

# THE Bizenghast

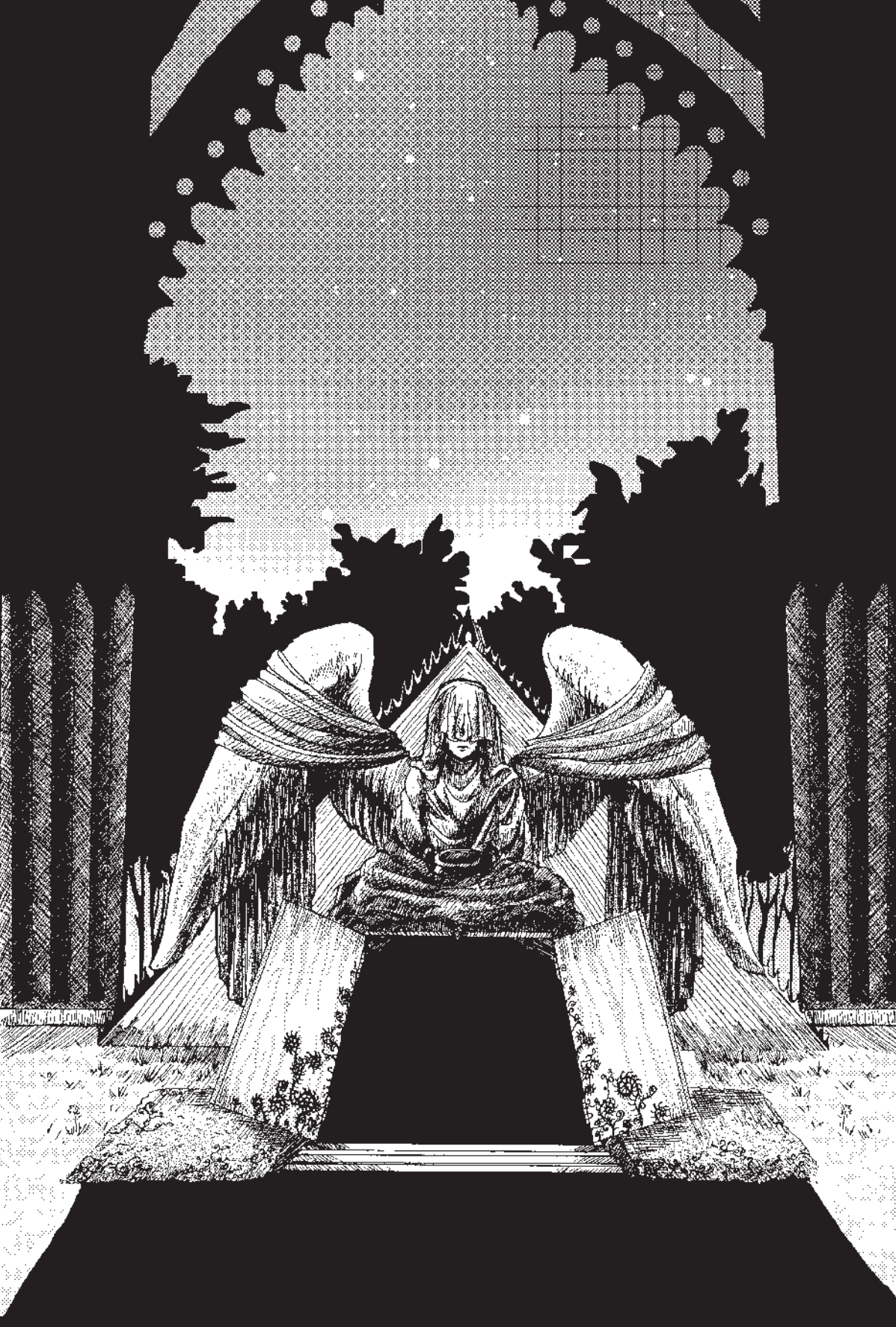
ADVENTURE GAME



By Clint Krause

Based on the hit manga series by M. Alice LeGrow





# **The Bizenghast Adventure Game**

By Clint Krause

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**Dedicated to Dade Murphy Krause.**

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The  
**Bizenghast**  
Adventure Game

By Clint Krause



# THE SICKNESS

*Fiction from the upcoming Bizenghast novel series By Shawn Thorgersen*

Dr. Morstan's stuff—Dinah couldn't remember the fancy name for it, though she knew the medication by its distinct taste of chalk dust—had been running its course through her ever since he'd arrived to treat her an hour or so earlier. Or maybe it was longer than that . . . the chalk-stuff made time drip, drip along, as slow and strained as her heavy eyelids.

She lay in bed, her long curls splayed beneath her, dark rivers on the white shores of her aunt's linens. Outside her bedroom, the day had started: A cloudy morning had come to Bizenghast, the decrepit, all-but-forgotten mill town Dinah had called home since . . . how long had it been now? The doctor's stuff made it hard to think. . . . Biting her lip until she left small red marks, she focused as much as the prescription would allow. How long, she thought . . . how long had she been here?

The answer materialized through the mists of her clouded mind: She'd been in Bizenghast since . . . yes, that was it: since the sudden bursting of a tire.

That's how the newspaper reporter had described it: "The sudden bursting of a tire."

Right. She took a breath. The medication must have been weakening. More breathing and more thinking, that was the trick. Dinah tried to remember that old newspaper clipping. She'd read it only once—after all, she'd been riding in the back of the car when the accident happened, so she didn't need an article to tell her about an incident that had left her bumped and bruised . . . and her mother and father far worse. It had been—yes, now she recalled—seven years had passed since the accident. She had been eight years old, and up until then, it had never occurred to her that sometimes, parents die and leave their children all alone.

Weak as it was, that chalk stuff, that liquid Morpheus, beckoned her to sleep—but if she forced her blue eyes to remain open, and if she kept her thoughts whirring, she could escape its lulling whisper. Sometimes, though, her mind raced ahead of her, revealing memories she'd prefer to forget. Memories, for instance, of that night in Drury, when she'd heard the tire rupture, sharp like a pistol shot, the screeching—she'd felt her mother's hand fire back to safeguard Dinah as the sedan's wheels screeched and the headlights set the double-yellow lines of the highway alight until oncoming high-beams washed the whole view into blinding white light, a light that seemed like Heaven—until Dinah had awakened later, here on Earth once more.

As her mind cleared, she could see the newspaper clipping again. At the age of twelve, she'd found it in a shoebox under her aunt's bed: a jagged-edged strip cut with a shaking hand and blunt scissors. Dinah remembered hating the reporter; in six words he'd summarized the moment when her life had cracked in two. But the part of the clipping that had hit her, smacked her, dropped her to her knees—was this:

"I just don't understand how it happened," said firefighter Neil Redmond. "The busted tire we found was brand new with no defects or puncturing. It didn't even burst in a way you'd

expect a tire would. It had a tiny puncture in it like a dart.”

How interesting! How curious! What’s more, the reporter had added: “Police are investigating the scene for signs of foul play.”

Dinah sat up. A lock of her hair fell in her face. Her gown had crept up during her rest, so she tugged it down over her knees. I’m awake, she thought to herself. Most times, she just poured the chalk-stuff down the drain, but whenever Dr. Morstan was here, he watched her take it. Now, though, she was coherent; the memory of that night—the shock, rush, crash so fast you can’t scream—had snapped her into a semblance of focus.

Foul play? No. Dinah knew there had been no foul play, and she’d known it all the seven years since moving from her parents’ home in Pennsylvania to this Massachusetts graveyard town. It hadn’t been foul play or fate that had caused the accident. Forget fate.

It had been random chance. Chaos, if you like. Dumb luck. A cruddy roll of the die.

She took a final breath, flipped off the bedcovers, and ran across her bedroom floor. It was a wide expanse; her bedroom had been a convalescent chamber back when the property was St. Lyman’s School for Boys. After the accident, her aunt had received the deed and moved from Colorado; she’d renovated the place to provide a home for her and Dinah, whom she placed in the healing room, since it came with a bathroom and was safely stationed on the first floor. In other words, it was the perfect spot for her newly inherited, troubled child.

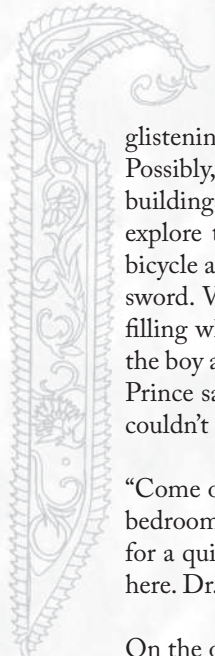
Dinah sat by the phone and dialed, twining the black cord in her pale fingers; these days, with Aunt Jane keeping her from attending school or leaving home for the most part due to her “illness,” Dinah rarely saw the sun. Through the thin walls (Dinah suspected that some of the renovations had been done on the cheap), she could hear Dr. Morstan talking to Aunt Jane. Most of it sounded like mumbles, but she pieced together a few words—words like “hospital” and “testing” and “for her safety.” Now, she knew she’d beaten the medication. She was getting nervous again, which was partly what the stuff was supposed to prevent.

Likely, Aunt Jane hated having to assume responsibility for Dinah since the accident, and certainly believed there was something very wrong with her niece. Vincent, on the other hand . . .

Just when she thought she might get stuck talking to his voicemail, Vincent picked up. She listened to his breath; likely, he was outside somewhere, perhaps riding the outskirts of town on his bicycle. His breath, and then his voice, soothed her. She knew so few people here—heck, there were only sixty-four residents in the whole town, including herself, Aunt Jane, and Vincent. Vincent struck Dinah as the closest she’d ever come to meeting an adventurer; he was brave, he liked to explore the abandoned homes in town, and—the bottom line was—when he came around, the other inhabitants of the former St. Lyman’s school, the ones only Dinah could see, left her alone.

“Hello?” he said. She imagined Vincent standing on a hill somewhere, his blond hair





glistening with sweat from bicycling, but light and long enough to blow in the chill wind. Possibly, he had some interesting gadgets in his pockets, ripped from one of the local buildings. That's how he looked when she'd met him two years ago. He'd been dared to explore the weird old Lyman's school, and he'd arrived with an antenna knotted to his bicycle and some crown molding strapped to his back, as a knight might have strapped his sword. Vincent had startled her, but perhaps she'd startled him, too; he'd discovered her filling what likely resembled a miniature grave in the yard. She'd felt certain she'd scared the boy away, but two weeks later, Vincent had returned with a discovered copy of *Le Petit Prince* salvaged from some of the town's other ruins. Dinah was thirteen at the time; she couldn't have guessed that this boy might become her dearest companion.

"Come over," Dinah answered. She paused, listening through the thin wall separating her bedroom from the foyer. Sometimes, Dr. Morstan stopped in simply to drop off meds, or for a quick exchange of paperwork along with a brief update—not this time. "I need you here. Dr. Morstan hasn't left yet."

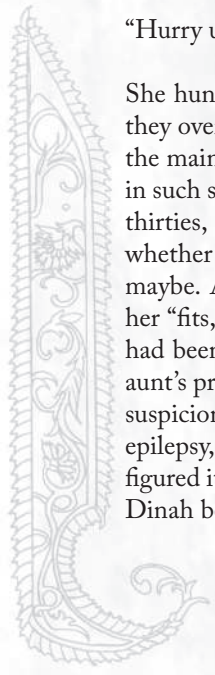
On the other end, Vincent took a deep breath. His breathing slowed. "What do you want me to do? He and your aunt hate me."

"But they know!" she said, and then her voice fell to a whisper. There was no way she could allow Aunt Jane or Dr. Morstan to hear this next part: "They know about the ghosts!"

"Don't worry. I'll make him leave. I'll tell him what he wants to hear."

"Please hurry." She felt helpless—like a fair maiden on a faded movie poster, grasping the brave hero as he valiantly shields her from black-hearted villains. She hated the feeling almost as much as she hated the chalk stuff, but what could she do? She had no power. No authority. And anyway, what difference would it make if she did try something? Random chance could happen along and ruin things anyway. Forget that. So, she might as well leave it to Vincent, who was much better at taking care of things than she was.

"Hurry up," she said, "before he sends me away!"



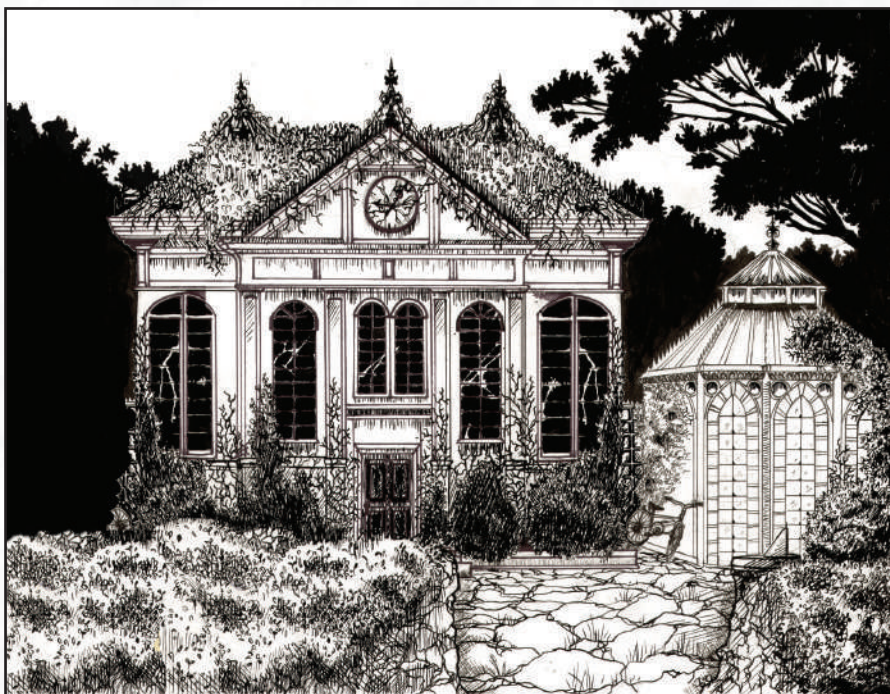
She hung up the phone and listened. They were quiet on the other side of the wall. Had they overheard her conversation? She sidled to the wall that separated her bedroom from the main hall and cupped her hand to eavesdrop, trying to imagine what they were doing in such silence. In her mind's eye she saw Dr. Morstan, a pale, bespectacled man in his late thirties, sporting a goatee. Likely, he felt it was fashionable, but Dinah often wondered whether he was just attempting to look like a legitimate psychiatrist—a young, hip, Freud, maybe. At Aunt Jane's request, he had been studying Dinah to ascertain the cause of her "fits," as he called them. Thus far, he'd discovered precious little—only that whatever had been troubling her through the years since her parents' passing and the move to her aunt's property often had left her screaming and bruised. He'd seen the fits himself, so any suspicion toward Aunt Jane had been quashed. He'd even tested her for the usual diagnosis, epilepsy, but that had come back negative. No, this was something else, and he hadn't figured it out yet, which is why Dr. Morstan had recently made his worst suggestion—that Dinah be removed to a hospital, where she could be better tested and treated.

When she'd heard that, she imagined towering white walls, wrinkled clothes reeking of bleach, and long, disinfected linoleum hallways spied through the reinforced glass square of solitary rooms. What an awful deal of the cards that would be, she thought. To be without parents was bad enough. To live in Bizenghast—which was, to her, the rotting cadaver of some colonist's dead vision—was to wilt alongside it. But to be alone, without even her aunt, or Vincent, her single friend, that would be the end for her. She'd never go to the hospital if she could help it, even if it somehow learning to cope with house full of ghosts.

If only Dr. Morstan could see what she saw. If only he could see the Walkers on the lawn, the shapes within the shadows here in her aunt's home . . . if he could see the governess, the matron ghost that would discipline Dinah, and realize that the creaks in the ancient floorboards were not the damned house settling, then he would know everything he needed to, and she wouldn't have to go to some hospital.

But the truth was that only Dinah saw these things. And in moments like these, staring at cracks in spackled walls, the eight-year-old inside her, who had been happy before the sudden bursting of a tire, wondered whether the new Dinah actually saw ghosts, or was simply mad as a hatter.

"Hurry, Vincent," she whispered.





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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Bizenghast Adventure Game. This book contains everything you need to create your own character in the Bizenghast universe and embark on ghostly adventures with your friends. Sound fun? Keep reading.

This game is based on the *Bizenghast* manga series written by M. Alice Legrow and published by Tokyopop. If you're already a fan of the series, then you not only have great taste in manga, but you're in for a special treat. In addition to the game rules and advice, this book also contains never-before-revealed secrets about the *Bizenghast* universe.

If you're new to *Bizenghast*, or you haven't read the whole series, you can still enjoy the game, but you should be warned that spoilers do exist herein, so you might want to check out the manga first. You can find *Bizenghast* at better bookstores around the globe.

Now, without further ado, let's step into the world of Bizenghast and see if we can survive a night in the vaults.

