she is in the presence of its Haunt. When the medium attempts to summon a dormant spirit, she must make a Will roll (DR 20). Add the spirit's Will to this roll. If the roll fails, the medium suffers -1 Will. If she succeeds, the spirit is no longer dormant, is summoned, and regains one Will.

Spirits that are at rest or that are currently aetherically contained cannot be summoned. Summoning a quarantined spirit is a crime punishable by up to ten years of hard labour.

## Level 4

### Expel

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 5 feet x the medium's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** The medium can expel possessing spirits at will. The medium can use this power on any possessed person within her field of vision and in the Range of this power.

When the medium uses this power, she makes a contested Will roll against the possessing spirit.

If the spirit wins, the medium suffers -1 Will. If the medium is reduced to 0 Will, she falls unconscious for d5 hours, during which time nothing can awaken her. After this time elapses, the medium awakens with 1 Will. The medium will regain one point of Will after each additional hour of uninterrupted rest.

If the medium wins, the spirit is immediately forced to depart its host's body and cannot possess the host it was forced to evacuate again for twenty-four hours.

### Manifest

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the medium's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The medium can lend her spiritual energy to assist the manifestation of a spirit within the Range of this power and in her line of sight. When the medium uses this power, the affected spirit immediately manifests, gaining the Audibility and Visibility Manifestations (see pages 143 and 146).

When the spirit uses a Manifestation while it is affected by this power, it may use the medium's Will in place of its own. If the spirit currently has a Will equal to or higher than the medium's Will, it gains +1 Will when manifesting while it is affected by this power.

Every minute that this power is maintained, the medium must make a Will roll (DR 16). If the medium fails, she suffers -1 Will. If the medium is reduced to Will 0, she loses consciousness and the effects of this power immediately end. The medium awakens after 1d10 minutes with 1 Will. The medium will regain one point of Will after each hour of uninterrupted rest.

### Soul Well

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the medium's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** The medium can exert her Will to empower or weaken a spirit. If she puts her mind to it, the medium can rend the essence of a spirit or rejuvenate a fading aetheric body. The medium can use this power to affect a single spirit within the Range of this power and in her field of vision.

When the medium uses this power, her Will is reduced by 1. At the medium's discretion, the spirit then either regains or loses 1 point of Will. If the medium is reduced to 0 Will, she falls unconscious for d5 hours, during which time nothing can awaken her. After this time elapses, the medium awakens with 1 Will. The medium will regain one point of Will after each additional hour of uninterrupted rest.

## Level 5

### Deadlock

**Subject:** Self

**Range:** 25 feet x the medium's Will

**Trigger:** Maintained

**Description:** The medium can use this power to keep spirits in her presence from using their powers of Manifestation. While this power is maintained, if a spirit in Range attempts to use a Manifestation, it must make a contested Will roll against the medium. If the spirit wins, it can use the power normally. If the medium wins, the spirit is stopped from using its powers but can make another attempt after one hour.

### Oubliette

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 5 feet x the medium's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** The medium can cause those who die in her presence to linger on as ghosts. The medium can use this power on any living character that expires within her field of vision and in the Range of this power.

When the medium uses this power, she makes a contested Will roll against her Subject at the time of his death. If the Subject succeeds, he dies naturally. If the medium wins, the Subject becomes a ghost (see pages 142 - 149). If the Subject wishes to have its spirit extracted at the time of his death, he may forfeit this roll and automatically becomes a ghost.

The ghost's Haunt is determined by the Narrator.

The medium has no innate control over the ghost she creates, and the ghost is not likely to know that the medium is responsible for its creation. Depending on the ghost's disposition, it may bear the medium a great deal of animosity if it ever discovers the truth of its creation.

This power cannot be used on those infected with vampirism or the Plague and has no effect on characters with the Anhedonia Affliction.

### Shepherd

**Subject:** Single target

**Range:** 10 feet x the medium's Will and line of sight

**Trigger:** Thought

**Description:** The medium can use this power to put spirits to rest (see At Rest, page 138). The medium can use this power on any spirit within the Range of this power and in her field of vision. When the medium uses this power, she makes a contested Will roll against the spirit.

If the spirit wins, the medium suffers -1 Will. If the medium is reduced to 0 Will, she falls unconscious for d5 hours, during which time nothing can awaken her. After this time elapses, the medium awakens with 1 Will. The medium will regain one point of Will after each additional hour of uninterrupted rest.

If the medium wins, the spirit is laid to rest.



# CHAPTER FIVE: AETHERTECH

## *From Parapsychology for Engineers: An Introduction to the Science, 2102*

*The advent of the aetheric monitor made it possible to directly observe changes in the aether surrounding a human at the moment of bodily death. In the months following the monitor's emergence as a parapsychological tool, not less than thirty independent groups published reports based on recordings of the low-frequency aether at the moment of death. Through these and subsequent observations, it was possible to determine that activity in the near aether did change at death, transforming from the rapid, energized "aura" readings of a living person to one of two other states. In most cases, the low-frequency aether in the vicinity of the body seemed to "flicker" and then go inert, fading to background levels within a few hours of death. In other cases, energy levels in the low-frequency aether did not diminish sharply and instead maintained their integrity, coalescing into what could only be described as a "spirit."*

*More recently, sophisticated aetheric instruments have enabled researchers to capture images of the spirit in its natural environs. In all cases, the spiritual image bore a striking resemblance to the recently deceased. Though, in some cases, photographs dating back many years were needed to confirm the resemblance.*

*Once the existence of the aetheric body was directly confirmed, interest began to focus on the development of a means of capturing it at or near the moment of death for closer study. In 2011, Dr. Phinneas Lodge created the psychocondenser. This technology, despite its distasteful nature and cruel design, represented a significant step forward in the collection of aetheric matter from a living person. However, the resulting matter retains little integrity and will dissipate without a trace if its containment is breached. Even in containment, material collected by the condenser will last only a few months before decaying into uselessness.*

*Despite these advancements and the numerous successes in retrieving and condensing life-essence, science is no closer than it ever was to determining conclusively what that essence is. The existence of the immortal soul and the fate, if any, of a human mind that has passed beyond the reach of the mortal realm remains mysterious. And yet, despite centuries of thwarted effort, the search continues for clues to the persistent mysteries of death.*

## Tapping the Aether

With improvements in the understanding of aetheric bodies as concentrations of ordered aetheric energy, interest in tapping this energy began to rise. Early experiments attempted to quantify the aetheric component of a human by measuring changes in the body at the moment of physical death. Some, seeking to estimate the mass of the soul, weighed the body on precise scales; others measured electrical fluctuations, and still others took more esoteric measurements. With the advent of the aetheric monitor, it became possible to watch the aether around a dying person directly, but, while very many observations have been made in this way, there has been no consensus in interpreting the data.

As aetheric engineering improved, there came an interest in tapping the energy of a spirit directly. Spirits had been

observed creating extreme displays of power, including spectral telekinesis, weather manipulation, and the manifestation of artificial physical forms. It was reasoned that, if a spirit is capable of generating the energy needed to perform these astonishing feats, it should be possible to tap into that energy artificially.

The first experiments focused on tapping the aetheric energy of contained apparitions, to some success. In 2080, Dr. Hollister Saintjohn created the aetheric engine, a mechanical-alchemical device based on the aether vault technology. Like the vault, the engine was able to store spectral energies, but when activated, the engine "digested" the contained aetheric forms, converting them into raw aetheric charge. The resulting energy could be used to mimic the spectrum of spiritual Manifestations, or, if channelled and targeted appropriately, to create objects in the aether. The process was inefficient, however, and the engine would overload if fed a spirit more powerful than an apparition. Following Hollister's death 2085, his work was carried on by his nephew, Philip Saintjohn, who completed development of the more efficient aether converter that very same year. The aether converter is similar to its predecessor in its ability to contain and utilize spectral energy; however, the apparitions fed into the converter do not suffer the same thorough processing as those passed through the engine. The result is a more efficient output of aetheric energies. The apparitions used as fuel for such devices are effectively discharged in use, dissipating into nothingness after the machines have done their work.

## Aetheric Measurements and the Rawleigh Scale

In 1952, Dr. Amethyst Rawleigh proposed a universal scale for psychical manifestation based on collected observations since 1935. The scale, known as the Rawleigh scale, rapidly came into common use within the field of parapsychology and remains a general psychical metric today. The scale makes use of the observed range of event intensities as registered by the aetheric monitors of the time. A magnitude zero event is ordinary background low-frequency-aether noise as read at the laboratory of the scale's creator in Cambridge. This zero marker is slightly below the levels customarily observed in a larger, more active city such as London, which registers at 0.3–0.8, depending on location, in the absence of notable psychical events. As the zero measure is arbitrary, negative values for psychical activity on this scale are possible; a psychically "silent" area, or one that has been intentionally shielded or contained, will register negative values. There is no set upper limit, which has allowed the continued use of this scale to define event magnitude even though detectors have become more powerful. Relative values on the Rawleigh scale are on a logarithmic rather than a linear scale: a Rawleigh 2 event is 10 times more powerful than a Rawleigh 1 and 100 times more powerful than a Rawleigh 0.

Event	Magnitude
Recently exorcised zone	(2)–0
Spiritually "quiet" area	0
Active city	0.3–0.8
Persistent apparition	1–2
Minor haunting	1–3
Ghost infestation (2+ active spirits)	2–6+
Poltergeist	4–9+

Tapping the energy of an actual ghost or poltergeist is a more dangerous and controversial exercise. In 2092, the Haldane Group, a parapsychological think tank based in Edinburgh, made a series of attempts to use a reinforced aether converter to process the energy of contained poltergeists in the hope of channelling and controlling that phenomenal, destructive energy, but the poltergeists proved far less tractable than the non-sentient thoughtforms. The harnessed poltergeists seemed, inexplicably, to be able to control their fate within the machine: aether cannons attached to the experimental power sources would function initially, only to refuse to work at critical moments or release far too much power at once, overloading the machinery. These experiments ended in November of 2092 when a prototype poltergeist-sourced aether cannon being tested in the field suffered a catastrophic failure, causing the collapse of a Stepney tenement house and releasing the contained poltergeist into the area. The resulting spiritual activity required the evacuation of seven square blocks and the collective effort of three teams of spectral eliminators to resolve. Costs in manpower and damage to property ran into the tens of thousands of pounds.

Even before this failure, the project had been plagued by protesters angered at the prospect of spectral energy used for industrial applications. Several prominent mediums, in a joint statement made with the Anglican clergy, spoke out vehemently against the device, claiming that the new weapon was a gristmill for human spirits and that the destruction of the essence of the spirits fed into it was, in fact, the murder of the soul. In the aftermath of the colossal failure in Stepney, these voices forced the project into retirement.

Although the protest against the use of spirit energy in all its forms continues, scientific consensus indicates that the apparitions commonly used are no more than “echoes,” deserving of no special protection. Mediums, exorcists, and spiritual leaders point out that a faded ghost—what they believe to be an actual, immortal human soul, though depleted of strength and memory, made a shadow of itself—is difficult if not impossible to tell from a strong apparition, and so they continue to push for the abolition of this technology. However, the scientific conclusion still holds sway, and the use of aether converters is unlikely to end soon.

## Ectophysics

Ectoplasm, the strange semimaterial substance associated with physical manifestations of aetheric force, has baffled scientists and spiritual investigators for centuries. The substance is not physical matter in any normal sense: it does not obey laws of conservation in the material plane, appearing as if from nothing at the will of a medium or spirit and vanishing gradually again into immateriality when that will is withdrawn. Most ectoplasm manifests in the physical plane as a barely perceptible “mist.” Still, when an ectoplasmic body is being maintained by a being of sufficient will, it can behave exactly as matter for a short time: it has mass; is capable of generating forces and responding to forces generated against it; and it can be felt, touched, and held as any ordinary body could. Maintaining a corporeal ectoplasmic form is incredibly draining for a spirit and can only be sustained for a few seconds at most.



Manifested ectoplasm is a curious substance. It has no innate smell, and it does not appear to be possible to cause it to generate odours. A flower brought forth from ectoplasm may have all the wonderful colour of the original, but there will be no scent, though an artificially applied scent can be made to adhere to the material for a time. Though an ectoplasmic body can be touched, pulled, and otherwise made to respond to mechanical force, the substance itself is apparently electrically and chemically inert, refusing to conduct current or react even with powerfully active acids or bases. When manifested, the ectoplasm will feel, to the casual touch and to the instrument, as if it were at the temperature of the ambient air. The sensation of cold reported to occur on contact with coalescing or, “evaporating” ectoplasm is perceptual rather than physical. It has no basis in material reality and has never been adequately explained.

Though the substance (an apparently perfect, chemically inert insulator) is of obvious interest from an industrial standpoint, no means of generating stable synthetic ectoplasm has been found. Ectoplasm seems to require an active aetheric event as a centre in order to maintain coherence, and maintaining a high-integrity ectoplasmic body seems to require a staggering amount of energy. Even the strongest mediums and spirits could produce only a moderate amount of ectoplasm. Attempts to modify an aetheric converter to produce ectoplasm succeeded in generating small amounts of the substance, but the ectoplasm could only be sustained for a few seconds before burning out the apparition used for fuel, the electronics of the converter, or both.

In 2081, observations of an ectohabitat, an apparatus capable of containing and sustaining fleeting spectral effluvia, proved that under some conditions confined spirits could be induced to

produce ectoplasm. The ectoplasm produced in the ectohabitat was quickly determined to be fluid and formless, unsuitable for industrial use, but the principle appeared to be sound. It was surmised that, if a number of suitably powerful spirits could be contained and compelled to produce ectoplasm, it might be possible to sustain the substance long enough to make it useful.

In 2085, a team of parapsychologists and researchers in the employ of Cambridge University staged a field trial of a system intended to accomplish this feat. A haunting in the dormitories, confirmed to consist of seven highly active spirits, was contained in the dormitory's basement with the use of oscillating fields. A modified aetheric converter was used to coalesce "seed" ectoplasm within the containment area; immediately, the forms of the spirits within became faintly visible as they moved within the containment area, trailing through the synthesized ectoplasm. Then, abruptly, the moving forms stiffened and coalesced—pale floating shapes, vaguely human in shape and features but lacking in definition, hung inert a few feet off the ground. The researchers, curious and amazed, moved in to investigate. The spirit-forms were solid to the touch and vaguely gelatinous; a hand pressed to one would encounter resistance; a greater effort would move the shape, and a cessation of effort would send the shape into a viscous stop, as if impeded in its movements by some unseen fluid. A knife would separate the material of the shape, revealing a uniform pale interior, and the wound would ooze shut moments after the blade was withdrawn. This condition lasted a few minutes, at which time, upon noticing a "mist" rising from the shapes, the researchers withdrew. The "evaporation" accelerated rapidly, and within a few moments, the ectoplasm dissipated, and the spirits within resumed activity. This system was miniaturized and refined into the *carpe spiritus* spirit-catching apparatus, which saw commercial release in 2090.

Though further efforts have been made, no one has yet succeeded in creating a stable, industrially viable source of ectoplasm.

## Spectral Containment

Spectral containment describes the various methods of containing and limiting spectral phenomena. The spectral eliminations industry utilizes a number of aethertech devices to contain and transport spirits. These devices function by generating low-frequency aetheric fields from which a spirit cannot escape. Once trapped in an aether field, the spirit can be transferred into a holding vessel and may later be moved to an aether vault for permanent containment.

## Containment Fields

Aether-field generators are devices that create low-frequency-aether energy fields capable of containing spirits within a given area. There are a number of field generators available to spectral eliminators; the most common types are based on either static- or oscillating-field technology. Professional spirit hunters use these generators to contain spirits before transferring them to an essence chamber or aether vault for longterm containment. Aether-field generators draw energy directly from the city's Tesla array. Outside the range of the ambient energy of the metropolis, these devices may be powered by large electrical generators but otherwise will not function.

The aether-field generator is placed outside the area of containment to avoid the potential of being damaged during operation, especially by the actions of psychokinetic spirits that escape containment. The generator is generally linked to the containment ring by braided-steel cables. The field itself emanates from this containment ring, and, in some cases, resonates through brass globes or steel antennae.

Spectral eliminators generally agree that for the best results, aether fields should be set up and activated in close proximity to a spirit's Haunt, where the spirit is most likely to be located. A spirit within the area of containment can be trapped whether or not it is currently manifesting. Of course, if a spirit is not within the confines of the field, it will not be contained whether or not its Haunt is in the affected area, and few intelligent aetheric entities are likely to enter the area of a containment field. However, one reliable means of snaring a spirit is to centre the containment field around its Haunt and then intentionally disturb the Haunt to agitate the spirit into manifesting within the field.

Aether-field generators are fairly complex devices, and to fully master their operation requires a great deal of skill and experience. Though a novice can activate a containment field device, only an expert can make the subtle alterations to these devices required to minutely adjust the field in order to extend the area of containment or compensate for the presence of more powerful spirits. If an operator fails to correctly manipulate the device, he risks collapsing the field and releasing the spirits contained within.

## Containment Field Rules

An aether-field generator can be activated by any character with either the Galvanics or Parapsychology Skill without a die roll.

Each aether-field generator has a default Area of Confinement and a Threshold attribute, which determines the strength of spirit that can be contained within it. Spirits within the Area of Confinement with a Will equal to or lower than the Threshold of the field generator will be contained within the field and unable to use their powers of Manifestation. If a spirit's Will exceeds the Threshold of the field generator, it is not contained or affected by the field in any way.

While held within a containment field, a spirit draws a minute amount of aetheric energy from the field itself, and this causes the spirit to become visible whether it is manifesting or not. A spirit made visible as a result of containment remains somewhat spectral and translucent.

If an aether-field generator is damaged or deprived of a constant flow of energy, the field generated will collapse and the spirits contained within will be released.

## Manual Control

A skilled operator can push the Threshold of an aether-field generator to contain more powerful spirits or extend the Area of Containment. A character attempting to manually control an aether field must have at least 2 in both Galvanics and Parapsychology.



## Dilating and Contracting a Field

A character operating an aether-field generator can increase or decrease the area of containment by manually changing the settings of the device. An operator can reduce the area of the field without a die roll. Reductions are made in two foot increments, and the area of the field cannot be made smaller than two feet in diameter. Spirits contained within the area of the field will remain within it as the field contracts. Any number of spirits can be contained within even the smallest field areas.

Expanding the area of containment requires a successful Parapsychology Skill roll versus DR 11 + 1 for every two feet the operator is attempting to expand the field beyond its standard area of effect. Each time the operator attempts to expand the field beyond its default Area of Containment, he must make another roll. If the operator fails this roll, the field becomes unstable and collapses. If the Area of Containment has been reduced below its default setting, an operator can increase the Area of Containment back to its default size without a die roll.