Have fun,

Clint








## WHAT IS AN ADVENTURE GAME?

Adventure games, also known as role-playing games, are a form of entertainment that has been around since the 1970s. These games allow players to create imaginary characters and take them through imaginary adventures in fantastic and mysterious worlds.

Kind of like a video game, right? Well, the difference here is that instead of relying on microchips and processors, role-players use their imaginations to create all of the characters, environments, and adventures in the game. This also means that role-playing games are not limited by the constraints of a video game . . . the characters in a role-playing game can do anything that the players can imagine . . . open any door, explore any mystery, talk to anyone. Anything that can be imagined can happen in the game.

So, how do you play one of these things? Well, first, you get together with your friends, gather some snacks and drinks, and get cozy around a table. One person in your game group is going to play the gamemaster and everyone else is going to play their own character. The gamemaster is in charge of playing the bad guys in the game; the evil spirits and monsters that oppose the heroes (the other players' characters). She's also in charge of creating the situations and environments that the characters will explore in the game. Meanwhile, everyone else plays a single character through which they explore the mysteries of the game world, interact with the other characters, and overcome dangerous challenges. Cool, huh?

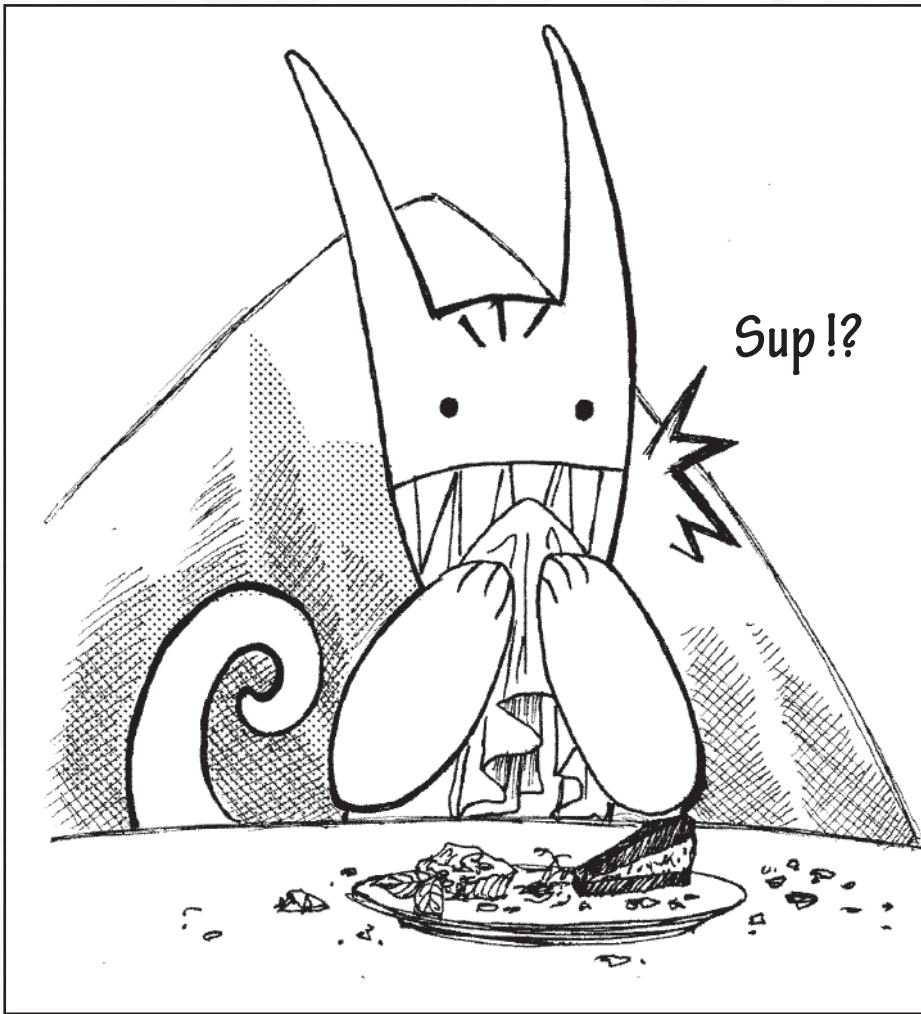


What's with the dice? Well, in a role-playing game we use dice to add an element of uncertainty to the proceedings. Without the dice, it would just be collaborative story-telling. The dice make it a game, and they make the outcome of the game unpredictable and fun. The dice determine whether or not the characters are able to overcome the challenges they face. They also help to keep everything fair, so that each player has an equal shot at contributing to the game.

If this is your first time taking a look at an adventure game, you've come to the right place. This game is designed with new players in mind. The rules are straight-forward and simple and there is plenty of advice on what to do with them. If you're a veteran player, you'll be able to grasp the basics of the game right away and get straight to the adventure.

Speaking of which, we'd better get moving . . . we're supposed to be meeting someone on the next page . . .

## AND NOW . . . OUR HANDSOME AND PATRIOTIC GUIDE!



Edaniel here is one of the tower guards from the Bizenghast guild. He's going to be applying his rapier wit and keen reflexes to comment on various things throughout the book. If you see him pop up, you can bet that he's got something important (or at least sarcastic) to say. You can count on Edaniel to tell it like it is and not pull any punches.



## TERMINOLOGY

Adventure games have a lot of specialized jargon, acronyms, and abbreviations. Here's a list of the terms that you'll find throughout the rest of the book.

### GAMEMASTER / GM

The gamemaster (GM for short) is the person who is responsible for creating and describing all of the environments and challenges that face the characters in the game-world. The GM is also responsible for arbitrating the rules and generally making sure that the game runs smoothly.

### PLAYER

The term "player" is used to denote anyone playing the game who is not the gamemaster. For instance, the typical role-playing group consists of a gamemaster and four to six players. Each player controls his or her own character, whereas the GM controls any characters that are not controlled by players (see *NPC* below).

### PC

PC is an acronym that stands for "Player-Character." A player-character is simply a character that is created and controlled by a player.

### NPC

NPC is an acronym that stands for "Non-Player Character." Basically, an NPC is any character that the GM controls during the game (one that is not, therefore, under the control of a player). The GM can introduce all of the NPCs that she wants. Sometimes the rules apply differently to NPCs than they do to PCs.

### TWENTY-SIDED DIE

A twenty-sided die is a funky die used in many role-playing games. It literally has twenty-sides and, when you roll it, generates a number between one and twenty. *The Bizenghast Adventure Game* uses twenty-sided dice exclusively, so anytime you see the word "die" come up in the rules, assume that we're talking about a twenty-sided die. You can find twenty-sided dice in book and hobby stores all over the place.

### ROLE-PLAYING

Role-playing refers to the act of assuming the role of an imaginary character, much like an actor assuming a role in a movie. While role-playing, you perform the dialogue for your character and make decisions on what course of action she will take. Role-playing involves a lot of improvisation because there is no script to follow, but that's the fun of it.

## SCENE

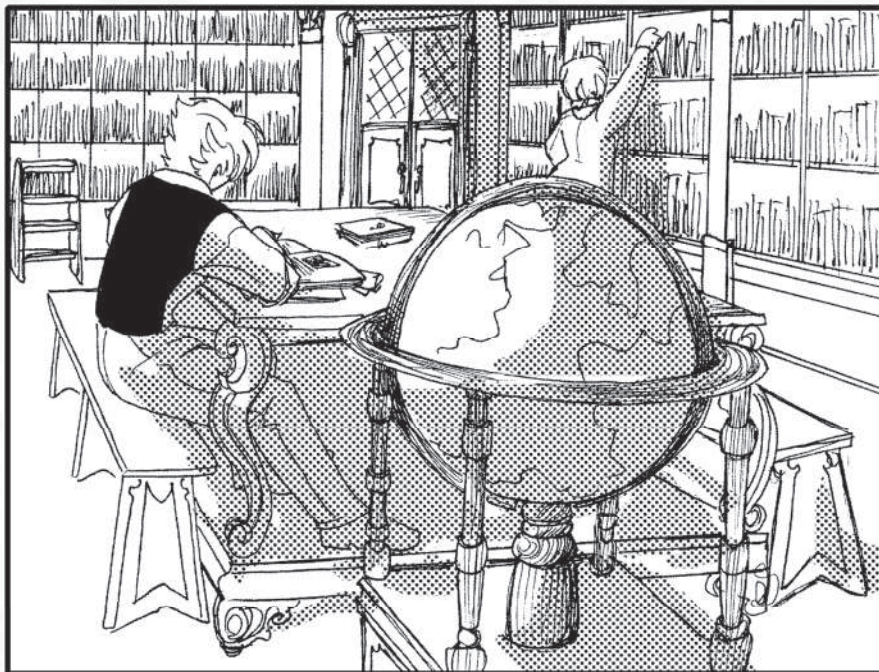
Just like movies and TV shows, the game is broken down into scenes. There are action scenes, dramatic scenes, all kinds of scenes. The GM is the arbiter of when a scene begins and ends officially (this is important because some game rules involve events that are triggered at the beginning and end of scenes). It's pretty easy to tell one scene from another . . . as soon as the focus of everyone's attention shifts to a new event or subject, a new scene has begun.

## SESSION

Each time you get together with your friends to play the game is considered a "session." The typical game session lasts between three and four hours (though you can go as long as you want).

## CAMPAIGN

A campaign is a series of sessions that involves the same cast of characters. Some people like short campaigns (three to four sessions) and others like playing massive, long campaigns (you could literally keep a campaign going for *years*). Campaigns are fun because the players have much more time to really develop their characters.







## WHAT DO I NEED TO PLAY?

There are a few things that you'll need before you get started.

- A copy of this book (multiple copies are useful, but not required).
- Several twenty-sided dice (preferably one for each player and the gamemaster).
- A few pencils (for making notes and writing on character sheets).
- Photocopies or print-outs of the character sheet (one for each player).
- Counters of some sort to use as spirit tokens (optional, but handy)
- At least one willing friend (four to six are optimal).
- An active imagination.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK . . .

Alright guys, here's the skinny on what you're going to find inside:

### SETTING MATERIAL

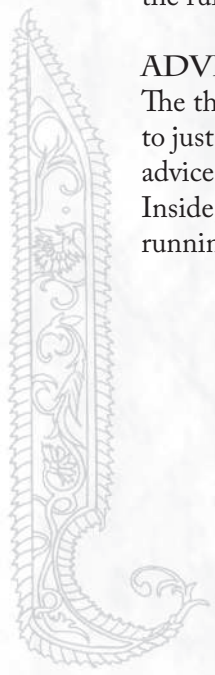
We start things off with a nice dose of all things Bizenghast. Whether you've read the manga or not, it might be worth it to check this stuff out. Here you'll learn the underlying cosmology of the Bizenghast universe, the guilds, the ghosts, etc . . . This material is intended to get you in the mood for the game and give you some answers that you might during play.

### RULES

After the setting stuff, you're going to start seeing rules and guidelines for creating guilds, characters, vaults, and all of the other components of the game. Hopefully, you'll learn the rules after a couple of read-throughs and you won't have to reference them much during the actual game. This book contains all of the rules you'll ever need to play the game.

### ADVICE AND EXAMPLES

The third component of this book is the advice and examples. It's not enough to just teach you the rules; I've also got to show you what to do with them. The advice should be helpful whether you're a veteran role-player or a total newbie. Inside, you'll find advice on everything from enjoying the game as a player to running it as the gamemaster.





# CHAPTER I:

NOT EVERY LOST SOUL IS A LOST CAUSE





## PREMISE

In this game, each player takes on the role of an agent of “The Hive.” The Hive is what most people are really talking about when they talk about “Heaven.” It’s a giant honeycomb of cities at the center of the universe. The Hive is the home of a mysterious being called “The Host,” which is what most people are really talking about when they talk about “God.” It is unclear whether The Host is a single being with multiple forms or multiple beings whose thoughts are assimilated into a single hive-mind. Either way, the Host is the entity that is responsible for the workings of the Universe.

The Hive is like the hub of a wagon wheel. There are countless “spokes” stretching out from it in all directions. At the end of each spoke is a world . . . what the inhabitants of the worlds call “Earth.” Each world is autonomous from the others and has its own history and personality. When a human dies on Earth, her soul returns to the Hive, where it is processed and its memories erased and filed in a great archive. The soul is then reincarnated to the world adjacent to the one it just left. In this way, all human souls must travel from world to world, life to life. Some say that the Universe will end when all of the souls have traveled to all of the worlds, but no one can say for sure (well, except maybe the Host, but it hasn’t revealed the answer to this question).

When a human dies with a burdened, tormented soul, her soul is unable to proceed to the next life. These souls become ghosts. Ghosts commonly remain on Earth until their burdens are resolved. That’s where the Hive’s agents come into play. It’s the agents’ job to capture ghosts and rehabilitate them, so they can be sent back to the Hive and move on to the next world.



## GUILDS AND GUILDSMEN

Guilds of Hive agents exist all over the world. Each guild is manned by 4 guildsmen. Guildsmen are not human, nor are they spirits, and they do not possess souls. They are constructs of the Host, created to fulfill a very specific role within their guild. The guildsmen possess supernatural powers that can prove useful in their work for the guild. All guildsmen possess two physical forms, one human and one animal. They can shift between these forms at will, but most prefer one form over the other and tend to remain in it most of the time. In her animal form, the guildsman can take the form of any type of animal and even mythical creatures (such as dragons and werewolves). Guildsmen also have access to magic spells, which they are permitted to employ in order to aid human agents. Though they have no soul of their own, each guildsman has a distinct personality. These personalities often seem extreme and eccentric to humans. Despite their origins as immortal constructs of the Host, guildsmen have the same vulnerabilities as humans (for instance, they can be injured and

killed, just like humans can). The task of stocking and clearing vaults is just as dangerous for them as it is for the guild's human agents.



## HUMAN AGENTS

The guildsmen must recruit human agents to help with their work, as they are not permitted to deal with ghosts directly. Human agents are contracted and sworn to work for the guild and if they fail to do so, forfeit their own life. Most guilds prefer human agents be somehow exceptional (perhaps possessing psychic sensitivity or other unusual talents). Human agents are sometimes accompanied by their human friends. This is generally permitted, even though the guild has no real power over a non-contracted agent. The guild will only take action against a non-contracted human if the human threatens the guild in some way (by revealing the guild's secrets to other humans, for instance).

## OTHER AGENTS

The Hive has two types of agents apart from the guilds: messengers and relays. Messengers are what most people would call "angels." They are responsible for transporting souls back and forth between the human world and the Hive. When a mortal dies, a messenger is present to escort the soul back to the Hive. Messengers are not possessed of great intellect and tend to pursue their tasks with great focus and very little fuss. Nothing short of a command from the Host itself can stop a messenger from completing its mission.

Relays are creatures that dwell at the Hive end of each spoke. They are the doorkeepers of the Hive and the only creatures who are permitted to see or speak to the Host directly. Any time a message or command passes from the Host to the mortal world, it does so through a relay.





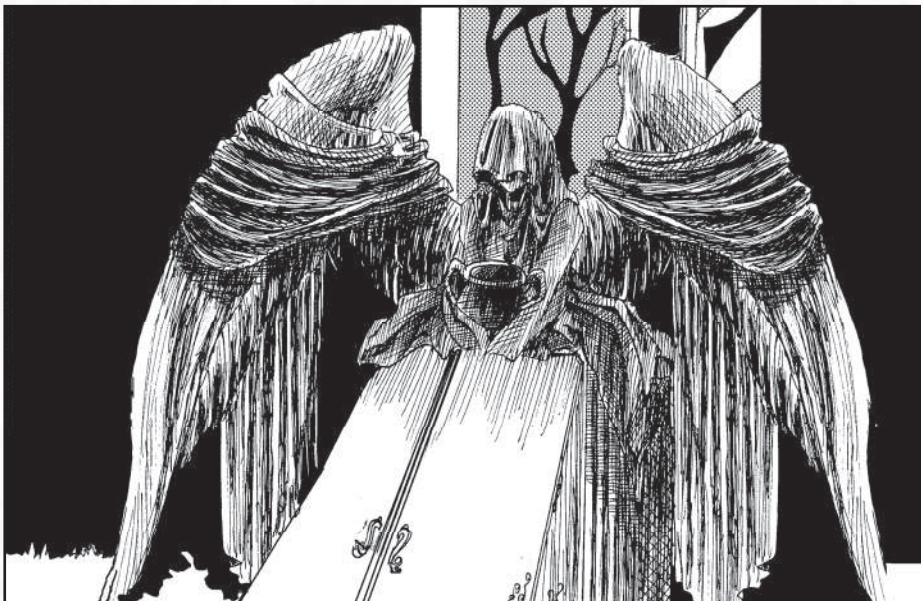
## GUILD APPEARANCE

Each guild is disguised as some sort of normal building, such as a mausoleum, an old decrepit theatre, or an abandoned warship. Guilds tend to be located in “creepy” environments (or at least they gain the reputation for being creepy as a result of the guild activity that surrounds them). Inside each guild is a series of vaults, which are used to imprison ghosts until they can be rehabilitated and sent to the next world. The guild’s agents are required to go from vault to vault, entering each one and resolving the burdens of each ghost. Each guild also houses two items called “anchors.” These consist of a “seed,” which is a physical piece of the Hive that is buried in the ground somewhere on the guild premises and an artifact from the local town that has some significance. These anchors allow the guild to commune with the Hive and also help to attract ghosts, who are naturally drawn to even a small piece of the Hive. Most guilds disappear and reappear at certain times of day to help keep their location a secret. The time of the guild’s appearance and disappearance varies from guild to guild.

## VAULTS

Each guild oversees a number of vaults. Each vault contains a captured ghost that is held in a dream-like stasis. To enter an occupied vault is to enter the dream of its resident spirit. Within the confines of the vault, the spirit dreams its own reality, which is generally haunted by the tragedy of the ghost's human life and the torment of its unresolved problems. Guildsmen, as well as the guild's human agents, are responsible for "clearing" each of the guild's vaults by entering them one at a time and putting their resident spirits to rest. The entrances to most vaults are sealed by a riddle that pertains to their captive spirit. After solving the riddle, the guildsmen are granted access to the inside of the vault, where the dream of the resident spirit becomes reality.

When a team enters a vault, they physically enter into the ghost's dreamed reality. The dreams of the ghost become real within the confines of the vault. As a result, guildsmen face true danger in their attempts to quell the restless, entombed spirits. It is common for guildsmen to be injured and not unheard of for them to be killed while attempting to clear a vault. The instant that the dreaming ghost's problems are resolved, the guild-team magically appears back in the physical world and the spirit's entire dreamed reality ceases to exist. Generally, human agents of the guild are only required to make one run through the guild's vaults. If they clear all of the guild's vaults, they are released and replaced with another agent who will be responsible for clearing the next batch of spirits.







## PARASITIC GHOSTS

In general, each vault can contain only one spirit. There have been reported cases of bonded or parasitic ghosts. Such spirits are usually the result of a strong emotional bond in life (lovers, siblings, parents, etc . . .) Parasitic spirits hinder the vault-clearing process as they make it difficult to determine the true target of the clearing. Parasitic spirits often appear separately from their host, but in extreme cases, can actually “meld” with the host spirit and become one with it.

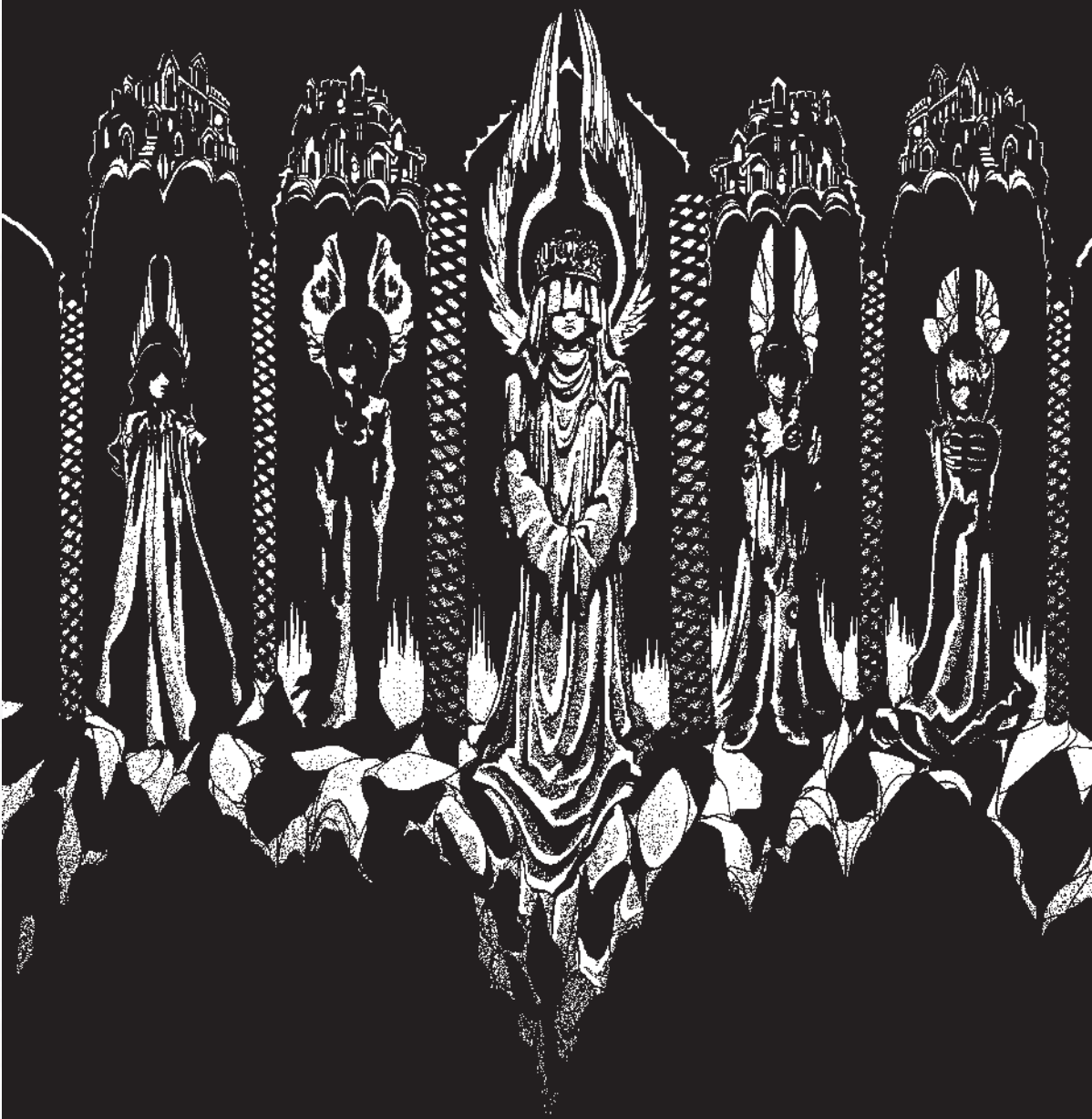
## GHOST HUNTS

Part of a guild’s function is to patrol its home region for unbound ghosts. This is called a “ghost hunt.” During such a hunt, the guildsmen, often with the help of human agents, will investigate local reports of hauntings. Once a spirit is found, the guildsmen capture it and bind it to an empty vault so that it can be cleared and processed. The process of capturing a ghost can be both difficult and dangerous. Ghosts must be incapacitated with magic weaponry and spells, and then bound to a vault. Some ghosts are simply unaware of their own death and don’t even need to be vaulted. Others, those with deep-seeded burdens, will often resist capture even to the extent of attacking the guild team or innocent bystanders.

## UNBEARABLES

Some souls are so deadly and evil that they stand no chance of rehabilitation and must be destroyed. These souls are known as “unbearables,” though they are also known (in folklore) as “demons.” Most unbearables come from the Riddle Road, a dimension of hateful, rebellious souls. The guilds treat unbearable cases very seriously, as these creatures are often extremely powerful and difficult to stand against. Generally, the oldest guild in the region is responsible for dealing with unbearables, though exceptions do occasionally arise. There have even been cases in which multiple guilds have banded together to combat a particularly vicious or powerful unbearable.

Each unbearable is different, but they are generally driven by selfish desires and ambitions. Some take the form of giant, otherworldly monsters, while others maintain a human guise or even shift from form to form. When an unbearable is captured, it is held in captivity until the guild is able to transport it to Neptune’s Gold, the senior guild on Earth, which lies at the bottom of the ocean. Neptune’s Gold is responsible for delivering unbearable souls to the hive (which involves a lot of paperwork and high-level security).



# CHAPTER II:

GUILDS AND CHARACTERS



## GUILD CREATION

The first task of setting up your game is the creation of your group's guild. Each player should have input in the guild creation process. Get everyone around the table and have the gamemaster ask the guild creation questions aloud. Let everyone toss ideas back and forth until there's a consensus, then write down the result and move on to the next question. If your group absolutely cannot come to a consensus about a given decision, have everyone vote for it. If there's still a deadlock, the gamemaster gets to decide.



## 1. WHERE IS YOUR GUILD LOCATED?

Location dictates everything from how old your guild is to how active it is. The Host only installs guilds where they are needed (i.e. where people are); therefore the oldest guilds are located where people have been living the longest. Bizenghast is the oldest guild in the United States because it is located where the original British colonies were formed. Before that, North America was populated mostly by Native Americans who, having a deeper connection with the Earth and the cycle of life and death, were far less prone to becoming distraught ghosties. California, the last part of the U.S. to become heavily populated, has the youngest guild of all.

The location of your guild will also affect its cultural flavor. A guild that operates out of a Canadian forest, for instance, will be quite different than one that operates out of a secret cemetery in a Louisiana bayou.

- What country is your guild located in?
- What city or town? Feel free to use a location from the real world or just make one up.

## 2. WHAT KIND OF STRUCTURE IS IT?

A guild's headquarters can be any type of structure, but it should be functional as a guild. Therefore, having one in an empty field or a municipal pool is probably not the best idea. Ideally, it's also a structure that's native to the location. You wouldn't find a guild built like a Shinto temple in Africa, or an igloo guild in Britain! They are almost always related to the area in some way. Many times, a guild is simply created inside an existing but abandoned structure, instead of being built from scratch.

- What type of structure houses the guild?
- If the structure was requisitioned, what was its original purpose and function?
- How old is the structure?
- Does it have an interesting history? Curses? Hauntings?
- Are there any local legends about the guild?





### 3. HOW IS YOUR GUILD STAFFED?

Most guilds have four guildsmen. Many older guilds require them to wear a loosely coordinated uniform, but the newer guilds are a little more lax with the rules. Every guild has a Watcher, as well as creatures that function as its staff. These can be any kind of creature. Guilds never contract more than two human agents at a time.

- Who is your guild's watcher?
- What kind of creatures serve as the guild's staff?
- How many guildsmen work at the guild?
- How many human agents?

### 4. WHAT IS THE SIZE OF YOUR GUILD?

Some guilds oversee others in their area and have a lot of vaults to look after, while others are very small branches, with less than twenty vaults. The biggest guild in England is called IronCrown with some 150 vaults. The smallest guild in England is a dress shop called Union Jack, and handles a mere ten vaults. All guilds, however, are equally important.

- How many vaults is your guild responsible for?
- Does your guild oversee any others?
- If so, what is the relationship between your guild and its subservient guild? Are they friends, rivals, or enemies?

### 5. WHEN DOES YOUR GUILD APPEAR?

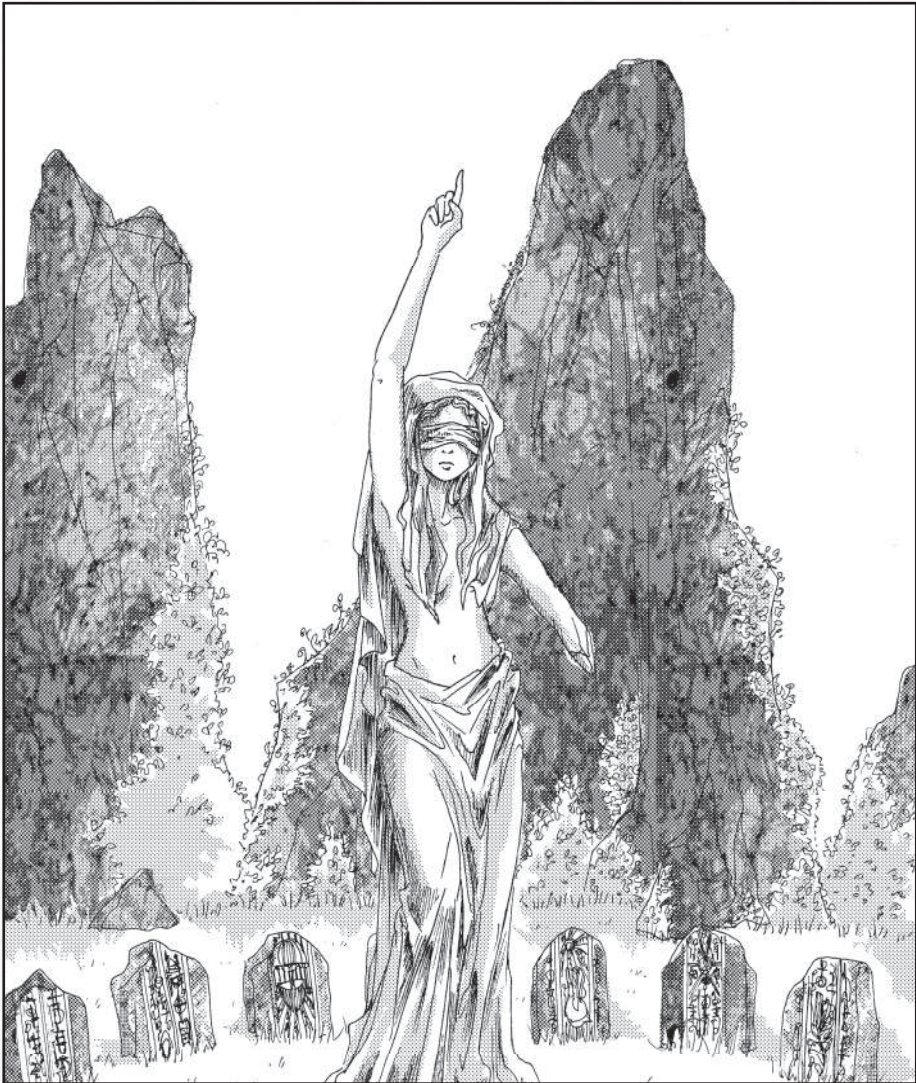
All guilds appear and disappear to keep their cover. Some appear at night, some only at noon, and some small ones on a once-weekly basis. Many guilds require their human agents to pay some sort of toll (such as a small piece of gold) to gain entry. Most accept gold, silver, or brass.

- When is your guild active?
- How often does it appear?
- What is your guild's preferred toll for human agents (if any)?

## 6. WHAT PROBLEMS DOES YOUR GUILD HAVE?

Every guild has its problems. Perhaps it's harassed by the local police department or has to compete with a rival guild to complete its quota. Giving your guild an enemy or problem helps to establish conflict in the game, which makes things more interesting.

- Your guild has at least one enemy or rival . . . who or what is it?
- How has your guild's enemy thwarted you in the past?
- Does your guild have any other problems?







## CHARACTER CREATION

Now that you've created your group's guild, it's time to create your character. You can create any character that you can imagine (within certain guidelines), so have fun and try to create a unique character that will be fun and interesting to play.

### WHAT ARE ALL THE NUMBERS FOR?

Your character's *attributes* and *traits* represent her physical, mental, and spiritual capabilities in the game-world. These ratings govern your character's interactions with her environment and with other characters and NPCs.

### WHAT MAKES A GOOD CHARACTER?

Different players are drawn to different types of characters. Some players like having a character who is very powerful; maxed out with optimal attribute ratings and fitted with the best possible traits. Other players are quite content with a character that, while not super-competent, is fun in other ways such as having an interesting personality or back story. All of these preferences are equally valid. My advice is to seek a middle-ground. Make your character good at what she does, but don't be afraid of having a weakness. Give your character some interesting personality quirks to make her more engaging to role-play. Don't stress out about getting it just right from the get-go. Your character will develop over time through her adventures, victories, and defeats. Sometimes, it will take two or three play sessions before you really feel like you have a grasp on your character's personality. This is all part of the process of developing an exciting, compelling character.

## CHARACTER CREATION: STEP-BY-STEP

Follow the procedure below to generate your character for the game. By the end, you'll be ready to hit the table and start the adventure.

### STEP ONE: CONCEPT

Before you write down anything at all, try to imagine the basic concept for your character. Your initial concept will be funneled down by the choices that you make during character creation, but it's a good idea to have a basic concept in mind from the get-go. Possible character concepts include: swashbuckling ghost-hunter, run-away psychic, paranormal investigator, tortured soul, amateur horror novelist, etc . . .

## STEP TWO: ATTRIBUTES

Next, you're going to define your character's physical, mental, and spiritual capabilities by assigning a rating to each of your character's seven attributes: *awareness*, *charm*, *luck*, *knowledge*, *speed*, *strength*, and *willpower*.

**AWARENESS** represents your character's basic level of sensory perception. Sight, hearing, smell, and touch are all covered by this attribute.

**CHARM** represents your character's social graces, looks, and personal charisma. *Charm* is used to determine whether or not other characters are swayed by your arguments or enamored with your striking personality.

**KNOWLEDGE** represents your character's level of factual knowledge and the depth of her education. Whenever you need to determine if your character knows useful information about a topic, make a *knowledge* roll. If successful, the GM must provide you with the requested information as long as it's reasonable that your character would know it. If the roll fails, either your character doesn't know the information or she is misled with false information.