## Pushing the Threshold

A character operating an aether-field generator can attempt to contain a spirit within it with a Will up to two greater than the Threshold of the field generator by succeeding in a Parapsychology Skill roll. The DR for this roll is based on the Will of the spirit. If the spirit's Will exceeds the Threshold of the field by 1, the DR is 14. If the spirit's Will is 2 more than the Threshold of field, the DR is 16. If the roll fails, the field becomes unstable and collapses (see below). If the roll succeeds, the spirit is contained.

If an operator who has temporarily contained a spirit by pushing the Threshold ceases the manual operation of the device, the spirits contained within the field can attempt to escape. Each minute that the field remains unattended, the spirits within have a chance to break free. The Narrator makes one roll for the spirits using the highest Will of a spirit contained within the field against DR 11 + the Threshold of the device. If the spirits fail, they remain held and the integrity of the field is maintained. If the spirits succeed, the field collapses (see below) and they escape containment.

Even more powerful spirits can be temporarily contained but only while the operator continues to make manual adjustments to the controls of the device. When a character attempts to contain a spirit with a Will exceeding the Threshold of a containment field by three or more, the character must make a contested Parapsychology Skill roll against the spirit's Will. Remember to add a spirit's Concentration Skill (if any) to this roll. If the operator succeeds, the spirit is held for one minute, after which time, the operator must make another contested roll to continue containing the spirit. If the roll fails, the aether field collapses (see below).

## Field Collapse

If a containment field collapses, the field generator immediately shuts off and the spirits contained within the field are free to escape and use their powers of Manifestation. The field can be reactivated again after one full minute. If the field is reactivated before this time, the delicate components of the generator will be damaged, and the device will cease functioning until it is repaired. Repairing the generator requires an hour's labour and a successful Galvanics Skill roll (DR 14).

## Long-Term Containment

Long-term containment refers to the indefinite confinement of spirits, generally until a spirit goes through the final stages of dissolution (see page 138) and is no longer a nuisance to the living. Though aether fields were once considered to be a method of long-term containment, they were always an imperfect solution at best. Aether-field generators are large and bulky and require a considerable area in which to operate. Additionally, even the finest generators available are subject to wear and frequent failure.

The development of aether vaults and essence chambers have provided Neo-Victorians with an efficient and reliable method of longterm containment. These devices are effectively storage lockers for aetheric matter; they cannot be used to trap spirits.

Generally, once spectral eliminators have trapped a spirit in a containment field, it will be transferred to an essence chamber for ease of transport. From the essence chamber, the spirit will

be moved to an aether vault for permanent containment. Though a spirit could be left within the essence chamber, this ties up valuable resources that could be used to capture and contain additional spirits.

The essence chamber works by generating an aetheric force gradient to draw an aetheric entity from another vessel into itself. While some manufacturers produce essence chambers designed to be inserted directly into an aether-field generator or aether vault, in most cases, the chamber must be linked to the other device with coupling tubes. Spirits may be transferred to or from essence chambers. They may also be transferred from one essence chamber to another.

While contained within an aether vault or essence chamber, the psychical matter of the spirit is completely held within the device containing the spirit. The spirit has no ability to manifest and assumes a state not unlike dormancy except that it continues to suffer dissolution (see page 138). A contained spirit is undetectable to mediums or aethertech devices and has no ability to perceive the physical world. If the spirit's Haunt is disturbed, it does not regain Will.

## Escaped Spirits

A spirit can be released from containment through power or equipment failure, a collapsed containment field, or through the intentional action of an operator. When released from spectral confinement, a spirit will suffer confusion, anxiety, and extreme agitation. Even the most mild-mannered ghosts are likely to lash out at those around them following spontaneous release from confinement. Once the spirit either gathers its wits or has exhausted its anger, it will return to its Haunt. Apparitions immediately return to their Haunts upon release.

## Quarantine

Quarantine is the most effective method of containing powerful spirits. Considered the final measure after all practical means of containment have failed, quarantine relies on isolating a spirit's Haunt and allowing its power to naturally dissipate through dissolution (see page 138). The process is generally slow and imperfect. It can take years for a powerful spirit to go to rest through dissolution. Worse, these spirits may become dormant and never truly go to rest, a situation that requires the boundaries around the spirit's Haunt to be left standing in perpetuity.

Quarantine is generally only used to contain poltergeists that lack the will or inclination to move away from their Haunts. Ghosts are virtually impossible to truly contain through quarantine because they are intelligent enough to move from the area, though their Haunts may be isolated, effectively keeping them from being disturbed. Apparitions are seldom strong enough to resist more direct methods of containment, and even those that cannot be contained by other means are usually considered too minor a nuisance to bother with quarantining.

# Aetheric Containment Devices

## Aether Vault

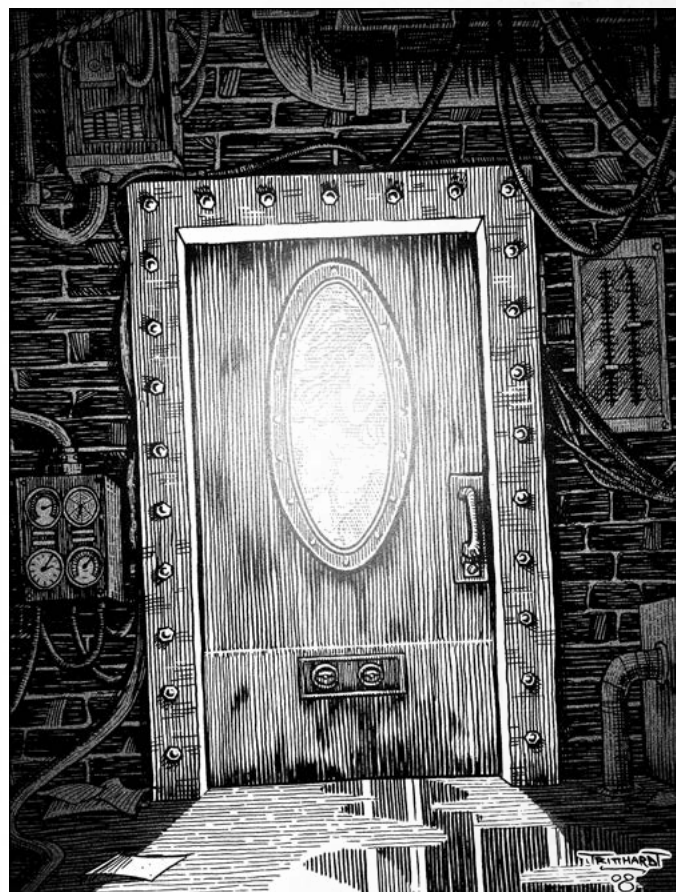
Cost: £350+

Threshold: Unlimited

Area of Confinement: The vault itself

The aether vault is a massive apparatus for the longterm confinement of spirits. Weighing in excess of five hundred pounds, these devices are not easily portable and are seldom moved once placed. The vaults rely on incredibly powerful aether-field generators to create a concentrated area of confinement. This barrier is both stable and inescapable. Provided the flow of energy is not interrupted, an aether vault can hold innumerable spirits indefinitely. Virtually every spectral-eliminations agency maintains at least one aether vault to contain the spirits it captures. The great device is composed of a mass of glowing glass tubes, flickering chambers, pulsing spheres, valves, and pressure gauges housed in a framework of brass, brick, and hardwood.

Spirits contained in an aether vault must be transferred to it from another device, generally an essence chamber. Each aether vault has several ports and valves that can be used to transfer spirits to and from confinement. A character with at least a rating of 2 in both Galvanics and Parapsychology can transfer a spirit from another device to the aether vault with a successful Parapsychology Skill roll (DR 11). If the roll fails, the spirit remains trapped in its original containment device. Each attempted transfer takes one minute.



While sealed within an aether vault, a spirit cannot manifest. Should the machinery of the device be damaged or compromised in any way, however, or if its electrical system should fail, all the spirits contained within the vault will come flooding out in a stream of chilling ectoplasmic mist.

Though these devices draw power from the city's Tesla array, many aether vaults are constructed with integrated electrical generators that can be utilized in the event of a power outage.

### **Alcott Jar**

**Cost:** £30 (plus regular maintenance)

**Threshold:** 6

**Area of Confinement:** 15 foot diameter

The Alcott jar is the first and most powerful aether-field generator ever created. Developed in 1972 by inventor Byron James Alcott, the Alcott jar has been a staple of the supernormal eliminations industry for over a century. The jar generates a static field in the low-energy aether, which forms, essentially, an aetheric "cage."

The device prototype was enormous and unwieldy, a house-sized tangle of metal framework and field generators. Later refinements allowed the field to be created using fewer generators, and advances in technology permitted generators to be made smaller. In 1981, Alcott patented a man-portable version of the device, weighing just forty pounds and small enough to carry in a large pack when collapsed. The use of alchemical amplifiers allowed the jar to be fashioned as a ring of miniaturized field generators, connected to one another for easy deployment. The portable jar was capable of responding to aether phenomena, strengthening or relaxing output, and modifying frequencies across a narrow range, with communication between connected units allowing coordination of frequency adjustments to maintain the aetheric barrier.

Modern Alcott jars range greatly in size. The largest incorporates a number of redundant systems and secondary power sources to ensure the device remains functional even in the event of partial mechanical failure. Before the development of the essence chamber and aether vault, these larger generators were used to contain exceptionally powerful spirits when isolation would cause too great a disruption to the living. Today, the smallest of these devices are man-portable, weighing twenty to fifty pounds. Alcott jars are preferred for the initial containment of powerful aetheric entities. It can be rightly said that if it cannot be contained in an Alcott jar, it cannot be contained.

Rules for using containment fields can be found above (see pages 161 – 163). An Alcott jar can be made operational by a character with 2 or more in both Galvanics and Parapsychology in twenty minutes without a die roll. Correctly deploying the device requires a successful Parapsychology Skill roll (DR 11). The device will not function until correctly deployed. Once deployed, a character with at least a 2 in both Galvanics and Parapsychology can transfer a spirit from another device to the Alcott jar or from the Alcott jar to another device with a successful Parapsychology Skill roll (DR 11). If the roll fails, the spirit remains trapped within its original containment device. Each attempted transfer takes one minute.

Unfortunately, the delicate alchemical-mechanical nature of the Alcott jar makes it fallible. These devices require periodic maintenance. Poorly maintained Alcott jars run the risk of explosive equipment failure. Even with preventive care and maintenance, these devices rarely have more than an eight-year lifespan. Maintenance can be performed by a character with at least 2 in both Galvanics and Parapsychology without a die roll. This maintenance takes four hours to complete, and cannot be performed while the jar is in use.

If the device is not serviced between uses or after ten hours of continuous operation, it has a chance of malfunctioning. In either case, roll a d10. On the roll of 1, the device suffers -1 to its Threshold. If its Threshold is reduced to 0, the Alcott jar burns out completely and is destroyed. A character with at least 2 in both Galvanics and Parapsychology can repair a malfunctioning Alcott jar with a successful Galvanics Skill roll (DR 14). If the roll fails, the Threshold of the jar is further reduced by 1. If the roll succeeds, it returns to full operating condition. Each attempt to repair the jar takes one hour. The jar cannot be repaired while it is in use.

These devices are usually powered by the ambient energy of the city's Tesla array, though it is possible to power an Alcott jar from an electrical generator. If the device does not receive an uninterrupted flow of energy or if it is damaged while in operation, the field generated immediately collapses, freeing any spirits contained within it.

### **EctoHabitat**

**Cost:** £20

**Threshold:** 3 (cannot be manually increased)

**Area of Confinement:** Slightly larger than the habitat

The ectohabitat is a holding-tank for minor aetheric entities. The tank is metal and glass, usually resembling an excessively ornate lantern or, sometimes, a diving-bell, with a complex series of dials on the side. Many different shapes and sizes are possible, the smallest being compact enough to be carried in one hand and the largest filling an entire room.

Within the habitat, a low-frequency-aether field is generated. The area of this field, not the physical dimensions of the habitat, constrain the entities contained within, and the field boundaries do not correspond perfectly to the physical boundaries of the device. The field may be calibrated with the aid of an aetheric monitor. Most models have the monitor built in, though miniature models will need to be calibrated with an external monitor. Unlike the aether vault or essence chamber, the ectohabitat is designed to sustain the integrity of spirits contained within it. While contained within the habitat, spirits do not suffer dissolution (see page 138).

Spirits contained in an ectohabitat must generally be transferred to it from another device, such as an essence chamber, though spirits can enter the device at will. Each device has several ports and valves that can be used to transfer spirits to and from its area of confinement. A character with at least 2 in both Galvanics and Parapsychology can transfer a spirit from another device to the ectohabitat with a successful Parapsychology Skill roll (DR 11). If the roll fails, the spirit remains trapped within its original containment device. Each attempted transfer takes one minute.

The ectohabitat's aether field is weak, capable of restraining only entities with Will 3 or lower. Spirits with a higher Will cannot be transferred to the device. The ectohabitat can contain any number of spirits, and while sealed within the device, a spirit cannot manifest in any way.

These devices are powered by the ambient energy of the city's Tesla array, though some operators will modify habitats to draw power from capacitors or generators for use outside the metropolis. If the device does not receive an uninterrupted flow of energy or if it is damaged while in operation, the field generated immediately collapses, freeing any spirits contained within it.

### Ectostability Containment Suit

Cost: £40

Threshold: Unlimited

Area of Confinement: The suit itself

The ectostability containment suit (ESC) is a means of giving a spirit a physical form. The ESC appears to be a heavily modified diving suit of brass; glass; and coarse, oiled cloth. An extension of ectohabitat technology, the ESC is a receptacle for aetheric energy that allows the spirit to fill the suit with a weakly manifested ectoplasmic body and physically interact with its environment.

These devices are seldom found outside parapsychology laboratories, and scientists generally only contain ghosts within them because apparitions lack the intelligence or motivation to utilize the suit and poltergeists are too erratic to be trusted with a corporeal form. The chief purpose of the suit is to enable ordinary researchers lacking the mediumistic talent to converse and interact with spirits. Spirits may be contained in an ESC for research, to render them harmless via containment, or for questioning. While in an ESC, spirits may be further restrained by chains, rope, and steel cable to restrict their freedom of movement and to limit their physical activities.

The spirit must be transferred to the suit from another containment device, generally an essence chamber. A series of valves and release chambers on the back of the suit can be used to transfer spirits to and from the ESC. A character with at least 2 in both Galvanics and Parapsychology can transfer a spirit from another device to the ESC with a successful Parapsychology Skill roll (DR 11). If the roll fails, the spirit remains trapped within its original containment device. Each attempted transfer takes one minute.

While contained within the suit, the spirit can walk, lift up objects, and speak aloud through an integrated voice-modulation system. A spirit does not have to be able to manifest audibly to speak through the system, which generates a hollow-timbered artificial voice that may be heard by anyone within earshot. The spirit can hear through a rough sensory device built into the helmet of the suit.



While inhabited by a spirit, the ESC's glass-plated helmet appears to be full of wisps of pale-green, glowing vapour. The spirit can see through the plate as if it had mortal eyes.

As with any other containment field, a spirit is unable to use any of its powers of Manifestation while within the suit.

The physical strength of the spirit contained within the suit is determined by the power of the spirit. The more powerful the spirit contained, the physically stronger it will be. When performing strength-based actions, including rolling damage for melee and unarmed attacks, the spirit is considered to have Vitality equal to its Will. The spirit also has Coordination equal to its Will -2. Contained spirits have a minimum Coordination of 1.

If the suit is hit by an attack or has the potential to be damaged in any way, it is considered to have Vitality 5. If it suffers a Serious Wound or greater, the structural integrity of the suit will be compromised, and the spirit will escape confinement. As the spirit makes its escape, chilling vapour will rapidly spill out of the suit as it collapses to the floor under its own weight.

## Essence Chamber

**Cost:** £10

**Threshold:** Unlimited

**Area of Confinement:** The device itself

An essence chamber, an aethertech vessel for the containment of a single spirit, comes in a variety of shapes and sizes and is among the most common of aethertech devices produced throughout Britain. An essence chamber generally consists of a complex network of glass and bronze tubes connected to an extremely small but extraordinarily powerful aether-field generator. The entire apparatus is housed in a metal sphere or box studded with levers, pressure gauges, and valves. An essence chamber generally weighs less than ten pounds.

These devices are not traps and can only hold spirits that have been previously confined by another device. Once a spirit is held within an essence chamber, it can remain there indefinitely, though it does suffer dissolution (see page 138). A spirit may be left in an essence chamber for longterm containment or it can be transferred to another device, such as a spirit lamp or aether vault.

The essence chamber can contain a single spirit of any power level provided that the spirit was first contained within another device. The essence chamber can either extract or deposit a spirit into or from another essence chamber, a containment field (such as the Alcott jar or void gate), or an aether vault. A character with at least 2 in both Galvanics and Parapsychology can transfer a spirit from another device to the essence chamber or from the essence chamber into another device without a die roll.

The chamber cannot be used to extract a spirit from another device if it already contains one. When the chamber is used to extract a spirit, it generates a powerful directed aetheric field, creating a motive force that quickly draws the spirit in. Though extraction may appear violent or traumatic to the spirit, the spirit is in no way harmed by the process. The vessel can be set to extract either the strongest or weakest spirit contained within the other device. When used to extract the strongest spirit, the spirit with the highest Will is extracted. When used to transfer the weakest spirit, the spirit with the lowest Will is removed. If there are spirits of equal power level with the field or vault, there is no way to extract a specific spirit, and the vessel will extract a spirit at random based on its setting.

Essence chambers are usually powered by the ambient energy of the city's Tesla array. If the device does not receive an uninterrupted flow of energy or if it is damaged while in operation, the field immediately collapses, freeing any spirits contained within it.

## Oscillating Aether Field

**Cost:** Variable, see below

**Threshold:** Variable, see below

**Area of Containment:** Variable, see below

The oscillating aether field, an easily portable yet incredibly powerful aether-field generator, is a wonder of the modern age. Most modern containment field designs are based on the oscillating-field principle and provide unusual strength for a relatively small investment in materials.

Engineer Edna Steibal created the first oscillating-aether-field generator in 2004. This device generated concentric fields of overlapping containment rather than maintaining a static field, as with the Alcott jar. The new technique required fewer points of field generation than the venerable Alcott jar, which made the oscillating-field device less expensive to produce and easier to miniaturize. The new technology provided comparable field strength at a fraction of the cost, but the initial models had a tendency to fall out of sync with wear or improper operation, and thus they had more containment gaps. Newer models have attempted to correct these issues with varying degrees of success. Unlike the static field devices, these devices are capable of compensating to some small degree for the loss of some of the generators in the network and thus can maintain containment despite sustaining damage or suffering mechanical failures.