**LUCK** is the magic 8-ball of the game. Whenever something is in question in the game that isn't covered by any other rule, roll *luck*. Whenever a player asks a question about some feature of the game world like: "is there a window in this room?" roll *luck*. Success indicates that the answer to the question is the most beneficial answer for the character. Failure means that things aren't the way the character wants them. Luck never trumps the GM's power to answer such questions herself; it is simply a go-to mechanic when the GM doesn't want to make a purely arbitrary decision about something.

**SPEED** represents your character's natural quickness, manual dexterity, and hand-eye coordination.

**STRENGTH** represents your character's innate physical power and endurance. This attribute covers everything from lifting heavy objects to running long distances.

**WILLPOWER** represents your character's inner fire, hope, determination, and courage. This attribute is used to cover situations when your character's physical abilities cannot prepare her for the task at hand.



## ATTRIBUTE RATINGS

Each attribute is given a rating from one to twenty, with one being very poor and twenty being exceptionally good. Your task in character creation is to prioritize your character's attributes, and thereby decide how she is going to operate on a very basic level.

- Assign one of the following ratings to each of your character's attributes. Each rating can only be assigned once: 12, 12, 10, 10, 8, 8, 6.
- Remember, the higher your character's rating in an attribute, the more likely she is to succeed in challenges that involve that attribute.

### EXAMPLE

I want a character who's strong and smooth with the ladies. Here are my attribute choices:

*Awareness* 8 (right in the middle-ground)

*Charm* 12 (I'm quite dashing!)

*Knowledge* 8 (No slouch, but no Einstein either)

*Luck* 6 (Looks like I'm pretty unlucky)

*Speed* 10 (Fit, athletic, and fairly well coordinated)

*Strength* 12 (Nice! I'm pretty buff!)

*Willpower* 10 (Pretty good. I've got some inner strength)

## STEP THREE: GUILD POSITION

Next, you need to determine your character's position in her guild. Work together with the other players to make sure that you end up with a balanced and "valid" group of characters.

Choose one of the following positions:

POSTITION	NUMBER PERMITTED (PER GUILD)
Human Agent	Up to two contracted. Any # of non-contracted.
Lost Soul	Any number. Normally one or two per guild.
Compass-Bearer	One per guild.
Sword-Bearer	One per guild.
Diviner	One per guild.
Intuiter	One per guild.

# HUMAN AGENT

The guilds rely on human agents to be the direct interface between the guild and its imprisoned spirits. Most human agents are directly contracted to work for the guild. Each contracted human is marked with a tattoo (which is unique for each guild). This mark designates the agent as literally belonging to the guild. The guilds prefer human agents that stand out in some way, such as being psychically sensitive or belonging to some uncommon human lineage. Not all human agents are contracted by the guild. It is possible, and even common, for a contracted agent to seek help from her human friends and family. This sort of thing is generally permitted even though the guild has no particular power over such non-contracted agents.

## AUTOMATIC TRAITS:

*There's no scrubbing this thing off* (for contracted agents).  
None for non-contracted agents.

## TRAIT CHOICES:

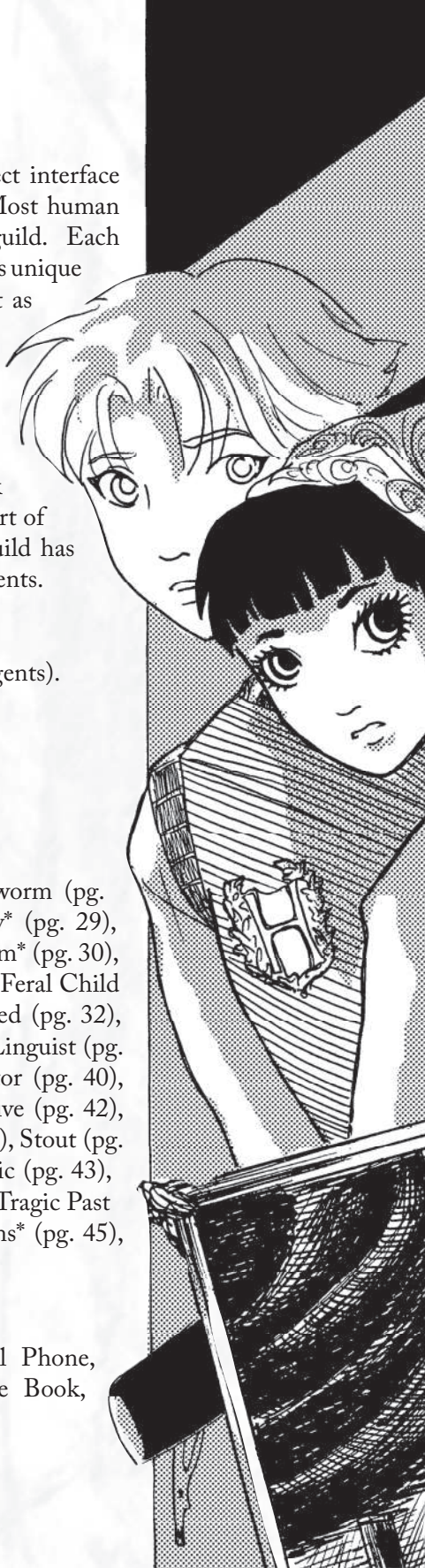
4

## AVAILABLE TRAITS:

Alert (pg. 28), Bayou-Blooded (pg. 28), Bookworm (pg. 28), Clairvoyant (pg. 29), Clockwork Anatomy\* (pg. 29), Connected (pg. 29), Curious (pg. 30), Cursed Arm\* (pg. 30), Cute (pg. 30), Devout (pg. 30), Fearless (pg. 30), Feral Child (pg. 30), Found it in the Attic (pg. 31), Haunted (pg. 32), Hidden Sanctuary (pg. 33), Hypnotist (pg. 33), Linguist (pg. 33), Lucky (pg. 33), Medium (pg. 40), Navigator (pg. 40), Object Reader (pg. 41), Oracle (pg. 41), Sensitive (pg. 42), Sixth Sense (pg. 42), Spirit Photographer (pg. 42), Stout (pg. 43), Stubborn (pg. 43), Swift (pg. 43), Telekinetic (pg. 43), Telepathic (pg. 43), The Tome Keeper\* (pg. 44), Tragic Past (pg. 44), True Love (pg. 44), Watched by Ravens\* (pg. 45), Wealthy (pg. 45)

## AVAILABLE EQUIPMENT:

Improvised Weapon, Talisman, Bandages, Cell Phone, EMF Detector, Flashlight, Spirit Board, Lore Book, Vehicle







## LOST SOUL

In some rare cases, a guild will allow a benevolent spirit to assist its staff in their operations. In these cases, the spirit must agree to be sent back to the Hive once her term of service has expired (the length of these terms varies from guild to guild). This arrangement is most common when the spirit in question has some sort of emotional connection to one of the guild's human agents. Though lost souls are not officially "guildsmen," the presence of a helpful spirit is often a great boon to the guild's operations.

### AUTOMATIC TRAITS :

Ghost

### TRAIT CHOICES:

3

### AVAILABLE TRAITS:

Alert (pg. 28), Bayou-Blooded (pg. 28), Bookworm (pg. 28), Bound (pg. 29), Clairvoyant (pg. 29), Curious (pg. 30), Cute (pg. 30), Devout (pg. 30), Fearless (pg. 30), Haunted (pg. 32), Hidden Sanctuary (pg. 33), Ignorant of Death (pg. 33), Linguist (pg. 33), Lucky (pg. 33), Magic Spell: Bewilder (pg. 35), Magic Spell: Choke (pg. 35), Magic Spell: Dreaming Dead (pg. 36), Navigator (pg. 40), Object Reader (pg. 41), Oracle (pg. 41), Sensitive (pg. 42), Stout (pg. 43), Stubborn (pg. 43), Swift (pg. 43), Telekinetic (pg. 43), Telepathic (pg. 43), Terrifying Shriek (pg. 43), Tooth and Claw (pg. 44), Tragic Past (pg. 44), True Love (pg. 44), Watched by Ravens\* (pg. 45)

### AVAILABLE EQUIPMENT:

None

## GUILDSMAN: COMPASS-BEARER

Compass-bearers are the information brokers of the afterlife. They possess spells and powers that allow them to reveal information about spirits and their tragic pasts. The compass-bearer's prime responsibility is to aid human agents by providing information about spirits, their pasts, and their weaknesses. A guild's compass-bearer is often a human agent's first exposure to the guild staff

### AUTOMATIC TRAITS:

Guildsman

### TRAIT CHOICES:

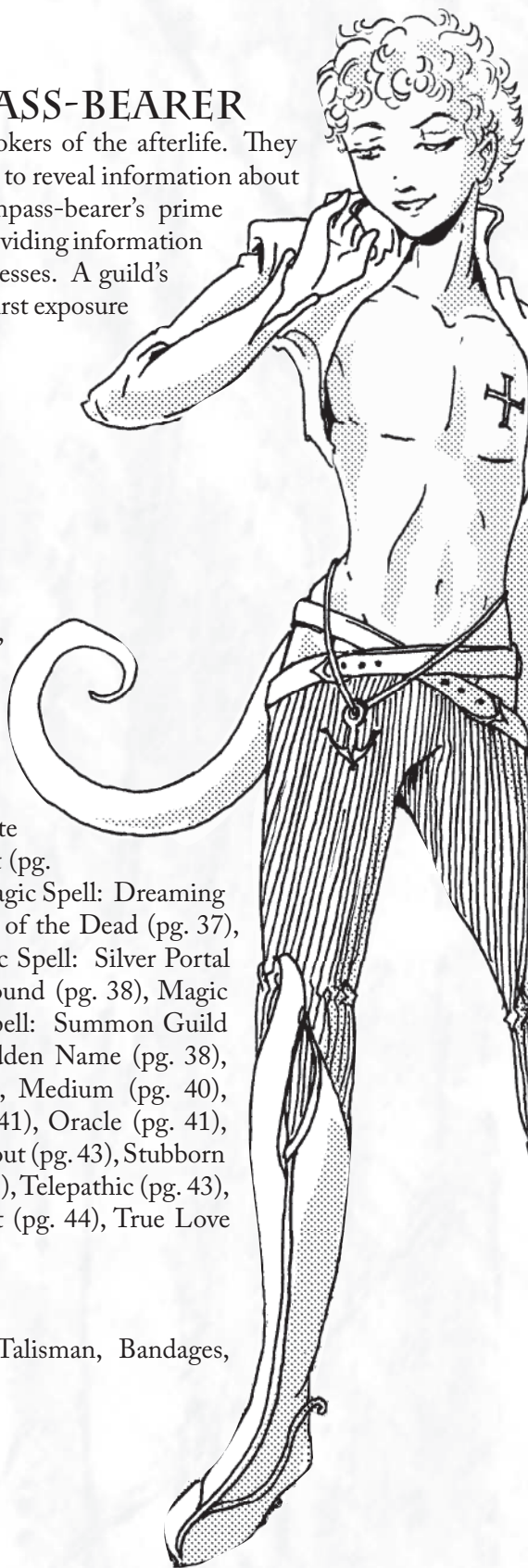
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### AVAILABLE TRAITS:

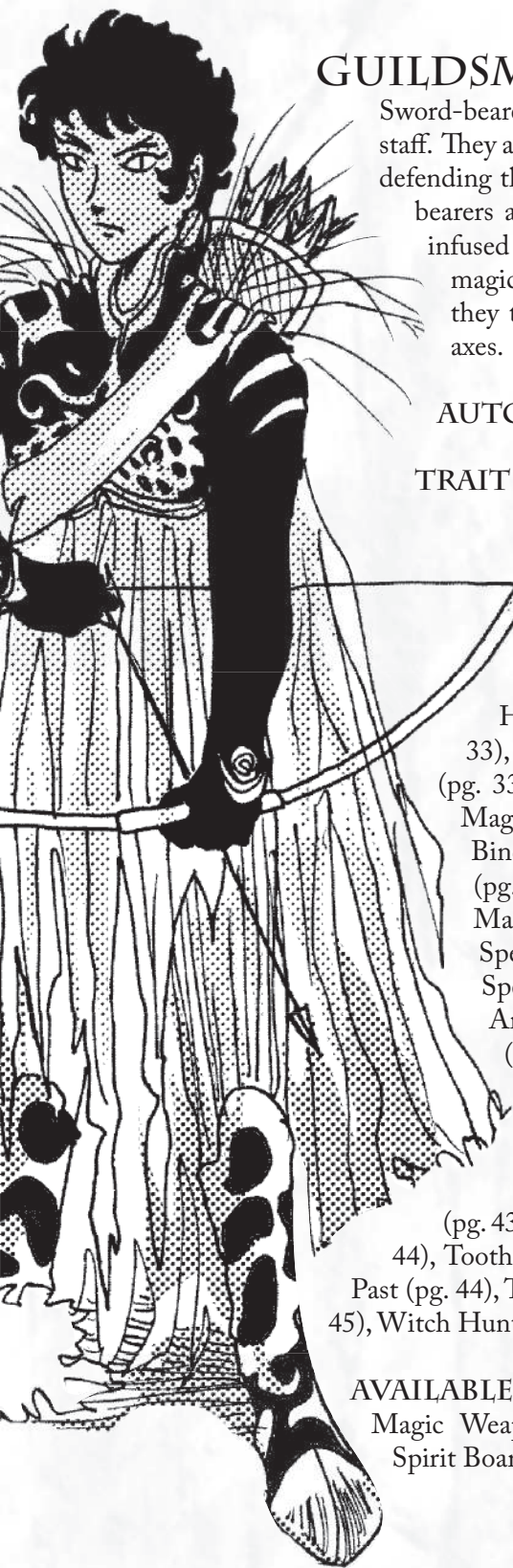
Alert (pg. 28), Bookworm (pg. 28), Clairvoyant (pg. 29), Connected (pg. 29), Curious (pg. 30), Cursed Arm\* (pg. 30), Cute (pg. 30), Fearless (pg. 30), Haunted (pg. 32), Hidden Sanctuary (pg. 33), Hypnotist (pg. 33), Linguist (pg. 33), Lucky (pg. 33), Magic Spell: Animate Statue (pg. 34), Magic Spell: Bind Ghost (pg. 35), Magic Spell: Dread Sigil (pg. 36), Magic Spell: Dreaming Dead (pg. 36), Magic Spell: Knowledge of the Dead (pg. 37), Magic Spell: Mothwings (pg. 37), Magic Spell: Silver Portal (pg. 38), Magic Spell: Snout of the Hound (pg. 38), Magic Spell: Spectral Steed (pg. 38), Magic Spell: Summon Guild Staff (pg. 38), Magic Spell: The Forbidden Name (pg. 38), Magic Spell: Transformation (pg. 39), Medium (pg. 40), Navigator (pg. 40), Object Reader (pg. 41), Oracle (pg. 41), Sensitive (pg. 42), Sixth Sense (pg. 42), Stout (pg. 43), Stubborn (pg. 43), Swift (pg. 43), Telekinetic (pg. 43), Telepathic (pg. 43), The Tome-Keeper\* (pg. 44), Tragic Past (pg. 44), True Love (pg. 44), Watched by Ravens\* (pg. 45)

### AVAILABLE EQUIPMENT:

Improvised Weapon, Lazarus Apple, Talisman, Bandages, Spirit Board, Lore Book, Vehicle







## GUILDSMAN: SWORD-BEARER

Sword-bearers constitute the martial arm of the guild staff. They are skilled warriors and guardians, tasked with defending the guild team during its operations. Sword-bearers are often equipped with a powerful, magic-infused weapon of some sort. A sword-bearer's magic weapon could be any style of weapon, but they tend to prefer archaic arms like swords and axes.

**AUTOMATIC TRAITS:** *Guildsman*

**TRAIT CHOICES:** 3

### AVAILABLE TRAITS:

Alert (pg. 28), Bookworm (pg. 28), Clairvoyant (pg. 29), Connected (pg. 29), Curious (pg. 30), Cursed Arm\* (pg. 30), Cute (pg. 30), Fearless (pg. 30), Haunted (pg. 32), Hidden Sanctuary (pg. 33), Hypnotist (pg. 33), Linguist (pg. 33), Lucky (pg. 33), Magic Spell: Animate Statue (pg. 34), Magic Spell: Bewilder (pg. 35), Magic Spell: Bind Ghost (pg. 35), Magic Spell: Mothwings (pg. 37), Magic Spell: Silver Portal (pg. 38), Magic Spell: Spectral Steed (pg. 38), Magic Spell: Summon Guild Staff (pg. 38), Magic Spell: The Forbidden Name (pg. 38), Martial Artsy (pg. 40), Medium (pg. 40), Navigator (pg. 40), Object Reader (pg. 41), Oracle (pg. 41), Riposte (pg. 42), Sensitive (pg. 42), Signature Move (pg. 42), Sixth Sense (pg. 42), Stout (pg. 43), Stubborn (pg. 43), Swift (pg. 43), Swift Attack (pg. 43), Telekinetic (pg. 43), Telepathic (pg. 43), The Tome Keeper\* (pg. 44), Tooth and Claw (pg. 44), Tough (pg. 44), Tragic Past (pg. 44), True Love (pg. 44), Watched by Ravens\* (pg. 45), Witch Hunter (pg. 45)

### AVAILABLE EQUIPMENT:

Magic Weapon, Lazarus Apple, Talisman, Bandages, Spirit Board, Lore Book, Vehicle

## GUILDSMAN: DIVINER

Diviners are the magic specialists of the guild. They generally have a lot more knowledge of spells and enchantments than their fellow guildsmen. The prime task of the diviner is to aid the guild's team by invoking spells to protect and assist them.

**AUTOMATIC TRAITS:** *Guildsman*

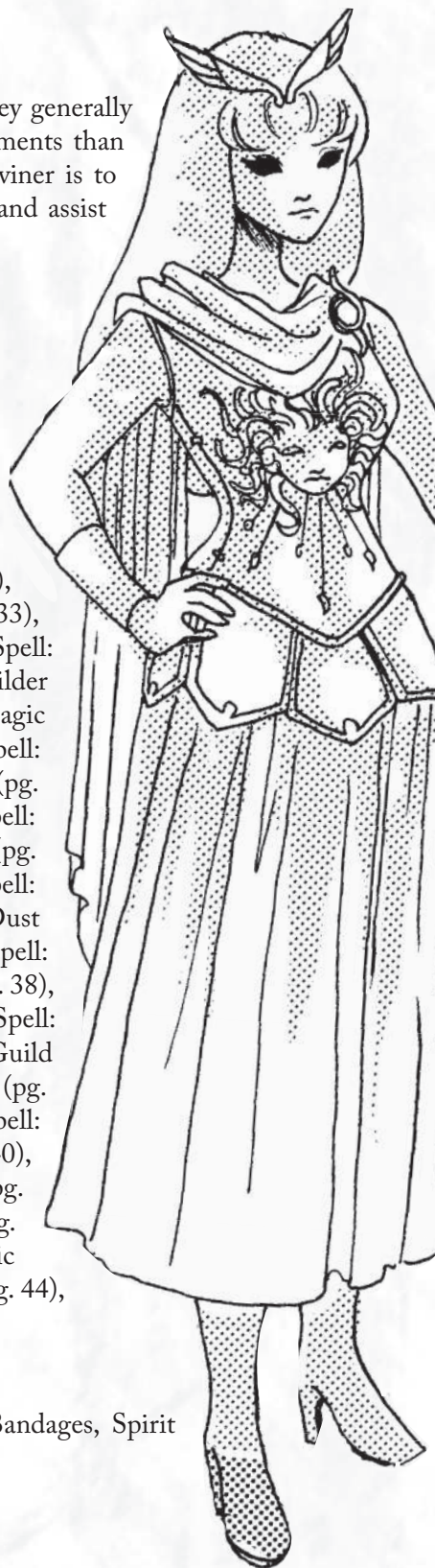
**TRAIT CHOICES:** 3

### AVAILABLE TRAITS:

Alert (pg. 28), Bookworm (pg. 28), Clairvoyant (pg. 29), Connected (pg. 29), Curious (pg. 30), Cursed Arm\* (pg. 30), Cute (pg. 30), Fearless (pg. 30), Haunted (pg. 32), Hidden Sanctuary (pg. 33), Hypnotist (pg. 33), Linguist (pg. 33), Lucky (pg. 33), Magic Spell: Animate Statue (pg. 34), Magic Spell: Bargain from Beyond (pg. 34), Magic Spell: Bewilder (pg. 35), Magic Spell: Bind Ghost (pg. 35), Magic Spell: Cat Got Your Tongue? (pg. 35), Magic Spell: Death's Journey (pg. 35), Magic Spell: Devil Doll (pg. 36), Magic Spell: Dread Sigil (pg. 36), Magic Spell: Dreaming Dead (pg. 36), Magic Spell: Evil Eye (pg. 36), Magic Spell: Fiery Wall (pg. 37), Magic Spell: Foot Track Hoodoo (pg. 37), Magic Spell: Grave Dust (pg. 37), Magic Spell: Mothwings (pg. 37), Magic Spell: Secret Seal (pg. 38), Magic Spell: Silver Portal (pg. 38), Magic Spell: Snout of the Hound (pg. 38), Magic Spell: Spectral Steed (pg. 38), Magic Spell: Summon Guild Staff (pg. 38), Magic Spell: The Forbidden Name (pg. 38), Magic Spell: Transformation (pg. 39), Magic Spell: Unrest (pg. 40), Medium (pg. 40), Navigator (pg. 40), Object Reader (pg. 41), Oracle (pg. 41), Sensitive (pg. 42), Sixth Sense (pg. 42), Stout (pg. 43), Stubborn (pg. 43), Swift (pg. 43), Telekinetic (pg. 43), Telepathic (pg. 43), The Tome Keeper\* (pg. 44), Tragic Past (pg. 44), True Love (pg. 44), Watched By Ravens\* (pg. 45)

### AVAILABLE EQUIPMENT:

Improvised Weapon, Lazarus Apple, Talisman, Bandages, Spirit Board, Lore Book, Vehicle







## GUILDSMAN: INTUITER

Intuiters are the leaders of the guild's team. They possess a strong ability to make good judgments under pressure and inspire their allies to do the same. Intuiters also have access to powerful healing magic, which safeguards the guild's staff from the dangers of their missions. They are also skilled mediators and can often resolve conflicts with dreaming spirits simply by talking to them.

**AUTOMATIC TRAITS:** *Guildsman*

**TRAIT CHOICES:** 3

### AVAILABLE TRAITS:

Alert (pg. 28), Bookworm (pg. 28), Born Leader (pg. 28), Calming Presence (pg. 29), Clairvoyant (pg. 29), Connected (pg. 29), Curious (pg. 30), Cursed Arm\* (pg. 30), Cute (pg. 30), Fearless (pg. 30), Haunted (pg. 32), Hidden Sanctuary (pg. 33), Hypnotist (pg. 33), Lucky (pg. 33), Magic Spell: Animate Statue (pg. 34), Magic Spell: Bind Ghost (pg. 35), Magic Spell: Dread Sigil (pg. 36), Magic Spell: Dreaming Dead (pg. 36), Magic Spell: Healing Touch (pg. 37), Magic Spell: Mothwings (pg. 37), Magic Spell: Silver Portal (pg. 38), Magic Spell: Snout of the Hound (pg. 38), Magic Spell: Spectral Steed (pg. 38), Magic Spell: Summon Guild Staff (pg. 38), Magic Spell: The Forbidden Name (pg. 38), Magic Spell: Transformation (pg. xx), Medium (pg. 39), Navigator (pg. 40), Object Reader (pg. 41), Oracle (pg. 41), Sensitive (pg. 42), Sixth Sense (pg. 42), Stout (pg. 43), Stubborn (pg. 43), Swift (pg. 43), Telekinetic (pg. 43), Telepathic (pg. 43), The Tome-Keeper\* (pg. 44), Tragic Past (pg. 44), True Love (pg. 44), Watched by Ravens\* (pg. 45)

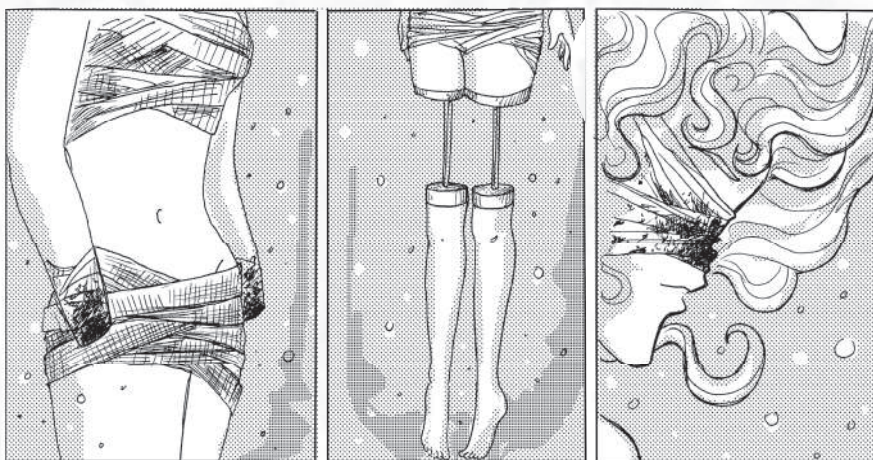
### AVAILABLE EQUIPMENT

Improvised Weapon, Lazarus Apple, Talisman, Bandages, Spirit Board, Lore Book, Vehicle

## STEP FOUR: TRAITS

Each position has its own list of available traits to choose from. Each one also lists which traits the character receives automatically for her position and how many free choices she can make (these are listed as “Automatic Traits” and “Trait Choices”).

- Write down any automatic traits granted by your position and make the number of trait choices allowed by your position. Important: you may only choose traits that are on your position’s “Available Traits” list.
- After you’ve chosen your traits, make sure to incorporate any attribute bonuses or penalties that your trait choices may grant.
- Make a brief note of each trait’s effects on your character sheet. This will allow you to reference the relevant rules without having to look them up during the game.
- Note that some traits have pre-requisites and requirements that must be met before they can be taken. Any requirements are listed in the trait’s description.
- Traits marked with an asterisk (\*) are designated as *Unique Traits*. Only one character can possess any given unique trait, and no character can ever have more than one.







### ALERT

You are intensely aware of your surroundings, always looking out for trouble. You receive +2 to your *awareness* attribute.

### BAYOU-BLOODED

Your family comes from a long line of southern “rootworkers.” Rootworkers are practitioners of hoodoo, a form of magic that was popular among African slaves in the southern United States. As a result of this, you are keenly in tune with the supernatural world and can manifest powers that most people cannot. You receive +2 to your *awareness* attribute and can choose to take any *Magic Spell* trait as a trait choice, even if they aren’t normally available to your position. In order to take this trait, your character must be from either the southern United States or from Africa.

### BIZARRE HABIT (MENTAL DISORDER)

You have developed some sort of bizarre habit. Gratuitous nail-biting, speaking only in baseball terminology, dancing instead of walking, etc . . . You determine the nature of your habit and are responsible for bringing it into your portrayal of your character.

### BOOKWORM

You are a voracious reader with a brain like a library. You receive +2 to your *knowledge* attribute.

### BORN LEADER

You possess a commanding presence that others find inspiring. As a battle action, you can attempt to inspire an ally with your words. Make a *willpower* roll. If successful, an ally of your choice immediately gains a spirit token. If the roll fails, nothing happens. You must role-play an inspiring or encouraging quip in order to achieve the benefit of this trait.

## BOUND (REQUIRES GHOST)

Your soul is tied to a specific person, place, or object in the material world. As a result, you must remain within the general vicinity of the source of your binding (within 100 feet or so). Describe whatever it is that binds you and its significance in your former life. For your trouble, you receive an extra spirit token at the beginning of each game session.

## CALMING PRESENCE

You have a calm, soothing demeanor that helps your companions deal with frightening situations. As a battle action, you can attempt a *willpower* roll to calm a *frightened* companion (who must be present at your current location). If successful, your companion is no longer *frightened*. If you fail, your companion remains *frightened*.

## CLAIRVOYANT

You are gifted with psychic visions of distant locations. You can spend a spirit token to invoke a clairvoyant vision. For the remainder of the scene, you are able to perceive a location of your choice as if you were actually there. You remain lucid during this vision and can relay what you see and hear to others.

## CLOCKWORK ANATOMY\*

Part of your body has been replaced with a magical clockwork device. This device performs the same function as the original body part, but is slightly enhanced due to its newly acquired efficiency. You receive an attribute bonus based on which body part has been replaced: Hand (+2 *strength*), Leg (+2 *speed*), Eye (+2 *awareness*), Heart (+2 *strength*), Brain (+2 *knowledge*). You can take this trait multiple times to represent each separate clockwork enhancement (even though it's a unique trait). Of course, having clockwork body parts is kind of, uh, weird, so you have to describe where and why you got the parts in order to take the trait.

## CONNECTED

You have a large network of personal acquaintances. You can draw on this network at any time by attempting a *charm* roll. If successful, you can establish a new NPC and describe your relationship to it. Alternatively, you can establish a pre-existing relationship to a character that has already been introduced (for instance, establishing that the villain character you just met is actually your long lost brother). If you fail the roll, the gamemaster gets to establish the basis of your relationship to the character in question and can use this freedom to establish the character as an enemy or a clueless dunce.



## CURIOUS

You've always been interested in learning new things. Everything from creepy stories about ghosts to general facts about the way the world works. You receive +1 to your *awareness* and *knowledge* attributes.

## CURSED ARM\*

One of your arms has been inhabited by a spirit. The spirit in your arm has its own agenda and will attempt to compel you to take actions that benefit its plan. The gamemaster is free to describe the personality and agenda of the spirit. At any time, the gamemaster can decide to compel you through your cursed arm. The gamemaster describes what the cursed arm is attempting to compel you to do and you must attempt a *willpower* roll. If successful, you maintain self-control and ignore the arm's commands. If you fail the roll, you must take the gamemaster's proposed course of action, even if you don't want to. The benefit of this trait is that your arm is supernaturally strong and fast, which grants +2 to your *strength* and *speed* attributes.

## CUTE

You're really darn cute. So cute, in fact, that someone could make millions by manufacturing a plush toy in your resemblance. You receive +2 to your *charm* attribute.

## DEPRESSED (MENTAL DISORDER)

You possess a deep, powerful sadness that is difficult to shake, even in the happiest of circumstances. You receive a -2 penalty to your *willpower* attribute.

## DEVOUT

You're faithfully devoted to an Earthly religion (Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, etc . . .). This devotion strengthens your resolve and fills you with courage. You receive +2 to your *willpower* attribute.

## FEARLESS

You are particularly courageous, even in the face of great terror. When you are *frightened*, you can still take actions as normal (instead of freezing or running away). This trait has no effect if you are driven *mad*.

## FERAL CHILD

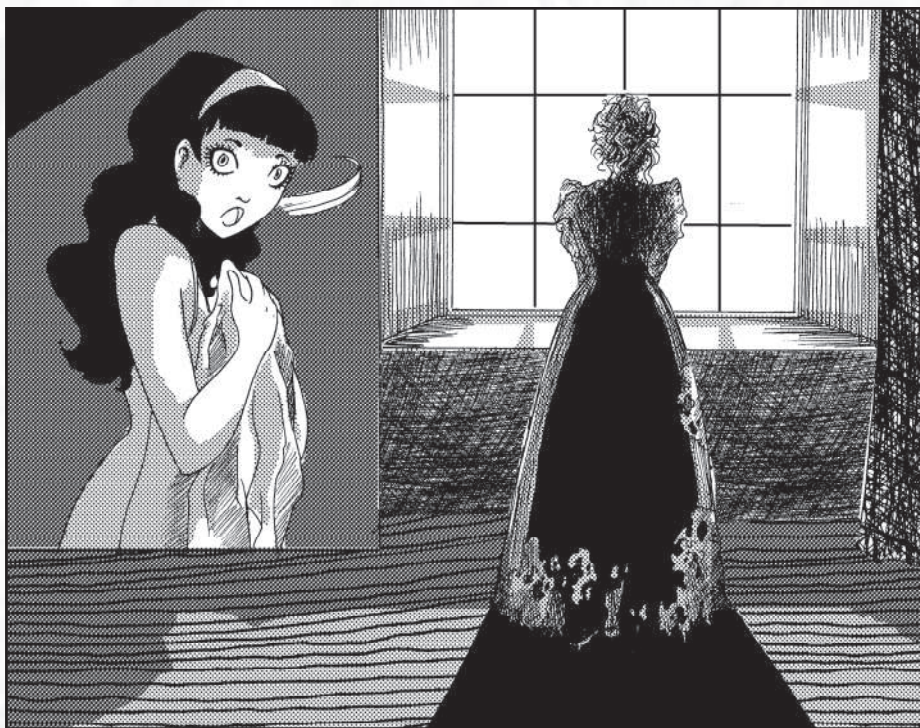
You were raised in the wilderness, perhaps by a pack of wolves or other animals. This upbringing led you to develop heightened senses and physical characteristics, but it also makes you seem a tad creepy. You receive +2 to your *awareness* attribute, +1 to your *speed* and *strength* attributes, and -2 to your *charm* attribute.

## FOUND IT IN THE ATTIC

At some point when you were exploring a relative's creepy old house, you discovered a unique item. You start the game with a special item in your possession. You can choose this item from among any equipment that is not normally available to your position.

## GHOST

You are a ghost, a spirit bound to earth due either to a flaw in the Hive's infrastructure or to the torment of your burdens in life. You have no physical form, but can manifest in various ways by drawing on the ambient energy of your present location. Your manifestations are generally subtle and include things like rapping on doors, moving small objects, speaking in whispers, and even manifesting yourself as a full-body apparition. You are intangible and completely unaffected by physical attacks and damage (you can, however, still be harmed by magic weapons and spells). If you enter the dreamed reality of another ghost, you temporarily re-gain physical form and all of the vulnerabilities of mortal life (you can be harmed by physical attacks and damage for instance, even to the extent of being forced to experience the terrors of death all over again). If you are *wounded*, the normal rules for wounded characters apply. If you are *gored*, you must choose either to recover (and suffer a permanent wound) or pass on to the next world (and start over with a new character).