When deployed, the oscillating-field generator resembles a sparse metal spiderweb with small generators positioned at nodes in the web. The web is flat and is spread on the ground in the desired containment area before activation; footprints range from five to thirty feet. The device can be laid out and assembled by a character with 1 or more in both Galvanics and Parapsychology in fifteen minutes without a die roll.

The device makes no sound when active, but those spending any time in the vicinity of the field will be conscious of a vague sense of anxiety and a prickling across the skin.

Rules for using containment fields can be found above (see pages 161 – 163). Spirits can be transferred to and from the containment field to another device. A character with at least a 2 in both Galvanics and Parapsychology can transfer a spirit from another device to the oscillating aether field or from the field to another device with a successful Parapsychology Skill roll (DR 11). If the roll fails, the spirit remains trapped within its original containment device. Each attempted transfer takes one minute.

Oscillating-field generators are usually powered by the ambient energy of the city's Tesla array. If the device does not receive an uninterrupted flow of energy or if it is damaged while in operation, the field immediately collapses, freeing any spirits contained within it.

The cost of an oscillating-aether-field generator depends on its Threshold and the size of its Area of Containment. A generator with a Threshold 3 costs £5; one with a Threshold 4 costs £10, and device with Threshold 5 costs £15. An oscillating-aether-field generator has a default Area of Containment five feet in diameter. For each additional five feet, up to thirty feet in diameter, add £3 to the cost of the device.

## Spirit Lamp

**Cost:** £15+

**Threshold:** Unlimited

**Area of Confinement:** The device itself

Spirit lamps are items of novelty rather than serious utility. Essentially a modified essence chamber, these glass and steel devices can contain a single spirit. The ectoplasmic form of spirits contained within can be seen through the glass of the lamp and give the device its distinctive glow. Some wealthy enthusiasts keep large collections of spirit lamps in vast galleries. The designs of these lamps are as varied as their collectors.



When a spirit is contained in the lamp, it will glow faintly and appear full of wisps of iridescent, greenish smoke. Some enterprising manufacturers have succeeded in tinting the glass to change the apparent colour, producing an eerie and unnatural spectrum of spectral light. The result is highly decorative. The spirit lamp is currently in vogue among the upper classes, who have taken to keeping the spirits of former servants after death. The lamp has been condemned by spiritualist and religious authorities alike, who find the use of what they believe to be an immortal soul to decorate one's parlours and galleries to be in extremely poor taste.

Some lamps are rigged with integrated voice-modulation systems. The modulator generates a hollow-timbred artificial voice when the spirit speaks. A spirit does not have to be able to manifest audibly to speak through the modulator. The device may also integrate a rough sensory device that allows the spirit to hear. A contained spirit can generally peer out from a spirit lamp, but its vision is extremely poor and clouded. Voice modulation systems add £20 to the cost of the device.

A spirit lamp is otherwise identical to an essence chamber (see above).

### Void Gate

Cost: £20

Threshold: 4

Area of Confinement: See below

The void gate is a device for the capture and longterm containment of spirits. The apparatus consists of an aether-field generator and an integrated essence chamber. The device functions by creating an unstable aether field

over a ten-foot radius that rapidly collapses, pulling nearby spirits into itself as it does so. The first spirit to be drawn into the device is trapped in its aether vault.

The spirits within the radius of the field become temporarily visible as they draw power from the field's ambient aetheric energy. The operation of the device, which takes mere seconds, can be terrifying for an unaccustomed witness and highly traumatic for intelligent spirits thus confined. Like water down a drain, all spectral effluvia, including ectoplasmic residue is sucked directly toward the machine, its operation only halting once a spirit has been contained within or five seconds of continuous operation have passed. Though the visible effects of the device seem to imply the contrary, the void gate does not harm a spirit's aetheric body.

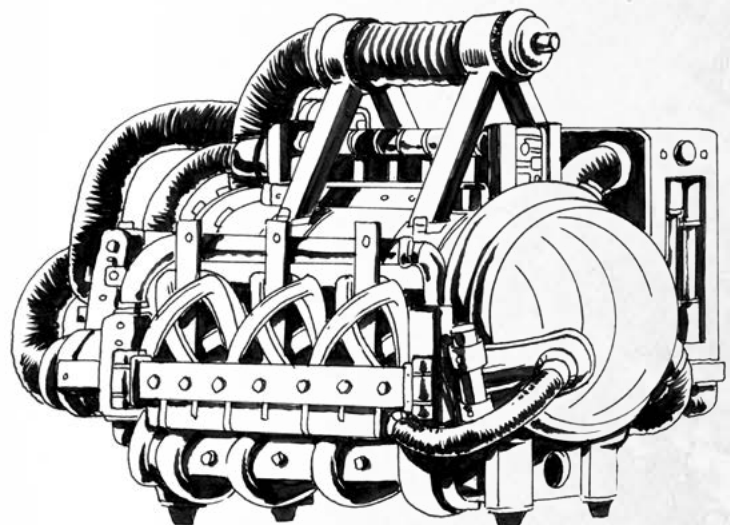
Unlike either the Alcott jar or oscillating-aether-field generators, the void gate requires no set up time and can be activated by any unskilled individual with little instruction.

While void gates are favoured by some theatrically inclined spectral eliminators and those who blanch at the thought of deploying complex oscillating-aether-field generators, at thirty pounds, their weight gives many pause. Additionally, the devices create a relatively weak field of containment incapable of holding more powerful spirits, a potentially lethal inadequacy in the field.

A void gate is powered by the ambient energy of the city's Tesla array. Generating a temporary aether field requires a tremendous build up of energy and the device cannot be used to generate another field until it has recharged for two hours. Safeguards prohibit the use of the device while there is a spirit already contained within the essence chamber. However, the essence chamber can easily be removed and replaced with an empty essence chamber.

Rules for using containment fields can be found above (see pages 161-163). When the device is activated, it generates a Threshold 4 field that has the potential to affect all spirits within the area of confinement. Affected spirits are violently pulled toward the device. The closest spirit that cannot resist the pull of the device will be sucked into its essence chamber.

The void gate lacks the proper controls to allow a character to manually control the device. The integrated essence chamber performs exactly like an ordinary essence chamber.



# Aether Gear

*Every day sees humanity more victorious in the struggle with space and time.*

—Guglielmo Marconi

Contemporary parapsychologists rely on a staggering variety of aethertech devices to observe and contain spectral entities. These tools include psychoactive photo plates, psychoscopic goggles designed to give ordinary people a glimpse at the invisible world, and sensitive recording devices capable of detecting sounds and vibrations from the spirit world. Engines have even been designed to create energy by consuming aether entities.

## Aether Converter

Cost: £100

Based on the venerable aetheric engine, the aether converter efficiently processes spectral matter, specifically spirits, into galvanic energy. This device integrates a miniature aether vault (see pages 163-164) that feeds spirits into a processor which converts raw aetheric energy into an electrical current. The energy generated by the converter can then be used to power galvanic devices or to recharge capacitors.

Aether converters are very compact and weigh no more than twenty pounds. The device is made up of the processor, a hermetically sealed metallic sphere housing a delicate turbine, and the vault, a brass box covered in gauges and valves. The vault is powered by a small capacitor that can operate continuously for thirty days without a recharge. The capacitor is automatically recharged each time the device is used to process a spirit.

Spirits contained in the vault must be transferred to it from another device, generally an essence chamber. A character with at least a rating of 2 in both Galvanics and Parapsychology can transfer a spirit from another device to the converter with a successful Parapsychology Skill roll (DR 11). If the roll fails, the spirit remains trapped within its original containment device. Each attempted transfer takes one minute.

The converter is only capable of processing weak spirits, so its aether vault can only contain spirits with Will 3 or lower. Spirits with a higher Will cannot be transferred to the device. The vault can contain any number of spirits, and while sealed in the vault, these spirits cannot manifest in any way.

When the aether converter is activated, a spirit contained in the vault is sucked into the processor, where it is converted into galvanic energy. A spirit can fuel the aether converter for a number of hours equal to its Will x 12. If the converter is shut off during this time, the spirit being used to fuel the device immediately dissipates into nonexistence. While the converter is operational, up to ten man-portable galvanic devices can draw power from it. Larger devices can be powered by the converter at the Narrator's discretion. These devices draw energy directly from the converter instead of from either the Tesla array or the devices' own capacitors. Galvanic weapons and devices draw energy directly from the converter while it is in operation and recharge their capacitors at the same rate as if they were exposed to a Tesla array.

Though this technology holds a great deal of promise as an alternate power source, it has been decried as inhumane by religious and spiritualist organizations throughout Britain who believe that the device is nothing short of an attack on the soul itself. Proponents of spectral processing must admit that they do not yet fully comprehend the metaphysical implications of such devices. Those who have firsthand experience with aether converters have reported a number of troubling and unexplainable phenomena surrounding their operation. A galvanic engine powered by a converter is said to wail like a soul in torment, and electrical lights and lamps fuelled by spectral energy are said to cast an unwholesome pallor over all they illuminate.

Presently, the use of this experimental technology is limited to some research facilities and field trials. Industrial applications have met with limited success due to worker discomfort with and widespread public distaste for factories literally fuelled by the spirits of the destitute. However, several expeditions, overland and by sea, have successfully used converter technology to power galvanic equipment far from London's Tesla towers.

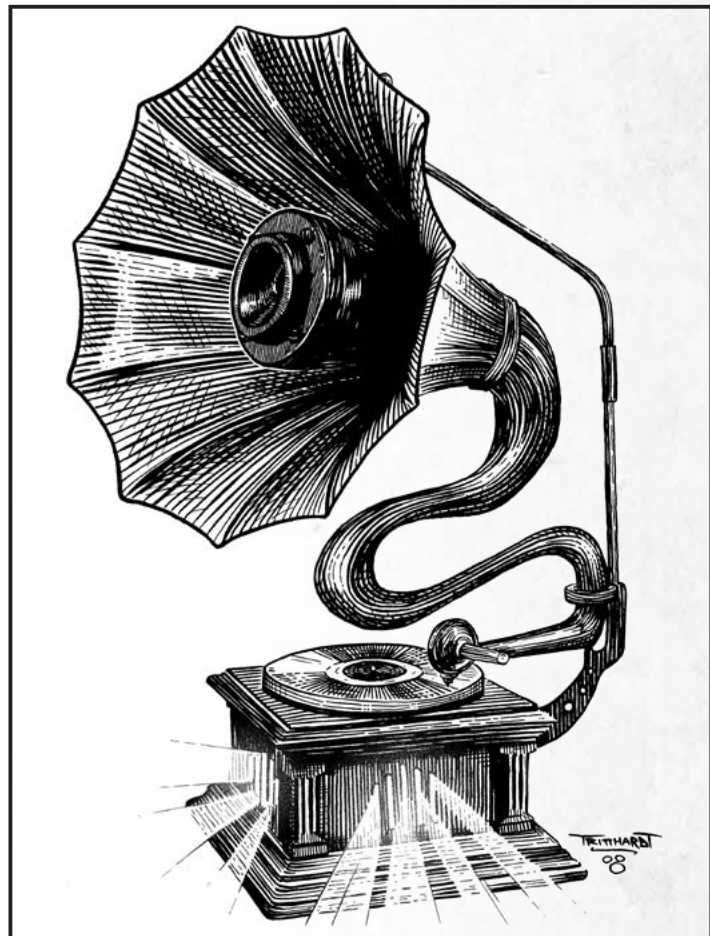
## Aethergraph

Cost: £40+

+10s for a blank disk

+£5+ for a prerecorded disk

The aethergraph is a brass and hardwood instrument resembling a phonograph, complete with turntable and horn. The base of the aethergraph is set with grilled metalwork that glows ominously



while the device is in operation. This glow may be accompanied by whiffs of ectoplasmic mist issuing from within the machine. A galvanic device powered by the city's Tesla array, the aethergraph is capable of recording and playing not music or sound, but aetheric vibration. This sensitive device records human and spiritual emotion, the echoes of thought, and the whispers of spectral entities onto delicate metal disks for play at a later time. A disk can generally record up to one hour of aetheric vibrations. Once recorded, these disks can be played on any aethergraph.

When this device is used to record aetheric vibrations, it records all emotions, thoughts, and audible aetheric transmissions within ten feet of the aethergraph. More sensitive devices with greater recording ranges exist but at vastly greater costs, and they are generally unique, hand-tooled instruments of exceptional beauty.

Using this device to record aetheric vibrations onto a blank disk requires a successful Parapsychology Skill roll (DR 14). If the roll fails, the recording on the disk is garbled and useless. If a psi-null individual is present within the recording range while an aethergraph is attempting to record aetheric vibrations, no information will be recorded.

When replayed, a character's perception of the vibrations generated depends on his supernormal senses. It is a curious quality of this medium that a "listener" with one set of senses may "hear" something entirely different than a listener with another. A normal person will hear nothing but the hiss of the disk turning on the aethergraph's table. An empath can use his powers to sense the recorded emotions. A telepath can use his powers to hear the recorded thoughts. A medium can hear the recorded voices of spirits. Psi-nulls, the undead, and half-lifers are entirely unaffected by and insensitive to the aethergraph.

The aethergraph can be set at a "volume" that generates a faint psychological background noise or turned up to a level that overwhelms all but the most powerful aetheric disturbances. A character with an aetheric monitor (see below) within ten feet of the aethergraph can use the monitor to read recorded psychological and spiritual disturbances as if the source was currently within the range of detection.

Aethergraphs are utilized extensively in psychical research as a means of re-examining events observed in the field. This technology allows recorded events to be examined in detail, under the calmer conditions of the laboratory. These devices are commercially available, and there is even a collectors' market among aficionados of the medium who buy, sell, and trade choice recordings. Weddings

and births are commonly aethergraphed by those who can afford to do so, and deathbed aethergraphs have gained popularity as a comfort for the bereaved. Telepaths and empaths may play soothing recordings to drown out psychical noise while they sleep or meditate. Other collectors may play recordings that put them in a particular mental state in the same ways music-lovers play their favourite song. Aethergraphs have also been illegally used to record the thoughts of individuals for later replay, such as during a business meeting via a hidden aethergraph.

Despite attempts to duplicate aethergraph disks, there is presently no commercially available means of doing so. The aethergraphs themselves are not sensitive enough to record the prerecorded vibrations from another aethergraph.

### Aetheric Coupling Tube

Cost: £2

Aetheric coupling tubes are standard issue equipment for anyone operating in the fields of parapsychology or spectral eliminations. The tubes, intended for use with aethertech devices, are hollow, hermetically sealed cables of rubber and braided copper wire designed for the easy transfer of spectral matter from one aethertech vessel to another. Each end of the coupling tube terminates in a brass valve that will connect to most essence chambers, aether vaults, and aether-field generators.

### Aetheric Monitor

Cost: £5

Approximately the size of a pocket watch, the aetheric monitor, or necrometer, is a fragile, handheld device that detects aetheric disturbances within thirty feet. A trained operator with the Parapsychology Skill can use the device to detect the type and power level of psychological abilities in use as well as the magnitude of spiritual activity in the vicinity. The monitor translates this information into numeric values that are displayed by an array of small-needled meters and gauges on the face of the device. The frequencies being monitored can be adjusted manually in order to allow for the observation of events over a range of phenomena types or to limit the detection to either psychological or spiritual phenomena.

When a character uses an aetheric monitor, he must make a Parapsychology Skill roll with a DR depending on the action attempted. If the character succeeds, he successfully sets and interprets the device. If he fails, he cannot get a clear reading from the device and must try again. Each attempt to read the monitor requires thirty seconds of calibration. If the character fails, nothing happens, but he can make another roll after thirty seconds of adjustments to the device.



Simply using the device to discover if there is any psychical or spectral activity within thirty feet requires a successful Skill roll against DR 11. The monitor can detect the use of psychical powers within the affected area, including Extrasensory Perception powers used to clairvoyantly eavesdrop on the location, even if the psychic himself is outside the area being monitored. The monitor also detects whether there are currently spirits within the area and if they are currently manifesting.

After an initial successful reading of the device, the character can make another Skill roll (DR 14) to determine the number of spirits or sources of psychical energy in the area, the direction of the most powerful, closest, or furthest source. Once an operator has locked in on an aetheric disturbance, he can make another roll (DR 14) to learn its general power level. If a psychic using a power or a spirit in the area has Will 2 or less, it will register as "weak." An active psychic or spirit with Will 3 to 5 will register as "strong." An active psychic or spirit with Will 6 or greater will register as "incredibly powerful."

An operator can also use the monitor to determine if an individual within five feet of the device is possessed by a spirit with a successful skill roll (DR 11).

An operator can even determine whether a spirit's Haunt is the area of an aetheric monitor with a successful Skill roll (DR 20). If the roll succeeds and the spirit attached to the Haunt is within the area of detection, the operator also determines which spirit is attached to the Haunt.

Some phenomena will cause an aetheric monitor to act erratically. The presence of a psi-null individual (see page 49) within ten feet of the device will cause the device to detect no aetheric activity, even background levels. The use of an Electrokinetic power within the area of detection will cause the gauges to fluctuate violently, making reading the device impossible. Both readings are familiar to anyone with Parapsychology 1 or greater, and their cause can be determined without a die roll.

### **Aether Lock**

**Cost:** £40

The aether lock is a device designed to generate fields of psychically disruptive aetheric static. They are used by government agencies and corporations throughout the Neo-Victorian world to ensure privacy and freedom from psychical manipulation. Most high-stakes, clandestine meetings take place under the protection of an aether lock. The lock itself appears to be an electrical lamp of bronze and glass. When the device is activated, grey-green fingers of electricity spring menacingly to life within the lamp's glass bulb. Other light sources within twenty feet of the aether lock dim visibly, and anyone in the area will feel an unsettling chill.

Any character with at least Galvanics 1 and Parapsychology 1 can activate an aether lock without a die roll. While within ten feet of an active aether lock, spirits cannot see or hear anything that happens in the physical world. When a spirit attempts to use a power of Manifestation in this area, it suffers -2 to its Will rolls. When a character within this area attempts to use a psychical power or a Second Sight power, he suffers -2 to his Will rolls. When a psychic attempts to peer into this area using an Extrasensory Perception power, the character's maintained

psychical powers immediately expire, he suffers a terrible headache, and he gains an Instability Point.

This device draws power directly from the city's Tesla array and cannot be activated outside the array without another substantial source of power.

### **Autopsychographer**

**Cost:** £20

The autopsychographer is a device for receiving one-way communications from the dead. The machine itself is little more than a galvanic psychoelectrical-field generator integrated into a motor-driven automated typewriter. When in operation, the psychographer picks up emissions from the spirit world while pulsating with pale electrical light. As the device receives these emissions, the typewriter transcribes them onto paper.