## GUILDSMAN

You are a direct agent of the Host. You work to keep the cosmology of the universe running smoothly through your position in an Earthly guild. Your prime task is to recruit human agents and help them to clear the guild's vaults of restless spirits. Though you are immortal (you do not age), you still possess human vulnerabilities and can be hurt and injured just like a human can. You also possess an animal form. This form can reflect any worldly animal as well as any creature imagined in worldly folklore (dragons, werewolves, etc . . .). You can instantaneously shift your form at will. While in animal form, you retain your attribute ratings and traits and gain any abilities that make sense for your form. A bird form, for instance would allow you to fly, while a dragon form might allow you to breathe fire. Work with your GM to determine the specific qualities of your animal form and utilize a healthy dose of common sense.

## HALLUCINATIONS (MENTAL DISORDER)

Your perception of reality is somewhat skewed. You are haunted by sights and sounds that aren't perceived by other people. The GM can introduce hallucinations to your character at any time. These visions and noises seem very real to you and you have no way of discriminating between what is real and what is merely a hallucination.

## HAUNTED

You are personally haunted by a spirit of some sort. Describe the spirit that haunts you and come up with its motivation for doing so (even if your character isn't aware of it). The ghost who is haunting you can assist you in the game as the GM sees fit. You can also attempt to call on your ghostly companion in order to ask questions of it or have it help you in some way.

## HIDDEN SANCTUARY

You have access to a hidden sanctuary . . . a place where you can recover, do research, and generally be “in your element.” Your sanctuary could be anything from an abandoned church to an apartment or house. Each time that you spend a scene hanging-out in your sanctuary, you gain a spirit token. Describe your sanctuary in as much detail as you’d like. You could even draw a picture or create a map of the location to show to the other players.

## HYPNOTIST

You’ve trained as a hypnotist. This training allows you to mesmerize other characters and bend them to your will. You can spend a spirit token to attempt to hypnotize another character. Your target must immediately attempt a *willpower* roll. If successful, the target resists your hypnosis. If the roll fails, you mesmerize the target and she must obey your commands for the remainder of the scene. When the hypnotism ends, the target will have no recollection of the events that transpired while she was mesmerized.

## IMAGINARY FRIEND (MENTAL DISORDER)

Your best friend is, frankly, a figment of your overactive imagination. You can describe and name your unseen companion however you see fit. Your friend is role-played by the GM. During conversations with your friend, you look like a crazy fool babbling to yourself (assuming you don’t look that way normally).

## IGNORANT OF DEATH (REQUIRES GHOST)

You are unaware that you are dead, and your companions are hiding it from you. This perception is what keeps your soul from moving on to the next world. If you ever find out that you are dead, you can choose to move on, but it would likely come as a shock to the system (in fact, this revelation inflicts incidental mental damage). For your trouble, you receive an extra spirit token at the beginning of each session.

## LINGUIST

You’re an expert linguist, fluent in dozens of different languages and able to learn new languages very quickly. Any time you encounter a language in the game, you can attempt a *knowledge* roll to determine whether or not you can understand it. If successful, you understand enough of the language to gather the information you need in the context of the scene. If you fail, you can’t understand enough of the language to be of much use.

## LUCKY

Luck follows you around like a trusty companion. You always seem to be in the right place at the right time. You receive +2 to your *luck* attribute.





### MAGIC SPELL: ANIMATE STATUE

You give life to a stone statue, forcing it to obey your whims. You can spend a spirit token to animate to any statue that you can currently see. The statue remains animated and obedient until the end of the scene, at which time it re-solidifies. Use the animated statue profile on page 90.

### MAGIC SPELL: BARGAIN FROM BEYOND

You call forth a spirit from the Riddle Road and strike a bargain for power. You can spend a spirit token to call forth a dark spirit. Once summoned, the spirit will bargain with you, offering power in exchange for your life energy. You can choose to sacrifice up to five points from your attribute ratings. Each point that you sacrifice in this way grants you one spirit token. This sacrifice is permanent and your attribute ratings can only be regained through new traits or epiphanies. This spell can only be cast at a crossroads or a place where two characters' paths have crossed.

### MAGIC SPELL: BEWILDER

You conjure a brilliant flash followed by a dazzling array of swirling lights. As a battle action, you can spend a spirit token to bewilder your enemies. Each enemy present in the scene must attempt a *willpower* roll at the beginning of their next turn. If successful, they can act as normal. If they fail, they are bewildered and lose their turn. Each bewildered character must make a *willpower* roll at the beginning of each turn until they succeed (allowing them to snap out of it).

### MAGIC SPELL: BIND GHOST

You cast a spell that binds a ghost to a certain location or object. This is the spell that the guilds use to imprison ghosts in their vaults. You can spend a spirit token to bind a ghost to a specific location or object. Both the ghost and the location or object they are being bound to must be present for the spell to succeed. If successful, the ghost can only manifest in the specified location or the general vicinity of the specified object.

### MAGIC SPELL: CAT GOT YOUR TONGUE?

You invoke a spell that silences your target completely. You can spend a spirit token to cause another character to be temporarily stricken mute. You must be able to see the character that you are targeting for the spell to take effect. The muted character is unable to speak or create any sound with her mouth. Of course, this prevents the victim from doing nasty things like casting spells or shouting a warning to her friends.

### MAGIC SPELL: CHOKE

You call upon dark magic to constrict your target's airway, causing her to choke. You can spend a spirit token to inflict damage equal to your *willpower* rating on a single target.

### MAGIC SPELL: DEATH'S JOURNEY

You perform a dangerous spell that allows the living to cross into the world of the dead. By performing a complex ritual and spending a spirit token, you can enter a death-like trance and cross the veil between the living world and the world of the dead. During this trance, you must light a single candle, which must be placed near your body. This candle serves as the link between your physical body and your disembodied spirit. If the candle goes out at any time during the spell's duration, the link is severed and your body dies, stranding you as a ghost in the world of the dead. For the duration of the spell, you gain the *Ghost* trait (page 31).



### MAGIC SPELL: DEVIL DOLL

You create a creepy doll and animate it with your magic. You can spend a spirit token to animate any doll that you have created with your own hands. Your doll can be any shape or size, made out of any material. Once animated, the doll takes on the attributes and traits of the devil doll profile on page 91. The doll remains under your control until it is destroyed (*gored*) or you release the spell that animates it. There is no limit to how many dolls you can have under your control at one time. We're going to move on to the next trait now, cause this one is freakin' me out.

### MAGIC SPELL: DREAD SIGIL

You brand an object with the dread sigil, a sign of the Hive's omnipotent power. You can spend a spirit token to permanently mark one item with the dread sigil. The item may then be used to make mental attacks against ghosts and other supernatural creatures. To make a mental attack with a marked item, declare your target and make a *willpower* roll. If successful, the target takes mental damage equal to the result of your roll.

### MAGIC SPELL: DREAMING DEAD

With this spell you can influence and shape the dreams of a ghost. You can use this ability to make changes to your environment while exploring a vault. You can spend a spirit token to make a single change in the environment (add a door, remove a wall, create an enclosed chamber, whatever you can imagine). This transformation happens immediately after you cast the spell.

### MAGIC SPELL: EVIL EYE

You invoke a hex against an enemy, cursing her to misfortune. You can spend a spirit token to place a curse on a single character that you can see. The cursed character will automatically fail any *luck* roll that she attempts for the remainder of the scene.



### MAGIC SPELL: FIERY WALL

You conjure a wall of blazing fire that sweeps over your enemies. You can spend a spirit token to summon a fiery wall attack. Each enemy character involved in the current scene immediately suffers incidental damage.

### MAGIC SPELL: FOOT TRACK HOODOO

You invoke a curse on an enemy through her footprints. You must first find a set of footprints created by your target, then sprinkle magic powder in an “X” shape across them. Once this ritual is performed you can spend a spirit token at any time to activate a curse against the target. Once cursed, the target’s spirit is poisoned. The target’s *willpower* rating is immediately reduced by 2 and she will be plagued with unexplainable feelings of depression and dread.

### MAGIC SPELL: GRAVE DUST

You can spend a spirit token to conjure a cloud of foul grave dust, which temporarily blinds spirits. Any spirits involved in the scene are immediately blinded and must use their *luck* attribute for any roll that requires sight. The blindness lasts until the end of the scene, at which time any spirits blinded by the spell regain their sight.

### MAGIC SPELL: HEALING TOUCH

You invoke powerful healing magic to restore your companions to health. You can spend a spirit token to immediately restore a *wounded* or *gored* character to healthy, active status. You must physically touch the injured character in order for the spell to work.

### MAGIC SPELL: KNOWLEDGE OF THE DEAD

By casting this spell, you reveal all information about a particular spirit. You can spend a spirit token to immediately learn the entire history of one entity. The GM must tell you the entire life history of the ghost without holding anything back. This spell does not, however, grant any insights into the ghost’s current form (weaknesses, etc).

### MAGIC SPELL: MOTHWINGS

You manifest a pair of shimmering moth wings, allowing you to fly about at your leisure. You can spend a spirit token to sprout moth wings, allowing you to fly for the remainder of the scene.



### MAGIC SPELL: SECRET SEAL

You invoke the secret seal, a magical barrier that no spirit can cross. You can spend a spirit token to place the secret seal on any structure such as a house, shed, or mausoleum. Once a seal has been placed, ghosts and other supernatural creatures (faeries, vampires, werewolves, whatever) are completely unable to enter the structure. The seal remains until the character who placed it decides to remove it.

### MAGIC SPELL: SILVER PORTAL

You utilize a mirror as a magical portal, traveling in the world between the glass. You can spend a spirit token to transform any mirror into a magical portal. You (and any number of your friends) can enter this portal and exit from any other mirror in the whole world. This transportation is instantaneous. After you arrive at your destination, the mirror becomes normal again and cannot be used for travel unless this spell is re-cast.

### MAGIC SPELL: SNOUT OF THE HOUND

You can spend a spirit token to manifest a dog-like snout, granting you tremendous sensitivity of smell. For the remainder of the scene, you count as having an *awareness* rating of 20 due to the sensitivity of your sense of smell. When the scene ends, your nose returns to its normal size and your *awareness* attribute goes back to its normal rating.

### MAGIC SPELL: SPECTRAL STEED

You conjure a spectral steed, allowing you travel with greater ease. You can spend a spirit token to summon a spectral steed (page 94). The steed appears immediately and remains under your control until the end of the scene. You are free to describe your mount's appearance as you like. It could be anything from a skeletal horse to an enslaved, flying mermaid . . . use your imagination!

### MAGIC SPELL: SUMMON GUILD STAFF

You summon the aid of your guild's minions. You can spend a spirit token to summon one of your guild's staff (as specified during guild creation). This minion appears immediately and remains under your command until the end of the scene, at which time it will return to its residence in the guild.

### MAGIC SPELL: THE FORBIDDEN NAME

You speak the true name of the Host, a sound that terrifies spirits and supernatural creatures. You can spend a spirit token to invoke the forbidden name. Any ghosts or supernatural creatures present suffer mental damage equal to your *willpower* rating.

## MAGIC SPELL: TRANSFORMATION

You invoke a spell that rearranges the physical form of the body. You can spend a spirit token to transform any *willing* character (including yourself) into a form of your choosing. The target of your spell retains her attributes and traits, but gains the physical appearance and innate characteristics of the form you have chosen. For instance, a character who is transformed into a bird will gain the ability to fly. A character transformed into a fish gains the ability to swim well and breathe underwater. The possibilities for transformation are nearly endless. When trying to determine the benefits of a given transformation, use common sense and group consensus. Some forms may be more beneficial than others. The gamemaster should feel free to grant transformed characters a temporary trait or two to reflect their new form. The effects of this spell last until the end of the scene, at which time the character returns to her normal form.





### MAGIC SPELL: UNREST

You weave a dark spell that raises the dead from their graves. You can spend a spirit token to animate and control one dead body. The age of the body does not matter except that a freshly dead corpse will appear more human and an older corpse will appear more rotted and skeletal. Use the zombie profile on page 96. This corpse remains animated and under your control until it is *wounded* or you dismiss it.

### MARTIAL ARTSY

You've got fists of fury and feet of . . . uh . . . fury. Your martial prowess improves your chances of damaging your opponents. Add +2 to the damage rating of any physical attack that you make.

### ME, MYSELF, AND I (MENTAL DISORDER)

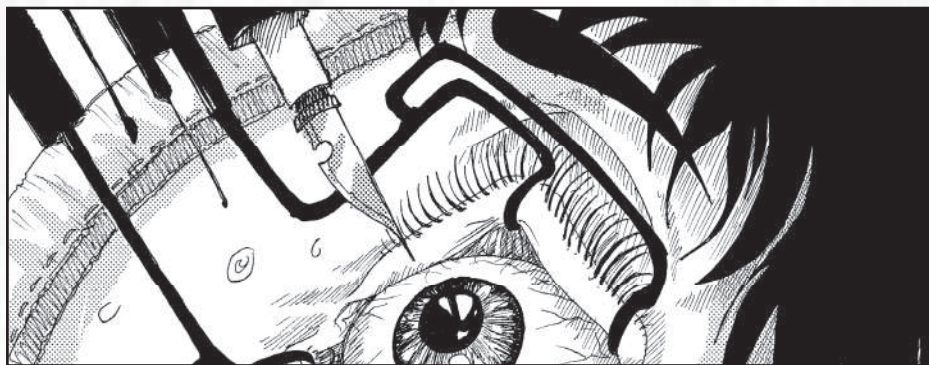
You have developed multiple personality disorder, an affliction in which your personality is prone to shift between different (often vastly different) personas. You may choose how many personas you possess and the personality and temperament of each of them.

### MEDIUM

You possess the ability to speak to the dead. The process of contacting the other side is often accompanied by some sort of ritual (such as a séance) or intermediary device (such as a spirit board). Some mediums even conduct their investigations by entering a trance and allowing the spirits to speak through them. Regardless of your methods, you can attempt to invoke communication with a spirit at any time. Make a *willpower* roll. If successful, you are able to establish communication with any spirit for a brief period (long enough to get whatever information you're after). You must know the spirit's name in order to establish a connection. If you fail the roll, two things can happen: either the communication is botched and unintelligible, or you make contact with a spirit other than the one you were attempting to contact (the GM chooses which). This spirit may try to deceive you or otherwise manipulate you toward its own agenda. You cannot use this ability while in a vault (outside spirits cannot breach the magical containment barriers of the vault).

### NAVIGATOR

You have an amazing sense of direction. This proves to be useful on occasion when you're exploring creepy vaults and such. You can make a *knowledge* roll at any time to figure out roughly where you're at and which direction you're facing.



### NIGHTMARES (MENTAL DISORDER)

You are plagued by terrible nightmares of the things that you have seen and done. These nocturnal visions result in a debilitating lack of sleep, which sticks you with a -1 penalty to your *awareness* and *speed* attributes.

### OBJECT READER

You possess the ability to psychically “read” the history of an object simply by touching it. At any time, you can attempt to “read” the history of an object that you are touching. Make a *willpower* roll. If successful, you are granted a psychic vision of all the people who have ever come into contact with the object, as well as the emotions that those people felt while the object was in their possession. If you fail your roll, you are unable to get a clear reading of the object.

### OBSESSION (MENTAL DISORDER)

You have an intense, eccentric obsession with one particular subject. The GM determines the subject of your obsession (which is usually pretty gonzo). Any time that you do something that involves your obsession *and* makes your life more difficult, you immediately gain a spirit token.

### ORACLE

You are gifted with psychic visions of future events. You can spend spirit token at any time to activate this ability. Roll a die three times and record the results. These rolls represent your visions of the future. Any time in the future when *any* character (PC or NPC) is required to make a roll, you can instead assign the character one of your predetermined roll results (as if the character attempted the roll and got the assigned result). These assigned die results *do not* trigger epiphanies.

### PARANOID (MENTAL DISORDER)

You have become extremely paranoid, constantly looking over your shoulder for some irrational threat. As a result, you receive a +2 bonus to your *awareness* attribute and a -2 penalty to your *charm* attribute (people think you're weird).



## PHOBIA (MENTAL DISORDER)

You are desperately afraid of one particular situation or circumstance. Any time that you encounter the source of your phobia, you immediately suffer a *scare* (incidental mental damage). The GM is responsible for determining the subject of your phobia. A phobia will usually be somehow related to the event that triggered it (falling into a well full of spiders, for instance, might trigger a phobia of spiders).

## RIPOSTE

Your keen reflexes allow you to take revenge on enemies who get in your face. Each time you are damaged by an attack, you can immediately make an attack against the character who damaged you.