The device is simple to operate. An operator asks questions of spirits in the surrounding area. Assuming there are any ghosts in the vicinity who are willing to reply, the device types out the answers to the questions asked. However, often as not, the psychographer only receives the chatter of the mindless, babbling apparitions. Over the years, the popularity of these devices has waxed and waned. Currently they are experiencing a renaissance of sorts among middle-class spiritual devotees who view them as a source of amusement. Amateur enthusiasts have made a hobby of recording spirit phenomena occurring naturally throughout the metropolis. They collect and trade transcripts and discuss the best places to collect ghostly transmissions.

Mediums who operate alone sometimes use these devices to record their conversations with the dead. Most mediums who do so write down their questions before contact and read them from the written list to provide a record of the questions asked.

Parapsychologists and spectral eliminators have had success using these devices to locate spirits. The device is simply left active in an area and regularly checked for signs of spiritual manifestation. In the case of spiritual activity, at least a few words will be recorded by the device, assuming, of course, that at least one of the spirits present speaks.

The psychographer records the words spoken by any aetheric entity within ten feet of the device, whether the creature is actively manifesting or not. A knob attached to the device can be adjusted to remove spiritual static, effectively tuning out weaker spirits. The most basic setting is completely unfiltered and records the words of all spirits within range. At its second setting, the device only records the words of spirits with Will 3 or greater. At its third and final setting, the device only records the words of spirits with Will 5 or greater.

### **Devourer Swarm**

**Cost:** £25 for a small school

£40 for a large school

+£20 for the ectohabitat

Devourer swarms are lab-created aetheric entities bred for the express purpose of consuming spirits. However, their ectoplasm-filled "fish tanks," modified ectohabitats (see pages 164-165), possess a strangely morbid beauty that entrances those who gaze into their ghastly green depths. The ectohabitat is crystal with a brass framework equipped with several control boxes and

circular portholes. Devourer swarms are barely visible to the naked eye in standard atmosphere, but when contained in their host tank, they appear as beautiful fish-shaped “bubbles” with a translucent skeletal structure. This bubble effect is the result of a displacement of the ectoplasmic environment in which they are contained. The visual effect is further complicated by the fact that the aetheric space within the physical shape of the tank extends beyond the apparent perimeter.

Using a devourer swarm for spectral elimination is as simple as transporting the swarm to the site and releasing them. They attack *en masse*, vicious and frenzied, until recalled into their tank by a frequency-modulated lure specific to that school. This frequency is usually designated during their initial creation, but may be changed if necessary.

A portable tank, a modified ectohabitat that may be attached to the back by a harness, is used to transport the swarm. This tank connects to the main ectohabitat via two locking ports bridged by a thick hose. The portable tank is much better protected than the ectohabitat as it is most often utilized in dangerous environments. This tank is encased in brass and outfitted with several enhanced-crystal portholes that are additionally protected by hinged metal covers. The recall frequency may be activated by a keyed switch, a necessary precaution to prevent the premature recall by any hostile beings in the area.

Aiming the direction of the swarm’s release and recalling them are the only variables that can be controlled by the operator. Spectral eliminators should take care not to deploy a devourer swarm in the presence of benevolent spirits.

Devourers may attack alone if necessary, but are most efficient when attacking in schools. A school of devourers is considered to be a single spirit with a shared Will based on the size of the school. A small school has Will 3, while a large school has Will 5.

Once released, the devourer swarm immediately moves to attack the nearest spirit in the vicinity. At the start of each round, the devourer swarm makes a contested Will roll against the spirit they are attacking. If the devourer swarm wins, the spirit suffers -1 Will. If the spirit wins, the devourer swarm suffers -1 Will. Each time the devourer swarm loses a point of Will, their numbers decrease as some members of the school dissipate into ectoplasmic mist. If the spirit the devourer swarm is attacking is reduced to Will 0 or less, it is completely consumed and the devourer swarm gains +1 Will. A devourer swarm cannot exceed Will 6. Once the spirit they are attacking has been destroyed, the devourer swarm will attack the next closest spirit until it has consumed every spirit in the area or is recalled.

The swarm’s Haunt is its ectohabitat.

### Psychoactive Photo Plates

Cost: £1 each

Psychoactive photo plates, or aetherplates, are alchemically treated film plates designed for use in ordinary cameras. Attempts to capture

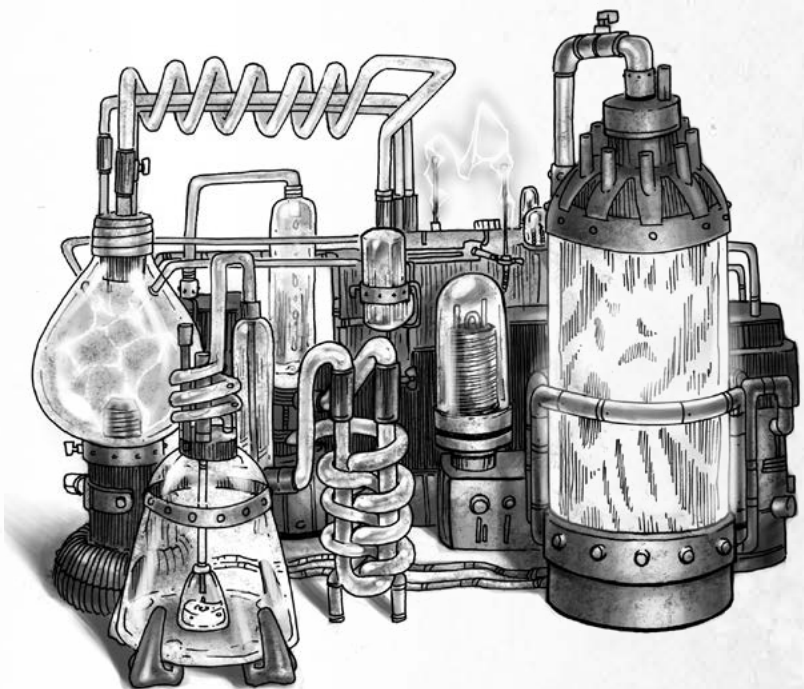
aetheric images date from the 1940s, but it was not until 1994 that aetherplate photography advanced to the degree that it reliably produced clear photos of spirits. The technology required a fairly long exposure—thirty seconds—and required minimal physical light for optimum clarity, but was nonetheless a landmark event. The original aetherplate technology has since been improved upon and diversified considerably. Necessary exposure times are now on par with visual-light photography, and the captured images are remarkably clear.

Unlike ordinary film, which sometimes records spectral activity, the emulsion used on an aetherplate is psychoreactive and always records spirits present when the photograph is taken. Most photographers that use aetheric plates use psychoscopic goggles to set up their shots. The images recorded on the plates are much crisper and distinct than what can generally be viewed through psychoscopic goggles, often astounding even the photographer once they are developed.

### Psychocondenser

Cost: £25

A device for the distillation of spirits, the psychocondenser is a five-foot tangle of delicate glasswork and metal tubing surrounding a modified essence chamber. When this device is activated, the field within the essence chamber is strengthened and constricted and the spirit is subjected to rapid pulses of aetheric energy, forcing the generation of ectoplasm. Activation of a solenoid wrapped around the chamber forces the semimaterialized spirit into the body of the condenser, where it is further concentrated, filtered, and mixed with a number of alchemical compounds. Ultimately, it is collected drop by drop in a crystal vessel beneath the terminus of the condenser. The resulting spiritual distillate can be used in a number of psychoactive drugs (see pages 178 – 181).



There must be a spirit in the essence chamber to activate this device. Operating the device requires a successful Parapsychology Skill roll (DR 14). If the roll fails, the process is disturbed or the psychocondenser is damaged before the process is complete; the spirit will be destroyed and the resulting fluid useless. On a successful roll, the potency of a distillate is determined by the Will of the spirit that was distilled. For example, if an alchemist distills a spirit with Will 3, the resulting distillate will be Will 3. Apparitions are too weak to distil, and any attempt to do so destroys the spirit without providing a usable distillate. The entire process takes 1 hour x the spirit's Will to complete. The spirit is always destroyed as a side effect of this process.

Spiritual distillates suffer a form of dissolution that weakens their potency over time. After each month, a distillate's Will is reduced by 1. By the time the distillate's Will has been reduced to 0, it has lost all potency and is no longer of use in alchemical preparations. Once processed into an alchemical solution, the distillate is no longer subject to this dissolution.

The distillate itself is an odourless, oily, milky-pale substance. Coming into flesh contact with the substance causes severe chills and nausea in the living but has no effect on half-lifers. Any living creature that ingests this substance before it is synthesized into an alchemical compound must make a Vitality roll (DR 10 + the Will of the distilled spirit). If the roll succeeds, the character suffers chills for d5 hours. During this time, he suffers -1 on Vitality, Coordination, and combat rolls. If the roll fails, the character becomes seriously ill for 2d5 hours. During this time his Vitality, Coordination, and Will are reduced to 1.

### Psychoscopic Goggles

Cost: £20

Psychoscopic goggles are an instrument for optically observing supernormal phenomena. The lenses of the goggles, chambers filled with an aetherically active fluid and held in place behind specially treated and shaped glass, allow a wearer to see auras and spirits. The invention of the device in 2058 by little-known inventor Dr. Wesley Arkwright led to a craze in ghost spotting that persists to this day. Psychoscopic goggles are used by enthusiasts, parapsychologists, ghost hunters, and security professionals on the lookout for astrally projecting spies.

A character wearing the goggles can see spirits whether they are visibly manifesting or not. Spirits that are not visibly manifesting will appear immaterial, shadowy, and indistinct. Recognizing a spirit that is not manifesting or noticing small details pertaining to a spirit's form requires a successful Wit roll (DR 11). A character wearing psychoscopic goggles can clearly see visibly manifesting spirits as if he had the Second Sight power Ghost Sight (see page 154).

While wearing the goggles, the character perceives auras as if he had the Extrasensory Perception power Aura Sight (see page 77).

A character wearing psychoscopic goggles while attempting to perform psychic grading (see page 61) gains +2 on his Skill roll.

While wearing psychoscopic goggles, the character's ability to perceive the physical world is diminished and he suffers -2 on ranged attack and vision-based Wit rolls pertaining to the physical world.

### Rictus

Cost: £60

The rictus is a delicate, psychoresonant mask of lead crystal and gold framing painstakingly crafted in the shape of a skull. The structure of the mask is designed to warp aetheric energies, and when worn by a living subject, alchemical treatments on the mask cloak any psychical emanations issued as well as the wearer's aura. As a result, both the mind and psychic impression of anyone wearing the mask are shielded from view or detection.

The origin of the rictus can be traced to the New Society for Psychical Research's investigations into "pre-Columbian Mesoamerican" crystal skulls. With access to the British Museum's collection, Society researchers conducted extensive experiments on these artefacts and concluded their origins fraudulent. Instead, they likely originated in the nineteenth century. The Society traced the skull's creation to the workshops of Idar-Oberstein, Germany. The quartz imported there from Brazil before the Plague shares unmistakable traits with that used in the skull. However, despite their dubious origins, the investigation discovered that the skulls themselves gave off a peculiar psychical resonance plainly detectable with an aetheric monitor. Further research determined that the skulls reverberated with low-frequency-aether radiation, sending ripples through the spirit world around them. While the skulls themselves proved little more than curiosities, they opened a door to a new field of psychical study. Realizing the implications of their findings, no papers were published on the subject lest the Prussians realize the potential treasure trove of occult technology under their very noses. Instead, copious handwritten notebooks were exchanged between Society members on both sides of the Atlantic.

Years later, pioneering American inventor and psychical researcher Adelaide Mather, created a device that could absorb and reflect psychical energy. Inspired by Mixtec ritual masks, Mather based her work on the British Society's findings. Her first masks were successful in deflecting the low-frequency-aether energies of New York's Tesla array permeating her workshop. Encouraged, she and a small team of assistants refined her invention, making minute alterations to angles of the glass fittings and experimenting with all manner of psi-dampening alchemical solutions. By 2049, her team had succeeded in perfecting the rictus. Their hard work led to no fewer than seventy-three patents. However, before she could appreciate her success, Adelaide Mather suddenly vanished, only to surface months later in the Hudson River. Her offices ransacked, investigators concluded that she had fallen victim to particularly vicious industrial espionage. The resulting attention made her work an overnight sensation, and her heirs made a small fortune supplying rictus masks to the British and American governments. However, it was no surprise to anyone when Prussian agents were captured with a copy of the mask in Manchester in 2062. Though they attempted to destroy the device, enough remained to discern its function and likely origin.

Now a common tool in the arsenal of the world's intelligencers, the rictus is used to hide from clairvoyant as well as spectral eyes. Anyone wearing a rictus mask is completely invisible to both spirits and all methods of extrasensory detection. A character wearing a rictus is completely immune to all non-psychokinetic psychic powers and automatically wins all contested Will rolls to

resist the effects of psychical powers and spectral Manifestations. However, the mask renders the wearers personal corruption plain to see. The glass of the mask only remains clear if the wearer has no Corruption Paths higher than 1. If his highest path has a rating of 2 or 3, the mask becomes a misted grey. The greater the wearer's corruption, the darker the mask becomes.

### The Shadow Caster

Cost: £250

This lantern-like device allows the consciousness of a user to separate from his physical body and manoeuvre across the physical landscape as a shadow entity. Though the peculiar qualities of this device have not yet been fully explained by modern science, it is certain the shadow entity is an imperfect astral projection (see pages 80 – 81).

The shadow entity is not invisible. It may, however, camouflage itself amongst other "natural" shadows or by bending its shape around a physical object, which causes a subtle darkening of its colour. The shadow entity is highly malleable and can change its shape at will.

The shadow entity's abilities are limited to observation, and it is "terrestrially bound." The shadow entity may move at great speeds over limitless distances but must remain in contact with a physical object or the ground. For example, if the shadow entity comes upon a chasm, it must creep down one side, traverse the bottom, and then ascend the opposite side in order to cross it.

The shadow entity can get lost on its journey. If such a thing happens, the shadow entity can make a Will roll (DR 14) to home in on its physical body and instinctively return to it. If the roll succeeds, the shadow entity knows which direction to go to return to its body. If the roll fails, the entity cannot immediately sense its body but can try again after one minute.

While the shadow entity is away from its physical body, the physical body remains in a trance-like state. The character cannot naturally awaken himself during this time and will only wake up if the shadow entity returns to the body, power to the shadow caster is interrupted, or if the character's physical body suffers harm. In the case of either power interruption or injury waking the character, a harsh reunion occurs (see below).

While separated from his body, a character can be affected by the Empathy, Extrasensory Perception, Prescience, and Telepathy powers. The shadow entity can be detected by psychics using Aura Scan, Aura Sight, Empathic Scan, Mind Scan, Omniscience, or Revelation. The shadow entity can be affected by the Second Sight powers Death Speaker, Ghost Sight, and Impression as if it were a spirit. While under the effects of this device, the ranges of a psychic or medium's powers are based on the location of the shadow entity rather than his body's location, and he uses his powers as if he were physically in the location of the shadow entity.

The shadow caster consists of the lantern and the back-screen. The lantern itself is a hexagonal metallic chamber supported by a tripod base. A multifaceted prismatic lens emits an amber glow upon activation. The back-screen resembles ordinary canvas but is crisscrossed internally by a network of copper wiring. It may be rolled and supported as a normal screen, but it is heavier.

Upon activation, a charge builds up within the lantern device (accompanied by a high-pitched, tinny sound) as the glow slowly increases. The user feels tingly and disoriented as nausea sets in. When the internal capacitor reaches its limit, it discharges a blinding flash that splits the shadow entity from the user, throwing it onto the back-screen where it is now free to move about separately. The physical body collapses upon separation. The lantern continues to emit a dull glow that maintains the separation.

The lantern can continuously operate for up to two hours at a time before losing its charge. While exposed to the city's Tesla array, the lantern completely recharges over four hours.

A harsh reunion occurs spontaneously if the lantern loses its charge while in operation, if the user's physical body is harmed, or if the lantern is destroyed or de-activated during use. A harsh reunion results in the shadow entity being thrown immediately back into its physical body, which causes physical distress including vomiting, spontaneous discharge of bowels and bladder, and a headache of monumental proportions. The character suffers -2 on Attribute and Skill rolls for 6d10 minutes.

This is avoided by a soft reunion, in which the shadow entity willfully returns to its physical body under its own cognition and in due time.

Any feelings, sensations, or memories experienced during the "cast" remain intact upon reunion.

### Soul Harvester

Cost: £100+ (highly illegal)

+£25 extra maiden cartridge

+£5 extra psychical filter

This device of unnatural cruelty was originally developed by the Prussian government for use on criminals whose offenses were too hideous to warrant a simple death sentence. When employed, the soul harvester's dual prongs are stabbed into the eyes and the aetheric essence is sucked out and safely stored in a maiden cartridge for further use. Though the device is highly illegal, a few have made their way to the metropolis. It is rumoured that both Special Branch and *Lux ex Morte* have access to these horrific machines.

The soul harvester consists of three sections, each composed of various sub-sectioned parts, that all work in conjunction to perform the gruesome task at hand. First, two sharp prongs of chambered glass set into a brass socket with a large wooden handle make up the working end of the device. A gauge located at the base of the prongs displays the LFTR (Life Force Transfer Rate), which is controlled by means of a dial at the bottom edge of the gauge. The "inter-orbital lock," located on the underside of the gauge, consists of two nail-like studs that deploy horizontally, piercing the bilateral medial orbital bones, when a pressure-plate contacts the bridge of the nose. This lock secures the device during the inevitable thrashing and bleeding that result from the insertion of the main prongs.

Second, the transport tube extends from the base of the handle to the main chamber box. This channel is a coiled passage designed to slow down the spirit matter flowing through it.

Third, the chamber box houses the main power controls, the maiden cartridge, and the psychical filter. The transport tube connection leads directly into the filter, which serves to remove psychical impurities, such as madness or hypnotic control, from the spirit. The tainted residue is directed into a dump tube where it congeals into sludge. If the dump tube is not replaced as needed, the psychical filter will still function, but the transfer rate will be exponentially increased, risking damage to the unit.

This tainted sludge has a tremendous black-market value for its use in a variety of nefarious purposes. For this reason, the Prussian government ordered a counter to be installed into the chamber box to record the captured impurity levels. This psychometer, however, can be altered by one with the proper skills and motivation.

The final destination of the spirit is the maiden cartridge, a coffin-shaped metal canister fitted with nine prongs upon its crown end, much like the connector pins on traditional vacuum tubes. The maiden cartridge is essentially a modified essence chamber used to contain the harvested spirit. A thin brass frame affixed to its front holds a card containing identifying information. The maiden cartridge is durable and may be re-used after purging.

Extracting a soul takes three terrible minutes if the device has recently been serviced or double that time if it has not. Operating the device requires a Parapsychology Skill roll (DR 14). If the roll succeeds, the soul is extracted. If the roll fails, the victim soon expires but too little of his spiritual essence is preserved for any use.

The extracted spirit is a ghost (see pages 142 – 149) with a Will equal to that of the character from whom the soul was stripped.

The chamber box as a whole is rather heavy but surprisingly compact for its abilities. Prussian Totenfresser interrogators carry these devices on a shoulder strap with the skewer handle holstered. Extra maiden cartridges may be worn bandolier style, while extra dump tubes are carried within a padded pouch.

Servicing the device requires ten minutes and a successful Parapsychology Skill roll (DR 11). The psychical filter and dump tube must be replaced after five extractions to keep the device in working condition.

### **Telekinetic Lock**

**Cost:** £15+

Telekinetic locks are brass and steel constructions lacking a keyhole or obvious moving parts of any kind. These devices can only be opened or locked by individuals possessing the Telekinesis Devotion, and only then if the individual knows the proper order to depress and move the tumblers.

The most sophisticated telekinetic locks are designed and assembled by telekinetic locksmiths. These devices are virtually seamless and are neither welded nor screwed together. Some locks may also require the application of a great deal of telekinetic force to open them.

Opening a simple telekinetic lock requires a character with the Telekinesis Devotion to use Telekinetic Hand, Greater

Manipulation, Mass Manipulation, or Total Control while the lock is in the Range of the power and succeed in a Wit roll. Most locks require a successful roll versus DR 14, but more complex locks could require a roll against DR 16 or greater. Each attempt to open a telekinetic lock takes five minutes.

### **Transaetheric Receiver**

**Cost:** £35

+10s head set

+8s antenna

Radio operators have long complained of aetheric or “spirit” static. Attributed to low-level supernatural manifestations, this phenomenon generally takes the form of guttural moans, indistinct whispers, or repetitious murmuring picked up on radio receivers. By the end of the Reclamation, parapsychologists had developed methods of isolating and boosting these phantom signals as a means of listening in on the denizens of the spirit world. The transaetheric receiver represents the culmination of their research: a device specifically attuned to the reception of spectral communications that allows an operator to hear discarnate voices otherwise undetectable to the human ear. Often, these communications are little more than the mutterings of mindless spirits. The messages received by the device are often indistinct and difficult to understand. Furthermore, these devices are notoriously hard to operate and must be constantly adjusted to maintain a steady signal.

Transaetheric receivers generally look like man-portable radio receivers of brass and polished hardwood covered in a dizzying array of knobs and switches. While receiving spectral signals, the inner workings of the apparatus glows with a flickering blue light. These devices are quite heavy and can weigh ten pounds or more.

A character operating the transaetheric receiver must make a Parapsychology Skill roll (DR 11) to establish a signal. If the roll fails, the operator loses the signal and the device only picks up static. If the roll succeeds, the receiver will pick up the sounds made by any spirit within ten feet of the device x the spirit’s Will. If the transaetheric receiver has an antenna, this range is doubled.

The character must make additional Parapsychology Skill rolls every thirty seconds to retain the signal. If a roll fails, he loses the signal but can attempt to re-establish it after thirty seconds of tuning. After succeeding in an operation roll, the character can attempt a second Parapsychology roll (DR 14) to increase the quality of the reception. If this roll fails, the character loses the signal and receives only static until the signal is re-established. If the roll succeeds, the signal quality is increased and remains clear as long as the character continues to succeed in his operation rolls every thirty seconds.

The operator can also intentionally tune out the voices of weaker spirits with a successful Parapsychology Skill roll (DR 14), thus isolating the strongest voice in the area of reception. If the character loses the signal, he must retune the device after re-establishing the signal.

The use of a psychical power within one hundred feet of the device x the level of the power causes horrendous feedback that drowns out spectral emissions. The signal is lost and cannot be re-established as long as the psychical power is maintained within this area.

## Transaether Luminator

Cost: £20

The transaether luminator is a complex gyroscopic device for the viewing of spectral phenomena. The machine was conceived by the eccentric French inventor Célestin du Mal before his imprisonment by order of *le Roi d'Or* in 2062. The ingenious device is made up of seven concentric brass plates that each spin on a separate axis. Lacking any internal motor or mechanized parts, the transaether luminator is operated by rapidly turning two or more of its plates, sending the device into wild and seemingly random gyrations.

Within moments it begins to build a crackling, electrically charged ectoplasmic field that rapidly grows to thirty feet in diameter. This field at first appears as a whiff of smoke emanating from within the device but soon takes on the character of a thick, gray mist or dense fog reeking of ozone. The ectoplasmic field is internally lit by a pale, flickering glow punctuated by electrical flashes.

As the mist fills the available area, spectral entities within the area become visible to the naked eye whether or not they are manifesting visibly. The spirits take shape from the mists and are obviously insubstantial and not entirely distinct. For an observer to recognize a spirit he has seen before or notice small details pertaining to a spirit's visible form requires a successful Wit roll (DR 11).

A single spin of the device is sufficient for ten minutes of continuous operation. Stopping the operation of this sensitive device before this time has elapsed without damaging it requires a successful Coordination roll (DR 14). A character attempting

to do so without aetherically grounded gloves will suffer a +5 electrical shock damage roll (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 178 – 179). If the roll fails, the device will be damaged and must be repaired before it will operate again. Repairing the device requires ten minutes and a successful Parapsychology Skill roll (DR 14). If the roll to repair the item fails, the character may attempt the roll again after an additional ten minutes of labour.

## Transpsychic Resonator

Cost: £150

The transpsychic resonator (TPR) is a device for boosting a psychic's raw power. The device works by identifying the resonance of a psychical emanation originating in the mind of a user and amplifying it, resulting in an increased intensity of psychical power. During initial field tests, it was also discovered that the device is capable of creating apparitions (see pages 140-141).

The TPR is a small brass cylinder, no larger than a child's fist, built around a glass chamber. A series of delicate metal prongs protrude from one end of the device and run down the side of the cylinder, rising intermittently in curving points. The glass chamber at the centre of the device holds an alchemical solution that acts as a resonator and a power source. The device activates when it presses into the skin at the back of the subject's neck. Even this slight pressure will fully deploy the prongs, allowing the curved metal to fix into the flesh and hold the TPR in place. Firm pressure applied to the top of the device will retract the prongs, allowing the device to be safely removed.



While using this device, a psychic's Will is considered to be two higher when determining the Range of psychological power, making a damage roll for a psychological power, and when making a contested Will roll against a Subject to resolve the effects of a psychological power.

When a character using this device activates a psychological power, he must immediately make a psychic control check (see pages 65-66). If the control check fails, the character falls unconscious for d10 minutes. During this time, the character cannot be awakened by any means. If the character rolls a critical success or failure, every living and half-living character within twenty feet of the psychic falls unconscious for d10 minutes. If the character rolls a critical failure, he must also make another Will roll versus DR 16; if that roll fails, the character's Latent Insanity becomes a permanent chronic Mental Disorder, and he must choose a new Latent Insanity.

When a character, whether psychic or not, focuses his mind on a memory or object while using this device, there is a chance an apparition will be created. The character makes a Will roll (DR 20). If the roll fails, nothing happens. If the roll succeeds, an apparition is created. The new apparition will have a Will equal to that of its creator. The apparition's behaviour and methods of manifestation are determined by the Narrator.

## Aether Weapons

### *Carpe Spiritus*

The *carpe spiritus* is a galvanic weapon that causes no physical damage but instead creates a low-frequency aetheric disturbance with a blast radius of five feet. Resembling a cross between a sextant and a cannon, this heavy device fires an ectoplasmic "net" that ensnares aetheric entities by seeding them with ectoplasm. The ectoplasm propagates on contact and temporarily solidifies all aetheric matter it hits. Spirits in this area are effectively forced into a paralyzing ectoplasmic "shell": they become visible but cannot move or speak. Those affected remain upright or floating in the air. These spirits cannot be harmed or damaged in any way. It is extremely disturbing to be in a room full of these spirits-made-flesh, and one must exercise some amount of fortitude and willpower to move amongst them.

**Cost:** £75

**Ammo Cost:** Extra galvanic capacitor £10

**Skill:** Rifle

**Ammo:** 4

**Maximum Range:** 60 feet

**Damage Modifier:** No damage

**Features:** Any spirits within the weapon's five-foot blast radius must make a Will roll (DR 16). A spirit that fails this roll suffers corporeal transformation and takes a solid form, gelatinous and cool to the touch. A spirit that succeeds still becomes visible for d10 minutes, though it does not take on a solid form.

The transformation does not last for very long (several minutes at best, depending on the assorted strengths of the trapped entities), so it is advised that one acts quickly and exits before they revive. Spirits with Will 3 or less are affected for 2d10 + 5 minutes. Spirits with Will 4 or 5 are affected for 2d10 minutes. Spirits with Will 6 or more are affected for d10 minutes. A spirit can take no action while suffering corporeal transformation.

Any character firing the *carpe spiritus* without aetherically grounded gloves will suffer a +5 electrical shock damage roll (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 178 - 179).

While within the confines of the metropolis, the *carpe spiritus* regains one charge every half hour.

Any blow to the weapon will misalign its fragile aiming components. Any attack with a misaligned weapon suffers -3 to the attack roll. The weapon can be realigned by a character with the proper equipment succeeding in a Galvanics Skill roll (DR 14). If the weapon suffers any serious damage, it will be rendered inoperable until repaired. Repairing the weapon requires the proper tools and a successful Galvanics Skill roll (DR 16).

### Grenade, Aetherpulse

The aetherpulse grenade is a finely crafted orb of glass and brass clockwork. Once wound and its mechanism released, the device detonates, generating a harmless but powerful pulse of aetheric energy capable of briefly disrupting psychological activity within a five-foot radius.

These weapons are commonly issued to the detectives of Psi Crime.

**Cost:** £5

**Ammo Cost:** None

**Skill:** Thrown Weapon

**Ammo:** None

**Range:** Thrower's Vitality x 10 feet

**Damage Modifier:** No damage

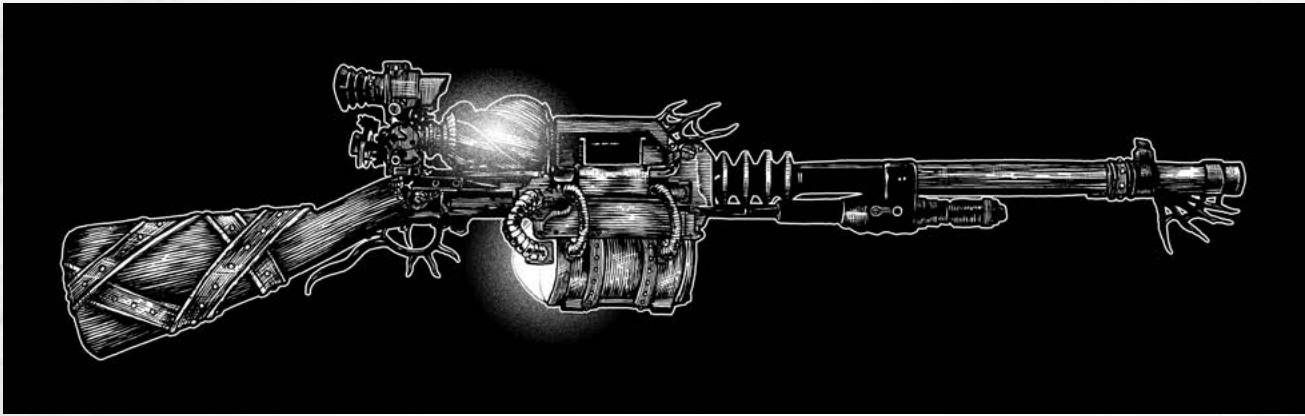
**Features:** The pulse causes no physical damage, but psychics and spirits in the affected area must make Will rolls (DR 16). If the roll succeeds, nothing happens. If a psychic fails this roll, he gains one Instability Point and all psychological powers he is currently maintaining immediately expire. If a spirit fails this roll, it suffers -1 Will and any powers of Manifestation it is using immediately end.

These devices must be wound before being activated. Winding an aetherpulse grenade takes one action. Once wound, it can remain primed until detonated.

### Klöchmann-Adler Hellebore

The Hellebore is a nightmarish psychological weapon powered by the essence of an imprisoned spirit. When the Hellebore is discharged, a portion of the spirit's form is painfully expended, unleashing a torrent of psychologically charged ectoplasm from the barrel. Erupting with a force that is part physical and part aetheric, those hit by the blast suffer numbing waves of pain, sorrow, terror, and nausea as the psychological poison voraciously works its way through their flesh, withering tissue and choking the life out of its victims. Most succumb quickly with a dreadful death rattle, while survivors are left infirm, as if their bodies were ravaged by unnatural disease.

Developed in Geneva by the famed Austrian parapsychologist and inventor Amadeus Adler, the Hellebore was later produced in small quantities by the Klöchmann Arms Company of London. Adler had sought to create an aetherpulse weapon capable of annihilating spectral matter. Instead, he fashioned one of the most psychologically devastating weapons ever created. Immediately realizing the potential for his device, Adler sold it at auction to the Ozymandias Group, a society of esoteric researchers with ties to the British Secret Intelligence Bureau. A short time later, Klöchmann



Arms began production of the weapon for the British government. Though the weapon was intended only for use in clandestine military operations abroad, a small number of Hellebores slipped into the hands of the public following the bankruptcy the Klöchmann Arms Company in 2091. The weapon has become a favourite of anarchist cells operating throughout the metropolis.

The Hellebore is a galvanic rifle with a stout barrel. Mounted atop the weapon's black lacquered stock is the void lock, a modified essence chamber (see page 166). Integrated into the barrel of the Hellebore is the cenotaph, a crude aetheric converter that processes and focuses the aetheric energy drawn from the spirit in the void lock into the force that constitutes the Hellebore's "ammunition." When the Hellebore is fired, the resulting ectoplasmic blast generates a mind-splitting wail and a sickly green electrical charge that dances down the barrel of the cannon.

**Cost:** £100+ (highly illegal)

**Ammo Cost:** Replacement void lock £25+

**Skill:** Rifle

**Ammo:** See below

**Maximum Range:** See below

**Damage Modifier:** No damage

**Features:** This weapon can only be fired while there is a spirit contained in the void lock.

The maximum range of the Hellebore is equal to the spirit's current Will x 30 feet.

Hellebore attacks do not suffer range penalties.

On a hit, the target and anything or anyone within five feet of him are covered in thick, galvanically charged, ectoplasmic sludge. The sludge pulses for several seconds with a sickly inner light before dissipating into thin air along with portions of sublimated flesh. Should the blast miss, its target may still be within the weapon's blast radius at the Narrator's discretion.

Living and half-lifer characters hit by the blast must make both a Vitality and a Will roll. The DR for these rolls are 10 + the contained spirit's current Will. The undead are not affected by the Hellebore. Whether he passes or fails the rolls, a psychic hit by this weapon gains one Instability Point.

If a character fails both rolls, he dies of fright and organ failure following a gurgling death rattle.

If the character fails the Vitality roll but passes the Will roll, his body is wracked by the spectral poison. He can do nothing for 2d10 minutes but contort with pain and nausea. Afterward, he suffers -3 on Vitality, Coordination, and initiative rolls for d5 days.

If the character fails the Will roll, but passes the Vitality roll, he is paralyzed with an overwhelming sense of fear and sorrow for 2d10 minutes. During this time he can do nothing but weep. Afterwards, he suffers -3 on Wit, Will, and initiative rolls for d5 days.

If the character fails either roll critically and survives, he suffers permanent damage from the attack. The character's hair may turn white or fall out, or he may be unnaturally aged or suffer a degenerative ailment from which there is no recovery. The character permanently suffers -1 Vitality or Will, coinciding with whichever roll he failed. This penalty cannot reduce the character's Attribute below 1.

After the effects of the attack have been determined, the contained spirit suffers -1 Will. If the spirit is reduced to Will 0, it is completely consumed by the Hellebore.

Any character firing the Hellebore without aetherically grounded gloves suffers a +5 electrical shock damage roll (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, pages 178 - 179).

This weapon draws its energy from the spirit contained within the void lock and so can be fired outside the range of the city's Tesla array. The void lock itself is powered by aetheric energy siphoned from the spirit.

Any blow to the weapon will misalign its fragile aiming components. Any attack with a misaligned weapon suffers -3 to the attack roll. The weapon can be realigned by a character with the proper equipment succeeding in a Galvanics Skill roll (DR 14). If the weapon suffers any serious damage, it will be rendered inoperable until repaired. Repairing the weapon requires the proper tools and a successful Galvanics Skill roll (DR 16).

### Lockhart Aetherpulse Cannon

The Lockhart aetherpulse cannon is a sophisticated clockwork rifle of brass and steel. It requires no ammunition and is instead prepared for firing by turning the time wheel, a crank set into the stock of the rifle behind the trigger that generates a concentrated field of aetheric mist that remains trapped within the rifle until the weapon is fired.

Once discharged, the aether mist exits the aether cannon with a muffled pop in the form of a slow-moving pellet trailed by wisps of vapour. On contact with a solid object, the pellet expands into a cloud of ectoplasmic mist five feet in diameter. While physically harmless, the chilling fog disrupts psychological activity and spectral manifestations.

**Cost:** £50

**Ammo Cost:** None

**Skill:** Rifle

**Ammo:** 1

**Maximum Range:** 150 feet

**Damage Modifier:** No damage

**Features:** Winding up the Lockhart aetherpulse cannon takes one action. Once wound, the weapon can remain primed for one hour, after which time, the mist generated completely dissipates.

On a hit, the target and anything or anyone within 5 feet of him are caught within a field of ectoplasmic mist. Should the attack miss, its target may still be within the weapon's effected area at the Narrator's discretion.

The Lockhart aetherpulse cannon causes no physical damage, but psychics and spirits in the affected area must make Will rolls (DR 20). If the roll succeeds, nothing happens. If a psychic fails this roll, he gains one Instability Point and all psychological powers he is currently maintaining immediately expire. If a spirit fails this roll, it suffers -1 Will and any powers of Manifestation it is using immediately end.

## Medical Equipment

### Psychosurgery Operating Kit

**Cost:** £10

This fine surgical set includes all the tools required for psychosurgical operations. A full set of instruments made from polished steel, brass, and ivory or horn come encased in a brass-bound, hardwood, velvet-lined box divided into a multitude of compartments. The set includes a trephine with detachable handle, a trepanning brace, a scalpel, a craniotomy saw, gigli wire saw, scissor-handled spreaders, and two raspatories.