## SENSITIVE

You are sensitive to the energies produced by ghosts and spirits. As a result, you are often able to sense when something supernatural is about to happen to you. Whenever you are in the presence of paranormal activity, you can make an *awareness* roll to sense the presence of ghosts, magic, and other supernatural energies. If successful, the gamemaster must reveal the nature and strength of any supernatural activity in your direct vicinity, including the exact number of spirits present (if any), the presence of magic, or anything else that she deems appropriate.

## SIGNATURE MOVE

You've developed a super special attack move that inflicts huge amounts of damage. Problem is, it takes a lot out of you. Once per game session, you can use your signature move instead of making a normal attack. When you use your signature move, *double* the result of your attack roll. If you fail the attack roll, you're out of luck.

## SIXTH SENSE

You have an uncanny ability to detect danger. This ability allows you to predict and avoid hazardous situations. Any time you would normally take incidental damage you can attempt an *awareness* roll. If successful, you are granted a glimpse of the future that allows you to foresee the danger and avoid taking any damage. If you fail, you suffer the damage as normal.

## SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHER\*

You found a strange, old-fashioned camera in a weird little antique shop. This camera is enchanted with the ability to take photographs of ghosts (even those that are not visible to the human eye). You've never been able to find the little store where you got the darn thing. You start the game with the "spirit camera"

in your inventory and can use it any time in order to record images of ghosts you've encountered or scout an area for invisible spirits. Each photograph takes about an hour to develop, so the results are not immediate.

### STOUT

You are particularly muscular, strong, and athletic. You receive +2 to your *strength* attribute.

### STUBBORN

You are particularly strong-willed and instilled with amazing conviction and bravery. You receive +2 to your *willpower* attribute.

### SWIFT

You move with great quickness and agility. You receive +2 to your *speed* attribute.

### SWIFT ATTACK

You're quite vicious when you're angry. If you make a successful attack roll, you can immediately make another attack against any available target. You only receive this benefit once per turn.

### TELEKINETIC

You possess the power to move objects with your mind. You can attempt a *willpower* roll to move any physical object that you can see. If successful, you can move and manipulate the object in any way you see fit. If the roll is failed, the object quivers and strains, but does not move.

### TELEPATHIC

You possess the gift of telepathy, the ability to communicate mentally with others regardless of obstruction or distance. You can communicate mentally to any sentient creature. This communication takes the form of a voice that the receiver of the message will "hear" in her thoughts. The subject can attempt a *willpower* roll to block out the communication if they wish. A successful roll blocks all further telepathic communication with the character for the remainder of the scene. A failed roll indicates that telepathic communication can proceed unhindered until the end of the scene.

### TERRIFYING SHRIEK

You wail from the depths of your tortured soul, giving everyone who hears you a great big willies-sandwich. You can use your mournful shriek as a mental attack. Make a *willpower* roll. If successful, you deal mental damage equal to the result of your roll to any enemy character who can hear your shriek.



### THE TOME KEEPER\*

You've been entrusted with your guild's secret lore book. It contains all of the guild's secrets and many pieces of lore and information about the history of the guild and the various entities who have inhabited your guild's vaults in the past. As long as you possess this tome, you receive a +4 to your *knowledge* attribute.

### THERE'S NO SCRUBBING THIS THING OFF!

You've been branded as property of your guild. You are bound to fulfill your guild contract upon penalty of death. Any time to try to back out of your guild responsibilities (leaving the country, etc . . .) you will be pursued by the guild's staff and terrible, nasty things are likely to happen to you. If you are *gored* by a member of the guild who is enforcing your contract, you die and cannot choose to recover.

### TOOTH AND CLAW

You possess some sort of innate natural weaponry (fangs, claws, barbed tail, etc). Your unarmed attacks grant a +6 damage bonus when this natural weapon is employed.

### TOUGH

You're one tough cookie. Any time you take damage from a physical attack, reduce the amount of damage taken by 2.

### TRAGIC PAST

You're haunted by memories of your dark past. The details of your past are up to you to create, but they should involve some sort of tragedy (the death of a family member, a childhood sickness, et cetera). You receive an extra spirit token at the beginning of each game session.

### TRUE LOVE

You are deeply in love with one of your companions. When you take this trait, choose one of your companions as your true love. At any time, you can spend a spirit token on behalf of the beloved character. Whether or not your love is requited or your beloved is even aware of your affection is up to the player of the beloved character.

### VOICES (MENTAL DISORDER)

You hear disembodied voices. They're everywhere . . . in your dreams, in your house, even in public places. No place is free of the voices. The voices compel you to do things, terrible things. The GM is in charge of role-playing the voices in your head. If a voice compels you to do something, and you do it, you immediately gain a spirit token.



### WATCHED BY RAVENS\*

You don't know why, but you are constantly followed by a flock of ravens. They always seem to be perched in the trees around you or pecking at your window late at night. The GM is free to complicate the story through your encounters with ravens (by having them show up at inopportune moments, etc.). For your trouble, you receive an extra spirit token at the beginning of each game session.

### WEALTHY

Your family is possessed of a great deal of wealth. You start the game with two extra equipment choices.

### WITCH HUNTER

You have a particular affinity for beating on practitioners of the dark arts. Whenever you make a physical attack against a character that possesses *Magic Spell* traits, you receive a +4 damage bonus (in addition to any damage bonus from weapons or special attacks).



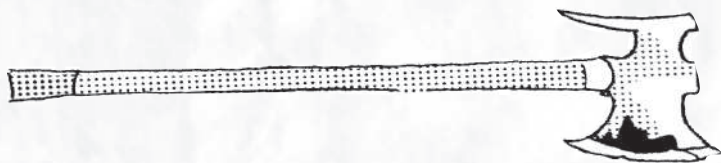
## STEP FIVE: CHOOSE EQUIPMENT

By default, your character starts the game with three items of your choice. Like traits, these items must be chosen from your position's "available equipment" list. Of course, it's possible to acquire new items once the game begins.



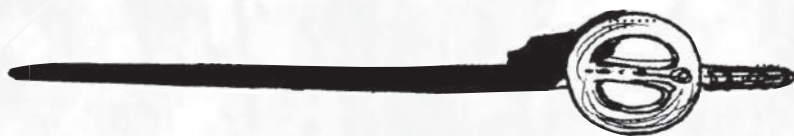
### IMPROVISED WEAPONS

An improvised weapon is any kind of object that can be utilized as a weapon that is not specifically intended for that purpose. Examples include: baseball bats, umbrellas, iron skillet, rocks, very large books, wooden boards, hammers, trash can lids, etc . . . Improvised weapons grant a +2 damage bonus to any attack made with them.



### WEAPONS

Any object that was made with the intent of inflicting harm is considered a weapon. Examples include: pistols, shotguns, swords, battle-axes, bows and arrows, crossbows, rifles, etc . . . Weapons grant a +6 damage bonus to any attack made with them.



### MAGIC WEAPONS

Magic weapons are special weapons that have been infused with supernatural potency. Most magic weapons are archaic in style (swords, crossbows, etc). Magic weapons grant a +10 damage bonus to any attack made with them. Magic weapons can also harm certain kinds of supernatural creatures (such as ghosts) that are invulnerable to normal physical attacks.

## FLASHLIGHT

Guild missions will often involve the navigation of very dark places. Flashlights help to shed some light on such situations.

## EMF DETECTOR

EMF (or electro-magnetic field) detectors are commonly used by paranormal investigators to detect the presence of spirits. It is believed that the presence of a spirit will cause a fluctuation in the electro-magnetic field. These devices are hand held, and battery operated. If an agent uses an EMF detector in the presence of a spirit, she may notice “spikes” and other abnormalities in the electro-magnetic field.

## CELL PHONE

Communication can be very important on guild missions. Having a cell phone with you can be very handy. Note: Cell phones do not generally work inside vaults (unless the resident spirit wants them to).

## SPIRIT BOARD

A spirit board is a rectangular, wooden board with numbers and letters painted on or carved into it. When some sort of pointing device (such as a glass) is placed on the board, spirits can manipulate it to spell out messages. The effectiveness of a spirit board depends completely on the mood and disposition of any spirits who are present when it is used.

## LORE BOOK

A lore book is simply a book that contains lots of information on the supernatural. Once per session, a character with a lore book can use it to automatically succeed at a *knowledge* roll. If a character has access to more than one lore book, she can use this benefit once per book.

## TALISMAN

Talismans come in a variety of forms. Everything from a crucifix to a gris-gris could be considered a talisman. Talismans gain supernatural potency due to the faith and belief of their wearer. Any time a character wearing a talisman is targeted by a harmful magic spell, she may attempt a *willpower* roll. If successful, the spell's effects are immediately negated. If the roll is failed, the spell takes effect as normal.



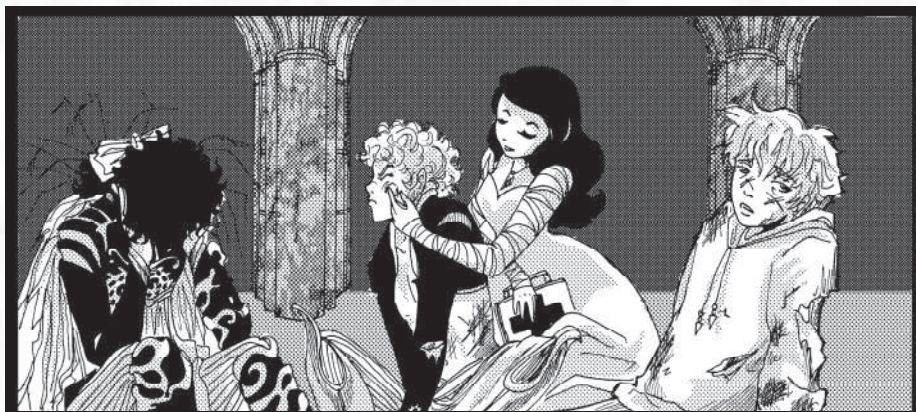
## LAZARUS APPLE

These apples are potent magical items, gathered from the Tree of Life on Lazarus Island. They look like fragile apples made of gold and glass. Each apple contains a dark liquid that has incredible healing power. If a Lazarus Apple is broken, any character who eats it (or has its liquid poured into her mouth) is immediately returned to healthy, active status. It doesn't matter whether the recipient is *wounded*, *gored*, or dead. The apple's magic also cures the recipient of any disease or poison in her system. Once a Lazarus apple is used, it loses any further healing power. If a character takes more than one apple from Lazarus Island at a time, any apples past the first will be rendered ineffective.

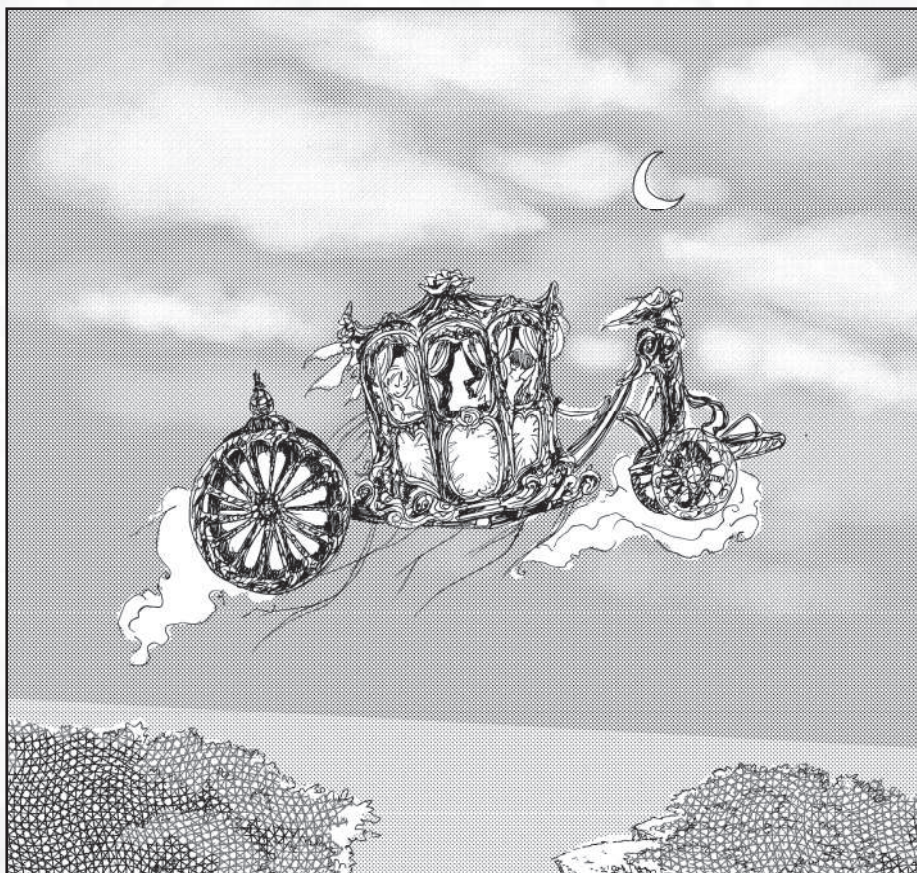


## BANDAGES

Bandages are required to patch up characters that are injured. If a friendly character spends a scene applying bandages to a *gored* character, that character is returned to active status at the end of the scene. Each set of bandages counts as one equipment choice. Once a set of bandages has been used, it cannot be used again.







## VEHICLE

A vehicle could be anything from a car, to a bicycle, to a flying black carriage pulled by spectral horses. It's often handy to have a vehicle during guild missions to cut down on the time it takes get to where you're going or to serve as a "mobile command post" of sorts.

## OTHER EQUIPMENT

Of course you can carry around items that are not listed above. Pretty much everything that exists in our modern world exists in the Bizenghast universe. However, unlisted equipment does not generally count as an equipment choice for your character. Equipment choices are reserved for those items that have a specific effect on the game rules or are particularly useful for the type of activities that characters are prone to participate in. If you want a piece of equipment that's unlisted, the gamemaster gets to decide whether or not the item is appropriate and whether or not it counts as an equipment choice.



## ACQUIRING NEW EQUIPMENT

You may occasionally want to acquire new equipment for your character. This game really isn't about how much loose change your character carries around or how much is in her savings account. Whether or not your character can afford to purchase an item is left to the GM's discretion. If the GM doesn't feel that you could afford the item in question, perhaps you could try something that might draw upon your character's abilities (sweet-talk a salesman with a *charm* roll . . . swipe an item with a *speed* roll, etc).



## STEP SIX: FINAL DETAILS

Name your character and think about what her personality might be like. You might also jot down a few notes about your character's background. Where does she come from? Does she have any family? What led her to become a part of the guild? What are her goals and aspirations? All of these details help to flesh out your character and make her more interesting to play.



# CHAPTER III:

GAME RULES

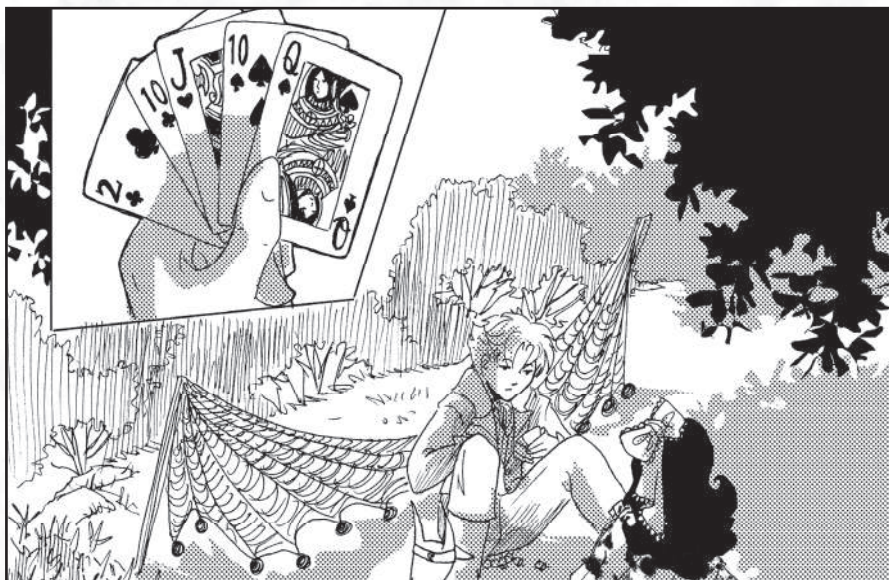


## GAME RULES

Now that you've been properly introduced to the setting and learned how to create your guild and your character, let's talk about how you use all of this to play a game.

### SO . . . WHAT DO WE DO?

Okay, step one is to get together with a bunch of friends who are interested in playing. The number of players is pretty much a matter of personal preference, but you'll need *at least* two. The sweet spot for most groups is somewhere between four and six players. Anyway, you're going to sit down around a table with these folks and create a fictional character. The gamemaster (GM) is going to describe scenes to you, and you are going to narrate your character's interactions with the scene and the other characters. For example, the GM might say: "You enter a dark, dusty hallway. There's a wooden door at the end of the hall. The door is open slightly and a golden light is leaking through the crack." You would then decide what you want your character to do in this situation. Here's the neat thing . . . you can do anything that you can imagine (within the limits of your character's attributes and traits). You might say "I walk down the hall and listen for noise on the other side of the door." The GM would then continue by responding to your action with further description. "You can barely hear a sad, tinny melody in the room beyond the door, as if there's a music box in the room." Then you would respond to the GM's description (see how it goes back and forth?) "I carefully open the door and peek inside." This simple, back-and-forth narration is the basic procedure of the game.