## Psychoactive Drugs

### Bastion

**Formulation:** Ingested or injected

**Substance Type:** Alchemical solution

**Appearance:** Clear solution or pills

**DR:** 16

**Material Cost:** 10s

**Production Time:** 4 hours

**Purchase Price:** £1/10s per dose

**Reaction Time:** d5 minutes

**Duration:** 60 + 3d10 minutes

**Effect:** Bastion is a powerful alchemical agent that protects the mind against psychological tampering. A psychic who attempts to mentally manipulate an individual under the effects of bastion will hit an insurmountable barrier, likely earning a good headache for his troubles.

While affected by bastion, a character automatically wins all contested Will rolls to resist the effects of psychological powers. A psychic who attempts to make a contested Will roll against the affected character gains one Instability Point. While under the effects of bastion, a character cannot use his psychological powers.

**Alterations:** None

### Deathlace

**Formulation:** Injected

**Substance Type:** Alchemical solution

**Appearance:** Clear, oily liquid that glows ominously in the dark

**DR:** 16

**Material Cost:** £2 + the cost of obtaining a spiritual distillate

**Production Time:** 8 hours

**Purchase Price:** £10+ per dose (highly illegal)

**Reaction Time:** Instantaneous

**Duration:** 5 + d10 hours

**Effect:** Deathlace is alchemical poison made from a spiritual distillate (see Psychocondenser, pages 171 – 172). Considered to be among the cruellest mechanisms of revenge imaginable, the substance not only kills its victim but also creates an unnatural record of his death in the form of an apparition. The substance is highly illegal, expensive to produce, and in low demand, making it exceedingly rare even on the black market. When an alchemist capable of producing the substance can be found, the buyer must often wait for days while the poison maker gathers the necessary materials.

After being injected with deathlace, the victim will immediately begin to feel unnaturally cold. His lips will darken, and his eyes will begin to turn pale and milky. After an hour, his skin, slicked with sticky sweat, turns pale, and his breath becomes foul. When he breathes, his exhalation will be accompanied by chilling aetheric mist, the surest sign of deathlace poisoning.

The character makes a Vitality roll (DR 14) every thirty minutes until the poison's duration is reached. If the roll fails, the character suffers -1 Vitality as his flesh grows weaker and more translucent. If the character succeeds, his condition temporarily stabilizes. When the character is reduced to Vitality 0, his temperature drops dramatically and his mind is gripped by paranoia and terror. Until either the poison works its way out of his system or he dies, the character can do nothing but babble and weep silently. Should the character's Vitality be reduced to -1, he dies and spawns an apparition d10 hours later.

If the character survives, his flesh will begin to regain its natural colour and warmth after the poison has run its course. The character regains one point of Vitality for every twelve hours he remains in bed and does not exert himself in any way.

**Alterations:** An antidote can be produced at the time the poison is manufactured. To do so requires 10s in additional materials and a successful Alchemy Skill roll (DR 14). The antidote will only counteract the poison it was made from. Once the antidote is ingested, it completely reverses the effects of deathlace after d10 minutes.

### Harrower

**Formulation:** Injected

**Substance Type:** Alchemical solution

**Appearance:** Black, greasy liquid

DR: 16

Material Cost: 12s

Production Time: 8 hours

Purchase Price: £4 per dose

Reaction Time: Instantaneous

Duration: 6+ hours

**Effect:** Harrower is a loathsome anxiety-inducing drug that shakes an individual to his core. Stripping away all sense of wellbeing, the compound induces confusion, anxiety, paranoia, weariness, and agitation. Anyone living or half-living that is injected with this substance suffers an intolerable sense of misdirected loss, which preys on his senses and renders him exceptionally subject to suggestion.

While under the effects of harrower, the character suffers  $-2$  Will, cannot add his Concentration Skill to his Will rolls, and loses the Resolve Quality. A character cannot have his Will reduced to less than 1 as a result of Harrower.

After five hours, the effects of Harrower begin to wear off. After each additional hour, the character makes a Vitality roll (DR 14). If the roll succeeds, the effects of Harrower end. If the roll fails, he can roll again after an hour. The character gains a cumulative  $+1$  bonus on each subsequent roll until he succeeds in this roll. If the character receives another dose of harrower, he suffers its effects for another five hours before the drug begins to wear off again.

**Alterations:** None

### Nebuchadnezzar

Formulation: Injected

Substance Type: Alchemical solution

Appearance: Dull grey, cloudy liquid

DR: 16

Material Cost: £5 + the cost of obtaining a spiritual distillate

Production Time: 6 hours

Purchase Price: £25 per dose

Reaction Time: d5 days

Duration: See below

**Effect:** Nebuchadnezzar is a relatively inexpensive anti-aging substitute manufactured from a spiritual distillate (see Psychocondenser, pages 171 – 172). The substance has the effect of rapidly reversing the aging process and revitalizing the user, at least for a time. The downside of this treatment is that each subsequent injection requires ever greater quantities of the substance to achieve the same effect, and the risk of physical addiction is high. Should the character stop using this substance after developing a physical addiction, his body will rapidly consume itself.

When the character first uses this substance, it will reverse the effects of a number of years equal to the Will of the spirit that was used to create the distillate  $+ d5$  years. Nebuchadnezzar cannot reverse a character's age back past an effective age of twenty-five years. The reversal process takes d5 days to complete. During this time, the character will rapidly grow more youthful and physically strong.

A character can benefit from another dose of the substance as soon as the reaction time of the previous dose has passed. However, each subsequent dose reverses the aging process by one year fewer. For example, Nicci's character, Dr. Fell, has become

*quite obsessed with Nebuchadnezzar. On his fourth treatment, Dr. Fell injects a solution manufactured from a spirit that had Will 4 at the time of its distillation. Nicci rolls a d5 for the treatment, resulting in a 3. The solution reverses Dr. Fell's age by another 4 years (4 for the spirit's Will  $+ 3$  for the roll  $- 3$  for the three previous applications).*

A negative result does not age the character, but should the result of an injection ever be 0 or less, the character becomes physically addicted to the substance. The substance will no longer reverse the aging process, but so long as the character continues to take the drug weekly, he will not age further. After developing a physical addiction to Nebuchadnezzar, if the character does not use this substance at least once per week, his body rapidly ages d5 years. The effects of this addiction are as of yet completely incurable. For every ten years the character is aged by withdrawal from Nebuchadnezzar, he suffers  $-1$  Vitality, Coordination, or Wit. The Attributes affected are chosen by the controlling player. Should any of the character's Attributes be reduced to 0 or less as a result of this penalty, he dies.

In addition to the primary effects of Nebuchadnezzar, the substance also has a number of curious side effects. As a character uses the substance, his eyes, hair, and flesh will gradually lose their colour, a phenomena known as "paling." The paling effect is so pronounced in addicts that many appear to be albinos. The flesh of some addicts is known to take on a luminous quality not unlike fine marble.

During the duration of the age-reversal process following a Nebuchadnezzar injection, the affected character suffers  $-1$  on Vitality rolls to resist infection and illness. Additionally, during this time the character is considered to have the Good Tasting



Impediment (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 144) as animates are inexplicably drawn to the character above all others.

The severe effects of Nebuchadnezzar make it a drug of last resort, pursued by those desperate to cling to life at any price. London has seen the rise and fall of a small number of these men, mainly aristocrats of considerable age, who, having exhausted the possibilities of conventional anti-agapics, began use of this dark drug and used their family's wealth to purchase lives from London's slums to make the substance on which they depended.

**Alterations:** None

### **Psi Inhibitor**

**Formulation:** Ingested or injected

**Substance Type:** Alchemical solution

**Appearance:** Clear solution or pills

**DR:** 16

**Material Cost:** 3s (1 injection or 10 pills)

**Production Time:** 4 hours

**Purchase Price:** 15s (1 injection or 10 pills)

**Reaction Time:** Instantaneous (injected) or 3d10 minutes (pill)

**Duration:** 4+ hours

**Effect:** A psi inhibitor is an alchemical substance that temporarily shuts down the mind's ability to access psychical talents. While under the effects of the substance, a psychic's supernormal abilities are quietly suppressed. Clairvoyants, empaths, precogs, and telepaths under the effects of the drug describe an eerie silence descending over their supernormal senses and closing them off from the external world. Psychokinetics generally suffer severe agitation and paranoia until their talents are restored.

Many psychics become reliant on psi inhibitors to control their talents. Unable to discipline themselves, they become psychologically dependent on the drug to sleep or think straight. Many professional psychic consultants take psi inhibitors during their off hours to relax or to escape into the illusion of normalcy. Alienists throughout the metropolis prescribe psi inhibitors to psychic patients to reduce the impact of their powers on their daily lives, and Psychic Branch issues them to new recruits until they can learn to control their talents. Psychically talented employees may also be prescribed inhibitors at times of extreme stress or while under psychological review.

A character that receives a dose of a psi inhibitor loses all his Devotions for at least three hours. After three hours, the character's psychical powers slowly begin to re-emerge. After each additional hour, the character makes a Vitality roll (DR 14). If the roll succeeds, his powers return. If the roll fails, he can roll again after an hour. The character gains a cumulative +1 bonus on each subsequent roll until his powers are restored. If the character receives another dose of psi inhibitors, he loses his powers again for another three hours before the process of regaining his powers begins anew.

**Alterations:** There are a number of formulations of psi inhibitors on the market. The most powerful has a material cost of 10s, requires 8 hours to produce, and sells for £2/10s per injection. This substance shuts down a psychic's powers for at least eight hours, and he makes Vitality rolls to resist its effects against DR 16.

### **Requiem**

**Formulation:** Ingested

**Substance Type:** Alchemical solution

**Appearance:** Milky-gray, effervescent, odourless liquid

**DR:** 14

**Material Cost:** £5 + the cost of obtaining a spiritual distillate

**Production Time:** 8 hours

**Purchase Price:** £20+

**Reaction Time:** 2d10 minutes

**Duration:** 2 + d10 hours

**Effect:** Requiem is an alchemical solution made from a spiritual distillate (see *Psychocondenser*, pages 171 – 172) that gives the drinker insights into the psyche of the distilled spirit. The drinker temporarily gains the spirit's insights and fragmented memories. The effects of this substance can have a profoundly destabilizing effect on the imbiber's sanity, as he is forced to endure not only the spirit's earthly demise, shattered personality, and pathos, but also its eventual destruction through distillation.

After the reaction time has passed, the user must make a Will roll versus DR 14 + the distilled spirit's base Will. If the character succeeds, he endures the psychical ordeal without incident. If he fails, the character permanently suffers -1 Will and gains the chronic level of Shell Shock Mental Disorder (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 154).

On a critical failure, the spirit's essence overwhelms the character and takes over his body, completely annihilating the native consciousness. The spirit is effectively reborn in the character's body. Now a being of flesh, the spirit loses all powers of Manifestation. The spirit uses its Wit, Will, Intellect, and Charm and its new body's Vitality and Coordination. The spirit is not considered to be possessing the body and cannot be driven out of it.

Whether the character succeeded or failed the Will roll, he gains the spirit's memories and insights. In effect, while under the effects of this solution, the character knows what the spirit knew and can see things as the spirit would see them. Additionally, while under the effects of the solution, the character takes on the personality traits, mannerisms, and affectations of the spirit. The Narrator determines precisely how the character is affected by this solution.

**Alterations:** None

### **Revelation**

**Formulation:** Ingested

**Substance Type:** Alchemical solution

**Appearance:** Oily, dark liquid that gives off whiffs of vapour

**DR:** 14

**Material Cost:** 10s + the cost of obtaining a spiritual distillate

**Production Time:** 8 hours

**Purchase Price:** £4

**Reaction Time:** d5 minutes

**Duration:** 30 + 3d10 minutes

**Effect:** Synthesized from a spiritual distillate (see *Psychocondenser*, pages 171 – 172), this fast-acting alchemical solution allows the drinker to peer into the spirit world. While under the effects of this solution, a character can clearly see spirits that are visibly manifesting regardless of their current Will and can recognize individuals that are possessed by spirits on sight. Spirits that are not currently manifesting appear shadowy and virtually formless.

While affected by this solution, the physical world seems darker and less distinct. The character suffers -2 on Wit and rolls pertaining to vision in the physical world.

Additionally, while this solution works its way through the character's system, his flesh takes on a pale, luminous quality that glows faintly in darkness. This glow lasts for 20 + d5 hours. While the character is glowing, anyone targeting him with a ranged attack will not suffer the modifier for poor visibility (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 168).

**Alterations:** None

### Shroud

**Formulation:** Topical

**Substance Type:** Alchemical solution

**Appearance:** Dark, viscous oily ointment

**DR:** 16

**Material Cost:** £2 per application

**Production Time:** 2 hours

**Purchase Price:** £5 per application

**Reaction Time:** Instantaneous

**Duration:** 5 + d5 hours

**Effect:** Shroud is an alchemical ointment that masks a user from detection by spirits. This greasy, black paste is comprised of ash resulting from the destruction of a vampire, water, and various alchemical oils. The blend of oils unlocks the psychological properties of the ash, giving this compound its ability to disrupt contact with the spirit world. Most alchemists who manufacture shroud acquire vampiric ash through special contracts with the Office of Urban Defence.

The compound itself is very cold and unpleasant to the touch. Once applied to the skin, it takes on the appearance of dull, black-grey grease paint. Insuring good coverage over the body requires a user to spend at least five minutes applying the substance. Removing shroud is a somewhat messier affair that requires at least ten minutes. Even after the majority of the stuff has been removed, the user will not feel truly clean for days after.

Anyone covering eighty percent or more of their bodies with the stuff will become completely invisible to spirits. Should a spirit manage to use a Manifestation power on the affected character, the affected character automatically wins any contested Will rolls resulting from the Manifestation's use.

While affected by Shroud, a character with Second Sight cannot use any of her Second Sight powers.

**Alterations:** None

## Prosthetic Grafts

### Cryptor

**Cost:** £30

The cryptor, or spyder, is an experimental prosthetic device designed to nullify psychological influence over its owner. The segmented, brass cryptor is grafted to the base of the skull and runs halfway up the back of the head. Steel prongs running up the length of the device pierce its owner's skull and spinal column, giving the device the particularly menacing appearance of a large metallic insect gripping the back of the head.

Anytime a character with a cryptor is affected by Empathy, Telepathy, or vampiric mind control, the device sends a powerful jolt of electricity directly into the subject's brain. Though the results are terrifically unpleasant, the mental command is completely negated. At the time of the shock, the subject's face twitches or seizes uncontrollably for a few seconds, he must pass a Coordination roll (DR 14) or drop anything held in his hands, and he must forfeit one of his next actions. However, the power that triggered the device has no effect. Despite the obvious drawbacks of the device, the cryptor has already become popular among the dustmen hunting the vampires of the metropolis.

The cryptor is powered by London's Tesla array and has no effect while the character is outside the city.





# CHAPTER SIX: BEYOND THE SHROUD

*“The story had held us, round the fire, sufficiently breathless, but except the obvious remark that it was gruesome... as a strange tale should essentially be, I remember no comment uttered...”*

—Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*, 1898

London, 2105 AD is a world haunted not just by the spirits of the discarnate dead but also by the wounded minds of its populace. The threats presented by these disquiet presences can be subtle and insidious or violent and overt, but all create unique challenges for the Narrator and his players. This chapter offers advice and ideas for Narrators and players alike on integrating the Callings, equipment, and other new material from this book into your games of *Unhallowed Metropolis*. It also provides tools for Narrators to better use this book’s contents in crafting their stories and antagonists.

## Mortality, Morality, and the Discarnate

Much of the material within *Unhallowed Necropolis* focuses on the question of the afterlife and what its empirically provable existence means for the Neo-Victorians. For example, ghosts are proof of some existence after death, but it is an unsure one. Even the demonstrable proof of ghosts has failed to explain the ultimate fate of man after death. If anything, the fact that ghostly manifestations seem to conform to some poorly understood but scientifically measurable rules implies existentially dreadful consequences for all humanity. This is underscored by material in the book that references the use of spectral phenomenon as a potential source of fuel for physical industry. The Narrator should be prepared to examine his own feelings on the subject matter as he presents that material to his players.

From harmless apparitions that merely repeat their last moments to furious poltergeists capable of the most extreme violence, the Narrator should choose his ghostly antagonists with care. The player characters may themselves provide ample opportunities to introduce ghost-themed plots. It is a rare group of characters in *Unhallowed Metropolis* who do not have some blood on their hands, and there is no reason why their vanquished foes should gracefully accept their death. The Narrator should take care not to re-use this device regularly, but applied carefully, the spectral return of an enemy thought safely dead and buried can provide an excellent shock for the players.

Plots and campaigns that feature ghosts as enemies can be frustrating for unprepared players, though. If you are building a lengthy scenario around a ghostly nemesis, be sure to give your players opportunities to defeat its schemes, its Haunt, or even its living compatriots. Family members, enthralled mediums, and even mobs of cultists make good corporeal antagonists in a ghost-driven story. A variety of challenges will keep your players from becoming frustrated with an enemy they may not even be able to see, let alone meaningfully interact with. Alternatively, players portraying exorcists or parapsychologists will likely be disappointed if they do not have opportunities to flex their spiritual muscles over the course of play.

In a more complex manner, ghosts may only be one element of a story. The characters might begin an investigation into the murders of several individuals only to discover that the killer is a spirit or spirits. As their discoveries grow, they might find that what they initially thought to be a ghostly curse is, in fact, the work of a murderous medium who dispatches powerful spirits to do his bloody bidding.

Of course, ghosts need not be used exclusively as antagonists. A clever Narrator can use them in much the same way as flesh NPCs: as allies, informants, and peers. The dead may have motivations as complex as those of the living. Indeed, their desires may have motivations unknowable to those who do not inhabit their aetheric purgatory. Player characters may come to depend on the information and aid of a spirit as they would any other NPC. Indeed, some mediums and parapsychologists may cultivate a stable of spectral entities to aid them in their endeavours. Such assistants may be invaluable in helping your players uncover spectral clues in the course of their investigation. Players may even find themselves aiding the spirit of a murder victim in his vengeance by visiting bloody revenge upon his killers or seeing that they meet justice or political ruin.

As with any other NPC, consider the appearance of the ghosts in your campaign. The ways in which they manifest are important; character notes and even simple characteristics, like an associated drop in temperature or a mild frisson causing hairs to stand on end in their presence, can do much for helping your players make assumptions—erroneous or otherwise—about that ghost’s personality and intentions. Spirits that can be more directly perceived should be described with as much detail as any other character. Consider what you wish to convey in that description. Did your ghost die a tortured death? Are the implements of his demise spectrally recreated in chains, garrottes, or daggers in the back, or does his incorporeal form merely bear the marks of his wounds?

If the discarnate dead will be a major element of an ongoing campaign, take the time to talk with your players about this and suggest that some of them choose Callings that will allow them to engage your game’s material in the way you intend. Some players may well enjoy the challenge of playing characters with no direct means to combat ghosts, but even they will not want to be left out of all the action.

## A Discussion on New Callings

The Callings presented within this book all present their own challenges and opportunities for the player and Narrator alike. While the Callings of *Unhallowed Metropolis* are easily integrated into any game, some of the new Callings require certain contexts to be used to their full potential.



## Alienists

Players commonly choose to portray characters of this Calling because they are interested in exploring the limits of the human mind in one manner or another. The Narrator should provide these characters with opportunities for investigation suited to the particular strengths of a given Alienist.

Whole campaigns can readily be themed around an Alienist and his companions' quest to track a serial killer and the red herrings therein. A profiler working with Scotland Yard to find a killer may be lead into confusion by ambiguous evidence, real or planted, and by the prejudices of his culture. The Neo-Victorian preoccupation with class has caused more than one alienist to pause as his carefully built profile crumbles in the face of an uneducated shopkeeper who has evaded Scotland Yard for months or an aristocrat with a penchant for brutal physical violence. The best alienists revise their theories; the worst prosecute the innocent to maintain the validity of their hypotheses.

Other Alienists may be more concerned with the more literal depths of the human mind and seek to stymie the schemes of psychics or even to induce that gift in themselves or others. These Alienists might do well in campaigns focused on tracking and eradicating rogue psychics, or in psychic-heavy groups of PCs where they have ample opportunity to observe and experiment upon their companions. Furthermore, campaigns with PC psychics may benefit from the stabilizing influence of an Alienist. The Alienist's unique skills allow them to assist other characters' control checks, slowing the descent of these characters into madness, and to resist the effects of psychical powers when these characters lose control. Whatever the course of his studies, the Alienist should be provided the opportunities to exercise his special areas of investigative expertise.

Alienist NPCs can be useful contacts or clever enemies. A character with associates in the police force or academia might have reason to call upon an alienist for information on a murder or insight into the mind of a dangerous psychic. Alienists are uniquely suited to function as proprietors of mental institutions, psychic induction facilities, and the like. The PCs may be tasked with rescuing an unfortunate victim from one of these chambers of horror; a psychic PC may be an escapee, searching back through the fog of hypnotisms and surgeries to find their former jailer; or perhaps the PCs have all been committed forcibly, because they have been troublesome or because they will not be missed, and must find a way to escape.

## Exorcists

Uniquely among all Callings, the Exorcist is driven primarily by his faith and sense of morality. Though Exorcists traditionally deal with the expulsion of ghosts, they have access to a diverse set of abilities that can make them deadly fighters, fiery orators, or charismatic leaders of men. Faith may be out of fashion in Neo-Victorian London, but there are still true believers to be found. Exorcists can find themselves able to gather a significant following, especially among the middle and lower classes.

Most Exorcists in Neo-Victorian England are from the Anglican Church, which trains and authorizes exorcists within its hierarchy. Every diocese of the Church of England maintains

an exorcist team consisting of a senior priest and one or more subordinate exorcists, a medium, an alienist, a physician, and a research assistant. All exorcists are ordained clergy, but other team members may be laypeople. This team may be used as a framework for a group of PCs. Even Exorcists who work without the level of support offered by the church are often accompanied by bodyguards in the course of their duty, and interested players may wish to use the Undertaker Calling to build ecclesiastical muscle with training in the destruction of more corporeal manifestations of evil.

For Anglican and Catholic exorcists, the divine mandate and the necessities of politics may easily come into conflict. Anglican Exorcists can easily find favour among the Neo-Victorian aristocracy; consequently, a sincere Anglican Exorcist may have to deal with corruption within the ranks or interference from politically interested parties. Conversely, papal Exorcists are distrusted as spies. Some, particularly those actually involved in espionage, may attempt to conceal their affiliation with Rome, with potentially disastrous consequences if their duplicity is discovered. Exorcists who tend to upper-class congregations are likely to share the attitudes of their flock, and lower-class members of the church face challenges from their own hierarchy when attempting to requisition funds or influence on their behalf.

Exorcists may be of any faith. Within London's Chinese population, there are Buddhist and Taoist monastics gifted in dealing with "hungry ghosts." Jewish Exorcists may be Talmudic scholars, relying on ancient lore and ritual to discover the true nature of hauntings and drive out possessing spirits. Regardless of affiliation or origin, an Exorcist character should have some research behind it, and the basic tenets of belief and major rituals should be learned or created as part of developing the character's background.

Exorcist NPCs can make interesting antagonists. The political entanglements of the Anglican Church have lured power-hungry individuals into the clergy. A corrupt Anglican exorcist might possess secrets regarding a string of destructive hauntings or may be shielding the predatory spirit of an aristocrat to gain the favour of living members of the family. Zealous exorcists may expand their war against evil into unacceptable arenas. They may murder those they believe are corrupters of souls: dealers in fleshly corruption, promulgators of false faiths, and mediums whose interference prevents the departure of souls from this world.

## Mediums

Mediums provide a way for characters to touch the spirit world directly and *vice versa*. Unlike other Callings, Mediums have a constant, personal relationship with the spirit world, which gives them the ability to form alliances, even friendships, across the veil and to perceive things within the spirit world that might easily go unseen.

It is important for players to decide how the medium experiences her gift. Most mediums are charismatic individuals who enjoy being the centre of a *séance* and find the risks of their occupation thrilling. Others, quieter and more private, find the constant intrusions of the spirit world distressing and treat their Second Sight as a barely tolerated burden.

Mediums make valuable additions to campaigns with a heavy parapsychology element. No team of ghosthunters is complete without a medium, and many detectives will hire a medium for assistance in murder investigations. A medium skilled in entertainment and deception will be as much at home in a high-society ghost story as in a carnival setting exploring grift and tragedy in the slums.

The talent and position of a medium gives them unique opportunities for power and deceit, well meaning or otherwise. While there are numerous ways to detect the presence and magnitude of a spirit, if the spirit is not manifesting, it may be the case that no one but the medium is able to see or hear that entity. If there are no Devotions or devices in play that allow other PCs to directly share the medium's perceptions, and if communication with the medium's player is done privately in game (*via* notes or private conversation), the other PCs have only the medium's interpretation to rely upon and only the medium's word that the ghost's messages have been communicated faithfully. Mediums who permit channelling are considered more trustworthy, as this allows a ghost to speak directly to the world of the living; however, there is always a risk to the medium. Furthermore, a sceptical observer must consider the possibility that a channelling is merely a skilled performance.

Sham mediumship is naturally widespread. Much of it is benign chicanery, practiced by sympathetic-sounding artists for the benefit of the bereaved and the curious, in exchange for some minor emptying of well-lined pockets. Some of these performers may have genuine Second Sight, though few have powers as extensive as their reputations suggest, and all are willing to gild the truth in the interest of pleasing their benefactors. Others may be psychics rather than mediums. For example, a telepathic "medium" could pull information directly from the minds of his clients to inform his communications, cause hallucinations of ghostly "manifestations," or even alter the client's memory to make his performance more convincing after the fact. A fraudulent medium may easily find herself in an intractable situation after one lie too many.

## Parapsychologists

Parapsychologists are scientists, engineers, and technicians, who use knowledge and technology to perceive and affect the world beyond the veil. The Parapsychologist possesses no special gift, no active supernatural defences, no insight except that developed through years of study and experience. Parapsychologists are vulnerable, but with the use of novel technology, they can expand their abilities in directions inconceivable to those constrained by the nature of supernatural gifts.

A Parapsychologist character should be equipped appropriately for the power level of the campaign. In a character- and story-driven campaign, a Parapsychologist with basic equipment should be right at home in a PC group with Alienists, Detectives, Aristocrats, and a Medium or two. In a more combat-capable group, the Parapsychologist could be permitted access to heavy galvanic weaponry, if only to keep the character in one piece through episodes of inevitable violence.



As NPCs, parapsychologists make excellent plot hooks. Prone to membership in academic and philosophical organizations, they can provide contact with the Order of Reason, *Lux ex Morte*, Noctuary, or other occult societies. They may appear as representatives of a spectral elimination agency, seeking contractors for a particularly dangerous task, as psychical researchers troubled by a colleague's secrecy and erratic behaviour, or as aether-historians predicting the imminent awakening of a long-dormant spirit.

Parapsychologists may appear as antagonists in ghost-oriented campaigns. A spectral eliminations agent may have been subverted to the will of a powerful spectre, executing a series of murders and trapping the spirits to feed his ghostly master; a parapsychologist-turned-cultist may have begun using his skills to sabotage containment arrays, resulting in a plague of freed spirits. Alternately, the aethertech itself may provide the focus of the story. Perhaps the PCs must track down and stop a mad inventor who has been releasing malevolent aetheric devices into an unsuspecting population.

## Psychics

Psychic player characters can provide unique opportunities for storytelling. Prescient, Clairvoyant, Empathic, and Telepathic PCs are information-gathering engines, particularly at low levels of these Devotions. Storytelling with psychic characters will involve exposition of events that would be hidden from normal perception. The players may be able to observe scenes from points of view that would normally be impossible — from behind

the eyes of a NPC, inside an unreachable location, or forwards or backwards in time. The Narrator should be prepared to provide visions containing enough information to be useful but not give away the entire plot. Ideally, these supernormal flashes should raise as many questions as they answer. Restricting or over-expanding the point of view of these visions is one way of doing this.

Psychic player characters will also bring unique challenges to gameplay. Psychic abilities are powerful and can easily be game-changing, and the madness inherent to psychical power can very quickly turn a character into a liability for those around him. A clever Narrator can use Instability Points as psychological leverage, working with the player to determine a character-appropriate path into madness that will be both interesting and appropriately horrific.

Though the rules for Instability Points, Latent Insanity and Breakdowns work to mechanically describe the character's descent into insanity, the Narrator should not feel limited by these rules. Depending on the situation, it may sometimes be more effective for the Narrator to choose a character's newly acquired Mental Disorder. This is especially true for characters whose mental states are already highly deteriorated. Alternatively, this descent may be illustrated by vividly described events with little or no indication that they are, in fact, not real. This should naturally be tailored to the character's existing condition and will be better still if the hallucinations relate thematically to the story of your campaign. Optimally, players will ride out the descent into madness with inappropriate glee. Psychics are tremendously powerful characters, and it is appropriate for the Narrator to ensure that they pay the heavy price that the world of *Unhallowed Metropolis* requires of all its citizens.

Telepathy, in particular, affords the creative Narrator some unique opportunities to play with the expectations of his players. Though, as a powerful tool, it is best used sparingly. The upper levels of the Telepathy Devotion allow a psychic to radically and permanently alter the memories of a victim. Consider tying the presence of an antagonist telepath to some secondary, physical clue that the characters may attempt to discern. Perhaps the anarchist telepath stalking them cannot stop smoking a pipe of cherry-flavoured tobacco, providing the characters an opportunity to notice his presence, perhaps only after he's been about his business and gone on his way...

Like Telepathy, Empathy allows a level of control over the mental state of another person, but the empath is a more subtle creature than the telepath. The empath operates by manipulating the passions of his target, either during face-to-face interactions or unseen at a distance. If the empath is subtle, it may be some time before the players even realize that their hearts and minds are being manipulated—rolls to resist the empath's tinkering should appear to the players as normal Will-based social contests or as struggles against their own naturally occurring emotions. If the empath has abandoned subtlety, or if the players are in pursuit of a powerful and entirely mad empath, it may be more interesting to let the players feel the heavy hand of their enemy in their minds. Try to leave some room for doubt in between blatant assaults—there is a rich reservoir of horror in forcing your players to doubt whether their impulses are their own and whether their minds can be trusted.

Psychokinetic Devotions will not be appropriate for every player or every story, and the nature of these monsters will make them difficult to sustain in play over a long campaign. Psychokinetics are dangerous, damaged individuals. Even when the psychic is able to keep his Mental Disorders in check, the danger that he may lose control of his powers is ever present.

If a player does wish to create a psychic character, the initial psychical induction event should be explored during character creation. Was the first manifestation triggered by trauma, and if so, how? The nature of a psychic's first manifestation may have far-reaching effects for the character.

For those psychics who have suffered the nightmare of traumatic psychical induction techniques, vengeance may be a strong motivation. Possibly the PCs have been brought together by mutual hatred of the individual or institution responsible, with psychosurgical induction being only one of the antagonist's many crimes. Alternately, perhaps the psychic suffers from a sort of Stockholm syndrome, expressing gratitude and loyalty to their torturer/benefactor for the psychical "gifts" they have been given; this psychic may serve his master with unquestioning devotion, leading the other PCs into atrocity after atrocity. This kind of tragedy is juicy stuff for both Narrators and players alike.

As a psychic PC accumulates Mental Disorders, the player may decide that the character is becoming unplayable, and the other PCs may decide that the character has become a liability. At this point, if the player does not want to simply shut the character in an asylum, the group may find it cathartic to have a final conflict where the psychic meets his end. If the players find pathos amusing, the psychic and his comrades may make plans for the inevitable, deciding on the best way to take down the psychic after madness overwhelms him. It is worth noting that, in this event, the psychic will know what tactics his companions plan to use to ensure his demise.

A Narrator running games with psychic characters may find it challenging to balance his attention between those characters and the rest of his group. Psychic characters may have solutions to problems posed by the Narrator that are unexpectedly clever, and it is important that the Narrator make sure that his other players do not feel overshadowed by the psychics. When integrating psychics into groups of mixed Callings, consider in advance what specialties and insights those other characters may possess that cannot be duplicated by the psychics' chosen Devotions and add elements to your story that speak to those strengths. A group composed entirely of psychic characters may help ensure that no one player dominates the game play. However, this sort of campaign can be extremely challenging for the Narrator given the wide variety of powerful skills available to his characters. Furthermore, an entire party of psychics could prove extremely unstable if too many control checks are failed at the same time.

Antagonists possessing Telepathy and Empathy can be used to impress the horror of total loss of control upon your players. By exploiting this horror, a devious Narrator can set the stage for a truly unsettling reveal. Through use of an enemy possessing Psychogenesis (see pages 92–94), the Narrator could have the players enact complex scenes that did not truly occur, a fact that is occluded from the players as well as the characters until both learn at the same time that what they thought was real was in fact



the fantasy of a cruel telepath. In another example, the players could learn over the course of gameplay that a NPC that all the players were asked to write into their backgrounds as a friendly patron was actually a hated enemy who has been using potent Empathy powers on them for years. Again, this kind of technique is best used sparingly, but the opportunities to manipulate the expectations, hopes, and fears of the group are limited only by the deviousness of the Narrator.

The use of London's official psychics as antagonists deserves special mention, as the spectre of Psychic Branch may be an excessively daunting foe for the players to face. If the players expect that Scotland Yard's telepaths and clairvoyants are always listening, they are unlikely to take much in the way of interesting action. However, it is useful for Narrator and players to keep in mind the rarity of powerful psychological talents, and the fact that the most powerful psychics will also be the most erratic and difficult to employ. The scope and severity of the player's crimes should be weighed when considering the probability that the Yard would assign any psychic, let alone a dangerously powerful one, to their case. If their crimes against society merit supernormal intervention, however, the players should be hunted to ground with excessive and horrifying abandon.

Prescient and Clairvoyant NPCs generally make better allies than antagonists, as the processes of these Devotions are minimally dramatic unless the PCs are invited to participate. However, the PCs may be directed to a fortune-teller or remote seer for information, taking part in the theatrics of the psychical event, as a satisfying (albeit possibly expensive) way of accessing information.

# Plot Seeds

## Chasing the Dragon

In the slums of Limehouse, a Desire-Bound spirit presides over an opium den, revelling in depravity and heedless of the many casualties of its sins. A criminal in life, stabbed to death by a rival gang while lying deep in an opium stupor, the spirit found its desires undiminished by death.

The ghost's manifestations include Possession, Psychological Powers (Empathy), and Fetch. Courtesy of the first of these, the ghost is able to possess the owner and clientele of the den to maintain regular contact with its criminal associates, who use the opium den as a base of operations. The ghost also uses these vessels as outlets for its urges, fanning the den's populace into hedonistic fits with Empathy and then jumping from one body to the next as the drugs and exertion incapacitate each host in turn.

Fetch results in the accumulation of a number of lesser spirits, mainly broken-down addicts whose bodies were used too roughly in one of the ghost's orgies. Some of these ghosts are able to possess the bodies of addicts and join in the orgies anew; others, unable to possess new hosts, lash out in frustration and rage. Screams in the night, plagues of vermin, and outbreaks of madness in the living population, along with the rising number of disappearances in the area, have attracted attention, resulting in the PCs being called to investigate.

## Dollhouse

An aristocrat thought to be emotionless and asexual loses the one thing she truly cared about—childhood friend and recent lover, Annie Chaphardt. Annie's ghost remains tied to the aristocrat, haunting a parlour where their most tender moments were spent. Annie's ghost is Desire Bound, lingering after death to remain close to its lover, and will submit entirely to the aristocrat's desires and commands.

After discovering the haunting, the aristocrat began to bring young women to the family estate under various pretences, plying them with liquor or drugs to lower their resistance so that their bodies can bring Annie back to life. Annie's spirit, using the Possession Manifestation, transfers itself into the bodies of countless young women to be "used" in whatever ways the aristocrat sees fit. Initially, these episodes were utterly innocuous liaisons for the parted lovers, and the women were released after a few days at most, confused but relatively unharmed. These women were carefully chosen: from poor families, pretty but powerless, insufficiently bright to piece together any scraps of memory they might retain.

Over time, however, the aristocrat has started to become unhinged, and these liaisons have become darker. She has begun selecting more spirited victims, informing them of the fate awaiting them just as the drugs begin to take hold. These women scream and fight, to the aristocrat's satisfaction. The liaisons themselves have become increasingly twisted; Annie's spirit does as it is ordered, and sometimes the women don't survive. As her mind breaks down and her need for fresh thrills increases, the aristocrat cares less and less about the provenances, titles, or statuses of the women abducted. Some of these women are from good families—important figures in their own right or the wives or daughters of the same—whose absence will be noticed by the

law. Sometimes the abducted women, under various types of sedation, utter interesting state and community secrets.

The family medium, Prudence Giles, has been forced many times to help Annie's ghost possess an intractable victim (See *Shroud*, pages 154 – 155, and *Manifest*, pages 143 – 147). She may be a loyal family servant torn between her duties and her conscience or a willing accomplice to the aristocrat's crimes.

The player characters could be brought into the story by an agent representing the family of one of the victims looking for justice. They could also investigate the case for the police or as private investigators. Possibly they could be tipped off as to the nefarious goings on by a jealous peer of Prudence Giles seeking to bring her down in the scandal resulting from the affair.

## Psychic Gone Amuck

A powerful psychic has succumbed to madness and is cutting a swath through London. The PCs will have to neutralize the psychic. It is up to the Narrator whether the psychic is to be brought in dead or alive.

- A rogue empath (level 5) has gone catatonic and is inflicting his nightmares on a section of the metropolis. The psychic's victims are rioting in the streets and killing indiscriminately out of terror and panic. Metropolitan Police and an advance Deathwatch squad are on the scene trying to impose control but with little success. Unless the psychic can be found and the transmissions stopped, Deathwatch units will be authorized to close the gates and cauterize the scene.

Here, the psychic is not malicious. He is locked in the hellscape of his own mind and his powers are firing at random. The rioters, likewise, are not acting according to their own volition, which should be presented to the players as an ethical dilemma as they decide how best to make their way through the streets.

- A telepathic medium (level 4+/5) leads her cult too far, and the PCs are called in to prevent an atrocity. The cult leader has succumbed to paranoia and become convinced that the end of the world is imminent. The cult has begun kidnapping people to swell the ranks of their "spiritual army," subjecting these unfortunates to physical and mental torture to increase the likelihood of creating poltergeists. An escaped kidnapping victim or a captured cultist has provided this information to the authorities or to the PCs directly, and they must prevent the cult leader from carrying out the planned apotheosis.

The deaths of cultists and victims have already created a small number of ghosts and poltergeists. If the mass death is allowed to occur, the cult leader will use Oubliette (see page 157) to force all the dead to remain as ghosts. The Haunts for these ghosts will be the cult's "temple," one of the torture implements, or the cult leader. The cult leader will arm herself with the haunted torture implements and take her "army" into battle against the living of the metropolis.

- A prescient electrokinetic (level 3+/3+) has been using Radio Transception (see page 99) to transmit distressing messages to individuals around the metropolis. These transmissions are gloating, threatening messages in which the psychic informs the victim, in vague terms, of misfortunes about to befall them. As the messages continue, the psychic informs the victim of his imminent demise. Six days after the first warning of death, the victim is murdered.

The psychic is, of course, the killer, who is controlled by the Paranoia Mental Disorder (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 154) and the Killer Instinct Corruption Path see *Unhallowed*

*Metropolis*, pages 130 – 131). Prescience will make the psychic very difficult to track and kill; to increase the challenge, raise Prescience to level 4, allowing use of Preternatural Reflexes (see page 86) to dodge ranged weapons.

### **Tangled Webs**

Mediums around the metropolis are disappearing, one by one. The mediums that vanish are all charismatic, theatrical types who have failed to secure wealthy patronage and must advertise their services in the periodicals. They are charlatans, for the most part, relying on sleight of hand and cold reading to serve where ability fails.

Though no bodies have been found, a friend of one of the missing mediums reaches out to the PCs, claiming that her friend is dead and that she suffered horribly before she died. She will implore the PCs to investigate, as the police are not treating the disappearances as murders, and she can see no progress being

made. Upon assessment, it will be discovered that the friend is a low-level Empath who probably sensed the murder through Empathic Bond (see page 70).

The mediums are being kidnapped by criminals. This gang killed several of their own in a dispute over money, only to find that one of the dead men possessed information they had to retrieve (a password, an identity, the location of a stash of money or weapons, *etc.*). The one resulting ghost is naturally unwilling to reveal the information, and none of the kidnapped mediums have been powerful or convincing enough to compel the spirit to speak.



# APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY

**Aether:** A pervasive medium, more rarefied than gas, through which various energies are propagated. The high-energy, or luminiferous, aether propagates energies in the electromagnetic spectrum, including visible light and the transmissions of the Tesla array. The low-energy aether sustains the energies associated with psychical and spiritual manifestation.

**Aether Field:** A field generated to contain a spirit.

**Aethertech:** Customarily used to refer to devices and technologies capable of perceiving or making use of the low-energy aether.

**Apparition:** A mindless spirit created by great suffering or outburst of emotion, such as at the time of death.

**After Lifer:** Slang for someone who signs a contract stipulating a post-mortem contact.

**Astral Body:** A living person's spirit when it is projected out of his body through the Extra Sensory Perception Devotion.

**Augury:** Prescience.

**Aura:** The generally invisible field of energy surrounding all living things.

**Autoscopy:** The act of looking back at one's own body while using a power of Extra Sensory Perception.

**Black Bird:** A psychic detective, specifically a clairvoyant or precog employed by Psi Crime department of Psychic Branch.

**Bone Picker:** Slang for a ghost hunter.

**Brain Bleeder:** Slang for a telepath.

**Bug Houser:** Slang for a psychic.

**Channeller:** A medium.

**Channelling:** The act of opening oneself to become a vessel through which a spirit may communicate.

**Chilled:** Haunted.

**Chiller:** A spirit.

**Circle:** A group of people who meet for séances.

**Clairvoyant:** A psychic with the Extra Sensory Perception Devotion.

**Coffin Nailer:** A medium that interrogates spirits to gain information to aid in criminal activity.

**Devotion:** A psychical ability.

**Doomsday Book:** The Psychic Registry.

**Doomster:** Slang for a precog.

**Ectoplasm:** A semimaterial substance associated with spiritual manifestations. The substance is normally whitish or greyish, more-or-less transparent, viscous, and cool to the touch.

**Electrokinesis:** The psychical power to create and manipulate electrical energy with the mind.

**Electrokinetic:** A psychic with the Electrokinesis Devotion.

**Empath:** A psychic with the Empathy Devotion.

**Empathy:** The psychical ability to read and project emotions.

**Extra Sensory Perception:** The psychical gift to read auras and to project one's senses to see distant or removed locations.

**Gaunt:** Slang for a spirit, generally a ghost.

**Ghost:** An intelligent spirit that may be able to interact with the living.

**Ghost Hunter:** An individual who makes his living capturing and containing spirits.

**Ghost Hunting:** The act of capturing and containing spirits.

**Ghost Trap:** An essence chamber.

**Gibbering Jemmy:** A noisy apparition.

**Gifted, The:** Individuals possessing psychical Devotions.

**Haunt:** The person, place, or physical object by which a spirit is bound to the physical world.

**Holy Ground:** Slang for the area of quarantine around the site of a haunting.

**Host:** The body of an individual who is possessed by a spirit.

**Lucidity:** Prescience.

**Marley:** Slang for a spirit, generally a ghost.

**Materialization:** The physical manifestation of a spirit.

**Medium:** An individual with Second Sight.

**Mentalist:** A telepath.

**Mind Ripping:** Telepathic interrogation.

**Necromancer:** An industrial medium employed to conduct corporate séances.

**Necrometer:** An aetheric monitor.

**Nethersman:** A medium who interrogates spirits to gain information to aid in criminal activity.

**Nethers, The:** The spirit world.

**Nightshift:** Slang for the occupation of ghost hunting.

**Oracle:** The precognitive division of Psychic Branch, used as an early warning system to detect impending catastrophes that threaten the metropolis.

**Parapsychology:** The experimental and quantitative study of supernormal phenomena.

**Phantasm:** An apparition.

**Poltergeist:** A murderous psychokinetic spirit.

**Precog:** A psychic with the Prescience Devotion.

**Precognition:** Prescience.

**Prescience:** The psychical talent to foresee the future.

**Prognosticator:** A precog.

**Psychic Branch:** The Psychic Branch of the Metropolitan Police, a division of Scotland Yard.

**Psi Crime:** Any crime committed with the aid of psychical powers, also the psychical crime investigation division of Psychic Branch.

**Psi Grade:** A ranking system for psychical powers based on psi grading, with first class being the highest grade and third class being the lowest.

**Psi Grading:** Psychic grading, a method of evaluating an individual's psychical powers.

**Psi Null:** An individual utterly incapable of developing psychical powers.

**Psychokinesis:** A category of psychical powers, including Electrokinesis, Pyrokinesis, and Telekinesis, associated with the manipulation of the physical world with the mind.

**Puppet Master:** A telepath that uses his powers to cause others to commit crimes.

**Purgatory:** Slang for an aether vault.

**Pyro:** Slang for a pyrokinetic.

**Pyrokinesis:** The psychical ability to create and manipulate fire with the mind.

**Pyrokinetic:** A psychic with the Pyrokinesis Devotion.

**Rattle Bones:** Slang for a medium.

**Sanguinmancer:** A precog who uses fresh blood as the focus for his trances.

**Scavenger:** A forensic medium.

**Second Sight:** The supernormal ability to see into the spirit world and to communicate with spirits.

**Selling One's Soul:** Slang for registering psychic powers.

**Sensitive:** A psychic, generally an empath, clairvoyant, precog, or telepath.

**Shadow:** An apparition.

**Shadow Gallery:** A collection of discarnate entities contained in spirit lamps for the amusement of the living.

**Shadowmancer:** A medium.

**Shadow Roller:** A ghost hunter.

**Shadow Spinner:** A medium.

**Silencer:** Slang for psi-inhibiting drugs.

**Siren:** Slang for a female empath or telepath.

**Sitter:** A non-medium who takes part in a séance.

**Sitting:** A séance.

**Sleeper:** An individual lacking psychical talent.

**Sniffer:** Slang for a psychic detective, usually used in reference to a police detective.

**Society, The:** The New Society for Psychical Research.

**Soul Distillate:** A spirit rendered down into the form of an alchemical solution.

**Special Interrogation:** The telepathic interrogation division of Psychic Branch.

**Spectral Eliminations:** The industry of ghost hunting.

**Spectral Eliminator:** A ghost hunter.

**Spectre:** An unpleasant ghost.

**Spirit Photography:** The photography of spirits and the spirit world.

**Spirit Static:** Spectral voices and sounds sometimes picked up by radio receivers.

**Spiritualism:** A school of thought, variously approached as a science, philosophy, or religion, that postulates the continued existence of the human personality after death and the ability of the living to interact with the spirits of the dead.

**Spook:** A ghost.

**Table Turning:** Slang for participating in a séance.

**Tear Jerker:** Slang for an empath who uses his powers for personal gain.

**Telekinesis:** The psychical ability to move objects with the mind.

**Telekinetic:** A psychic with the Telekinesis Devotion.

**Telepath:** A psychic with the Telepathy Devotion.

**Telepathy:** The psychical ability to read and project thoughts.

**Thought Eater:** Slang for a telepath.

**Thought Transference:** Telepathy.

**Threshold:** The boundary between the physical and the spirit worlds.

**Truth Grinder:** Slang for a telepath.

**Watcher:** A ghost that watches over and is devoted to the protection of a person, place, or thing.

**Weird:** Slang for a poltergeist.

**Widow's Gate:** An aether vault.

**Witchdoctor:** Slang for an exorcist, especially one without religious affiliation.

**White:** A ghost.

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# APPENDIX C: UNHALLOWED METROPOLIS REVISED ERRATA

## Page 100, Undertaker Starting Skills

Undertakers should begin with Survival 2.

## Page 111, Missing Skills: Torture, Tracking, and Trade

The following skills were regrettably lost in layout: Torture, Tracking, and Trade.

### Torture

Any sick bastard can cause pain to his fellow men when he wants something from them, but only a character with the Torture Skill has actually studied the applied science of causing pain for the purpose of extracting information. Torture can be quick and brutal or slow and methodical. Brutal techniques, while fast, can make a mess of the victim and often result in premature death or incomplete information. A professional who takes his time at his work will be able to wring more information or a more complete confession from his subject. In either case, the torturer requires a victim who is powerless to halt the physical duress he endures. The torturer's controller should begin by describing his demeanour, the punishment inflicted, and the questions asked or comments made.

In the case of a quick and brutal torture session, after listening to the player describe the actions taken, the Narrator decides when the victim has had enough and could potentially crack. If the torture involved genuine physical brutality, the victim suffers an unmodified (2d10) damage roll from which the victim's Vitality is subtracted. Next the torturer makes a contested Torture Skill roll versus his victim's Will. If the torturer's total is higher than the victim's, the victim starts blubbing and tells the torturer what he wants to hear. Information exchanged under such duress is notoriously faulty since the victim is likely to say anything to make the pain end. If the roll fails, the victim has the choice of keeping his mouth shut or spilling his guts. If the character fails a contested, quick and brutal Torture roll, he can try again after another five minutes of torture.

In the case of the methodical application of torture, the torturer makes only one contested Torture Skill roll versus his victim's Will each day the victim is tortured. If the roll succeeds, the victim suffers -1 Will. If the roll fails, nothing happens. If the torturer rolls a critical success, the victim cracks and tells him everything he wants to know. On a critical failure, the victim dies. If the victim is reduced to 0 Will, he answers every one of his torturer's

questions as truthfully as possible, though the victim will volunteer false information if the torturer insists on a particular point about which the victim has no real knowledge.

Regardless of the outcome, after being tortured for a day, the victim must make a Vitality roll (DR 14). If the roll succeeds nothing happens. If the roll fails, he suffers -1 Vitality. If his Vitality is reduced to less than 0, he dies.

A character regains Will and Vitality lost due to torture at a rate of one point per week. Characters surviving lengthy torture sessions often develop permanent psychological damage.

In addition to getting the answers to his questions, a torturer may also inflict precise wounds on a Helpless Victim with a successful Torture Skill roll versus DR 11 + the victim's Vitality. With a successful roll, the torturer can inflict a Flesh Wound, Serious Wound, Incapacitating Wound, or, at the Narrator's discretion, his choice of complications. On a failed roll, the victim suffers a lesser wound than intended or a Flesh Wound in the case of an attempted complication.

## Tracking

The character is a skilled tracker able to pursue prey over land. The character can tell how old tracks are, what sort of animal made them, and the status of its health. This Skill is more common among the inhabitants of the wastes than those dwelling within the confines of the city walls, though some Undertakers will have considerable practice with it.

When determining the DR for a Tracking Skill roll, the Narrator should consider how fresh the tracks are, what sort of ground they cover, how familiar the tracker is with the animal, and how trafficked the area is. If the character fails the roll, he loses the trail but could find it again with another successful roll. On a critical failure, the character follows the wrong trail. The Narrator may require the tracking character to make several rolls if the trail is particularly long. The character should be expected to make one Tracking Skill roll for every hour of game time that passes while he is tracking.

## Trade

The character is a skilled tradesman. He may have developed his craft through natural aptitude or apprenticeship. Depending upon his Skill level, the character may have even completed his journey-work or gone on to master his trade. A skilled tradesman practicing his craft can make a comfortable living for himself while supporting a family.

A character may take this Skill multiple times, and each time he must select a particular craft he is developing.

Options for a trade include, but are not limited to, accounting, animal husbandry, blacksmithing, brewing, carpentry, cooking, embalming, glass blowing, gunsmithing, navigation, sailing, sign painting, stone masonry, tailoring, telegraph operation, and writing.

Creating quality work or executing the advanced aspects of the trade requires a successful Skill roll versus DR 11. More complex works that tax the character's abilities require a successful roll versus DR 14. A masterpiece or an extremely difficult work involving complex schematics could require a successful roll versus DR 20 or more. Along with determining the DR, the Narrator also determines how long a particular work will take to complete as well as any special or rare ingredients required for its creation. If the character attempts to complete the job in a rush, add +2 to the DR.

## Page 140, Wealth Quality

A character that takes this Quality cannot take the Poor Impediment (see Unhallowed Metropolis, page 142).

## Page 152, Delirium and Dementia

The text of Catatonia was reprinted under the Delirium entry. The text of Delirium was placed under the Dementia entry. And the text of Dementia is nowhere to be found. We are aware of the irony.

## Delirium, 3 or 5 Point Impediment

*'True!—nervous—very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses—not destroyed—not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad?'*

—Edgar Allen Poe, "The Tell-Tale Heart," 1843

The character has difficulty matching his perceptions of the world to the consensus reality. His consciousness is clouded and may be indistinct or wholly artificial. Often delusions are accompanied by misinterpretation of outside stimuli and a disordered stream of thought. The character has great difficulty focusing and sustaining attention.

Perceptual disturbances are common and result in various misinterpretations, illusions, and hallucinations. For example, a banging door may be mistaken for a gunshot (misinterpretation), faces may appear in cracks in the walls (illusion), or leering demonic entities may hover above the character and rain down tears of blood upon him (hallucination). These disturbances are often backed by both delusional conviction and emotional response. The character will believe what he sees to be real. Some delusional characters may pick at their flesh, while others reach out to phantasmal objects. The character may suffer a near catatonic state, experiencing his illusions in silence. A character in the grip of delirium cannot maintain

coherent thought. With minor Delirium, this may manifest as an acceleration or deceleration of thought. With chronic Delirium, thought is completely disorganized. This disturbance is reflected in speech that may be sparse or incoherent.

Additionally, a delirious character will suffer disturbances to his sleep cycle. He may be either constantly tired or hypervigilant. Vivid dreams and nightmares are common and may merge with waking hallucinations.

Unlike some Mental Disorders, Delirium is constantly active. A delirious character suffers -2 on all Wit, Intellect, and Skill rolls unless he passes a control check to temporarily take control of himself. If the roll succeeds, the character can act normally for d10 turns in combat or d10 minutes outside of combat.

Minor Delirium is a 3 point Impediment. Chronic Delirium is a 5 point Impediment.

### **Dementia, 2 or 4 Points Impediment**

Dementia interferes with a character's ability to remember information and can also impair his judgment. A character with mild dementia suffers from forgetfulness: he may need to have information repeated several times before he will remember it. In more severe cases, the character may

forget names, entire conversations, or even to return to finish a task if he is interrupted. In the most severe cases, the character may forget his closest friends and family members. The impaired judgment and lack of impulse control that often accompany the memory loss can be a source of some embarrassment for those close to the character. A demented character is likely to make off-colour jokes or use inappropriate language. He disregards standard rules of social conduct, making this Impediment particularly embarrassing for members of the upper class.

Unlike some Mental Disorders, Dementia is always active. The character's short term memory is badly flawed. The Narrator should require the character to make control checks to recall important information from time to time. If the character succeeds, he remembers. If he fails, he does not. The character's controller may have the character make a control check to temporarily pull himself together. If the roll succeeds, the character acts normally for d10 x 10 minutes after which he returns to his previously confused state.

Minor Dementia is a 2 point Impediment. Chronic Dementia is a 4 point Impediment.

**Page 159, Lifting and Feats of Strength Table**  
The Max Lift for a character with Vitality 7 should be 3460 pounds.

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# UNHALLOWED NECROPOLIS

*"At the door of life, by the gate of breath,  
There are worse things waiting for men than death"*  
—Algernon Charles Swinburne, *The Triumph of Time*

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