## CHALLENGES

The back and forth narration ends as soon as a character enters a situation that the GM considers a challenge. Let's say that after peeking through the door with the creepy music, the GM says "as you open the door, all of the lights go out and you hear a terrible, threatening shriek in the room." You say, "I run back down the hallway to get away from whatever made that shriek." The GM responds by asking you to make a *speed* roll to determine whether or not you make it safely away from the source of the shriek. A challenge is simply a situation that has at least two possible outcomes. In order to make the game more unpredictable, we roll dice to determine the outcome of the situation. You roll the die . . . success! The GM describes you safely fleeing down the hallway, escaping the terror in the room. The GM should take care not to call for a roll every time a character wants to take a minor action. Only roll the die when something important is at stake. If a roll doesn't result in any changes in the game it probably wasn't necessary.

## THE ANATOMY OF A DIE ROLL

So we've talked about *when* to roll the dice, but we still need to discuss how to interpret the results once they hit the table.

## ACTIONS TO ATTRIBUTES

When your character faces a challenge in the game world, the GM decides which of your character's attributes covers the action in question. If, for instance, your character is trying to perceive an approaching figure in more detail, the GM would probably decide that the action is covered by your character's *awareness* attribute. Once the GM assigns an attribute to the challenge, it's time to roll the die.



## MAKING A ROLL

When the time comes to make a roll, roll a twenty-sided die and compare the result to your character's relevant attribute rating. There are three possible outcomes of any roll:

**SUCCESS:** If your roll is *lower than* your character's relevant attribute, the roll is successful and your character succeeds at whatever she was trying to do.

### EXAMPLE

Amy's character is trying to escape from a ghost who is chasing her. The GM calls for a *speed* roll to see whether or not she escapes. Amy's character has a *speed* rating of 10. She rolls a die and gets a 7 . . . Success! Amy's character escapes from the ghost.

**FAILURE:** If your roll is *higher than* your character's relevant attribute, the roll is failed and your character fails at whatever she was trying to do.

### EXAMPLE

Isaac's character is trying to convince his mother that the reason he was caught sneaking out at night was because his guild needed him to help with a ghost hunt. The GM calls for a *charm* roll. Isaac's character has a *charm* rating of 8. He rolls a die and gets a 17 . . . failure! Looks like somebody's gettin' grounded.

**EPIPHANY:** If your roll *matches* your character's relevant attribute, the roll is successful *and* the attribute's rating is immediately raised by one. This represents a moment of sudden insight that improves your character's innate abilities. "20" is the highest rating that an attribute can have. If you roll an epiphany with an attribute that has a 20 rating, the rating does not increase, but you immediately gain a spirit token. Epiphanies do not increase the attribute ratings of NPCs (NPCs attributes are essentially "locked"). Epiphanies can also earn your character new traits (see page 57).

### EXAMPLE

Mike's character is firing his crossbow at an unbearable soul. The GM calls for a *speed* roll. Mike's character has a *speed* rating of 12. He rolls a die and gets a 12 . . . epiphany! The shot strikes home and Mike immediately raises his character's *speed* rating from 12 to 13.

After a roll is made, the GM is responsible for describing the outcome of the challenge. She describes the character's success or failure in the challenge, and the play continues as normal.

## SPIRIT TOKENS

Spirit tokens are a way that you, the player, can exercise more control over what happens to your character. Each player starts the game with one spirit token. The GM starts each session with a number of spirit tokens equal to the number of players. Spirit tokens can be used in a number of ways:

You can spend a spirit token after any failed roll to instead succeed at the roll. The roll counts as an epiphany (a roll that matches your attribute rating), but does not increase the rating of your attribute like a normal epiphany would.

### EXAMPLE

Noah's character is trying to remember the weakness of a creature that he's fighting. The GM calls for a *knowledge* roll. Noah's character has a *knowledge* rating of 6. He rolls a die and gets a 13 . . . failure. Noah decides to spend a spirit token to succeed at the roll. His character suddenly recalls the creature's weakness.

You may spend a spirit token after a failed killsave or fearsave to avoid being *wounded*, *gored*, *frightened* or *mad*.

### EXAMPLE

Amy's character falls off a rusty ladder and is *wounded* by incidental damage. She decides to spend a spirit token to avoid being *wounded*. Her character walks away from the fall with only a minor bruise.

Some traits require that you spend a spirit token to activate them (especially magic spells and the like).

### EXAMPLE

Mike's wants his character to cast the magic spell, "Fiery Wall." He spends a spirit token and his character casts the spell.





## GAINING NEW TOKENS

There are two ways that you can gain more spirit tokens during the game. The GM can award spirit tokens to players who really go out on a limb to make the game more fun. Anything from good role-playing, to contributing snacks or heroic in-character actions could be rewarded. GMs shouldn't overuse these rewards, but a well-placed spirit token can really help to encourage positive participation in the game.

### EXAMPLE

Isaac always brings snacks to the game. The GM thanks him by awarding him an extra spirit token at the beginning of the session.

### BANTER

The other way to get new spirit tokens is through *banter*. During a battle, you can choose to *banter* on your turn (which you must do to the exclusion of any other action). When you decide to *banter*, role-play a short bit of dialogue for your character. This could be a battle cry ("Yaaaarg!"), a taunt ("Come and get some corpse-face!") or any other flavorful dialogue that you can think of. After you've role-played your *banter*, make a *willpower* roll. If successful, you gain a spirit token. If you fail, you gain nothing.

### EXAMPLE

During a battle scene, Marty declares that she's going to banter on her turn. Her character leaps up on a table and shouts "Stay back, Mr. Nastypants!" Marty attempts a *willpower* roll and succeeds. She immediately gains a spirit token.

## HOW THE GM USES SPIRIT TOKENS

The GM is restricted to using her spirit tokens on NPCs that *oppose* the player-characters. She cannot, for instance, spend a spirit token to benefit a PC or a friendly NPC. This assures that the PCs will be presented with an exciting challenge and not just bowl through their opposition. Clever GMs will use their spirit tokens to control the pacing of climactic scenes. For instance, if a villain is almost out of spirit tokens, the GM might decide to have her banter to gain a spirit token and keep the scene going a little longer.

### BANTER FOR NPCs

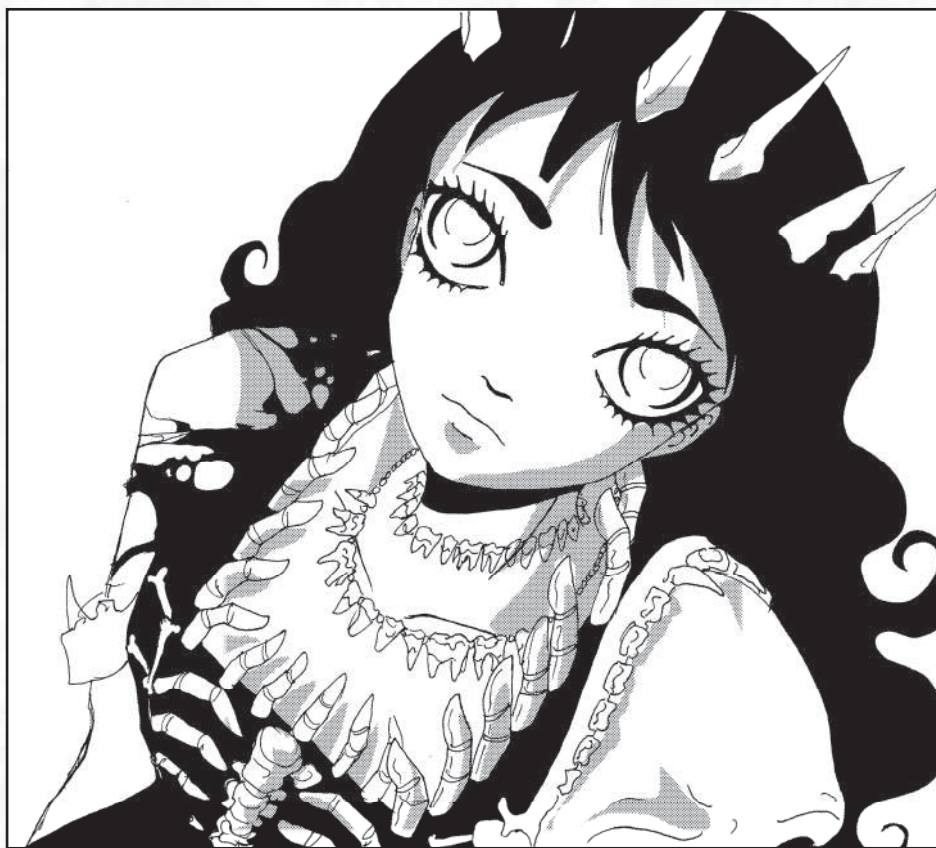
NPCs can banter, but only the important ones. Only *named* NPCs can gain spirit tokens through banter. If an NPC isn't a specifically named character, it cannot banter. For example, "Bali-Lali" is a named NPC. A "zombie" isn't. The GM can only spend spirit tokens gained through *banter* on the NPC that performed the *banter*.

## GAINING NEW TRAITS

Over the course of the game, your character can receive new traits as she learns from her experiences in the game. Each time one of your character's attributes reaches a rating of 16 or 20, she immediately gains a new trait from her position's available traits list. This benefit is only granted the first time a given rating reaches 16 or 20. For instance, if your character is gored and a 16 rating is reduced to 14, she does not gain another new trait when she raises her rating back to 16. It is possible, through certain trait choices, for a character to start the game with one or more 16 or 20 ratings. In this case, the character is granted extra traits just the same as if she had earned the ratings through epiphanies.

### EXAMPLE

After several sessions, Isaac's character has a *knowledge* rating of 15. At some point, the GM calls for a *knowledge* roll and Isaac gets an epiphany, raising his rating to 16. Achieving a rating of 16 means that he immediately gets to choose another trait from his position's list. He chooses his new trait and is able to use it later in the same scene.





# COMBAT

When characters battle with lost souls and other opponents, there are a few extra rules to follow and a few new ways to interpret the dice. Follow the procedure below when a battle occurs.

## 1. DETERMINE INITIATIVE

In a battle, it's important to determine the order in which the involved characters take action. The character with the highest *speed* attribute acts first, followed by the character with the second highest *speed* attribute, and so on until each character has acted. If there's a tie (which is fairly common) compare the *awareness* attributes of the tied characters. The character with the higher *awareness* attribute acts first. If there's still a tie, roll a die and the character that rolls higher acts first.

## THE INITIATIVE LIST

It helps for the GM to make a list of the characters' initiative order before the game starts. This allows the GM to simply add NPCs each time there's a battle (instead of having to start a fresh list each time).

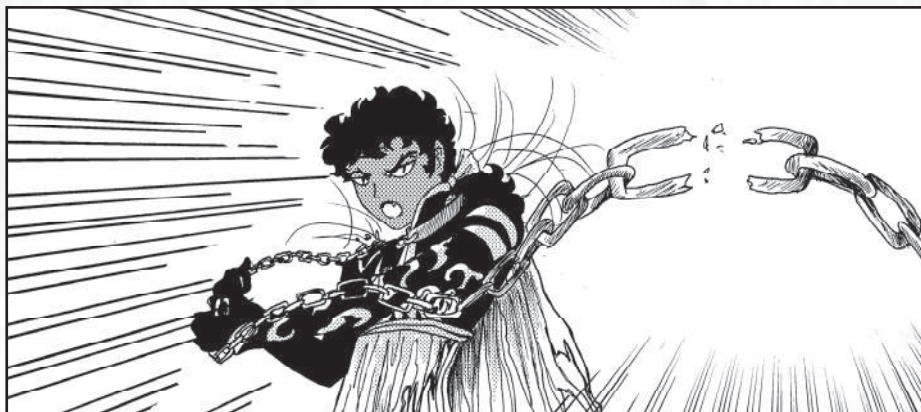
## EXAMPLE

At the beginning of the game session, Mike (the GM) makes a list of each PC in order of initiative. Marty's character goes first with a *speed* rating of 13 and an *awareness* rating of 8. Amy's character goes next with a *speed* rating of 10 and an *awareness* rating of 12. Isaac and Noah's characters both have a *speed* rating of 8, but Noah's character has the higher *awareness* rating (13 to Isaac's 6), so he goes before Isaac. The GM jots down a list that looks something like this:

13/8 Marty  
10/12 Amy  
8/13 Noah  
8/6 Isaac

Later in the game, the players do battle with a horde of disgusting zombies. The zombies have a *speed* rating of 8 and an *awareness* rating of 10. The GM inserts them into the initiative list like this:

13/8 Marty  
10/12 Amy  
8/13 Noah  
8/10 Zombies  
8/6 Isaac



## 2. TAKE ACTION

Each character takes one action on her turn. This is sometimes referred to as a “battle action.” The most common action for a character to take during a battle is to attack an enemy, but any action is possible (you can move around, try to escape, shout to a friend, etc). Any challenges that arise from your character’s action are resolved normally. Note: Some traits specifically require a battle action to activate (most magic spells, for instance). If your character activates such a trait, it takes her entire turn. Outside of battle, a battle action represents a segment of time of about ten seconds.

Once each character has taken an action, start over at the top of the initiative list and keep cycling through until the battle ends (usually by one side *wounding* or *goring* all of their opponents, or by one side running away).

### EXAMPLE

On his turn, Noah decides that his character is going to cast the spell *Spectral Steed*, to bring an extra ally into the fight. Isaac decides to banter for an extra spirit token and Amy attempts to strike an enemy with her weapon.

## MAKING AN ATTACK

When one character attacks another, the attacking character makes a roll using the appropriate attribute for the type of attack she’s making. Ranged attacks (shooting and throwing) require a *speed* roll. Melee attacks (punching, kicking, striking with a weapon) require a *strength* roll. If the roll is successful, the attack strikes its target. If the roll is failed, the attack misses its target.

### EXAMPLE

Noah’s character is attacking an unbearable soul with his revolver. The GM calls for a *speed* roll. Noah’s character has a *speed* rating of 12. He rolls a die and gets a 7 . . . success! His shot strikes home.





## DETERMINING DAMAGE

When an attack successfully hits its intended target, it's time to figure out how much damage it causes. The damage of an attack is equal to the result of the successful attack roll, plus the *damage bonus* of the weapon being used by the attacker (unarmed attacks such as punches and kicks do not generally confer a damage bonus).

### EXAMPLE

The result of Noah's successful attack roll was 7. He adds in the +6 damage bonus granted by his revolver for a damage total of 13.

## MAKING A KILLSAVE

After damage has been totaled, it's time to determine whether or not the damage inflicted was enough to wound the victim. We call this making a "killsave." To make a killsave, the victim of the attack rolls a die. If the result is *higher than* the amount of damage she's taken, she shrugs off the attack and remains active. If the result is *equal to or lower than* the amount of damage taken, she is *wounded* by the attack.

### EXAMPLE

The GM needs to make a killsave for the unbearable soul. He rolls a die, trying to beat the 13 points of damage from Noah's attack, and gets a 7 . . . failure! Looks like the unbearable was *wounded* by the attack.

## BEING WOUNDED

*Wounded* characters have suffered enough of an injury that they can't take any further action. They fall to the ground, still conscious, but in too much pain to do anything constructive. *Wounded* characters remain wounded until the end of the scene, at which time they automatically recover.

### EXAMPLE

The *wounded* unbearable falls to the ground with a howl of agony, clutching the revolver wound in its chest cavity.

## BEING GORED

Being *wounded* sucks, but there are still worse things that can happen to your character, like being *gored*, for example. There are two ways that a character can be *gored*. If a *wounded* character takes damage and fails her killsave, she is *gored*. If any character, active or *wounded*, ever takes so much damage (20 or more) in a single instance that she couldn't possibly succeed at a killsave, she is *gored*. When a character is *gored*, she's in really bad shape. We're talking blood spraying through the air. Nasty stuff. A *gored* character is immediately rendered unconscious and is hanging on to life by a very thin thread. *Gored* characters remain *gored* until they receive medical attention.

### EXAMPLE

Amy's character gets attacked by an angry ghost. The ghost's attack inflicts 22 points of damage. Since there is no possible way that Amy can roll higher than 22 on a twenty-sided die, she is *gored*.





## RECOVER OR GIVE UP THE GHOST?

When your character is *gored*, you have an important choice to make . . . does your character recover or give up the ghost? If you choose recovery, your character will pull through and eventually recover from her wounds. If you choose to give up the ghost, your character succumbs to her wounds and dies. I hear you puzzling, “why would I choose to have my character die?” Well, there are a couple of reasons. Sometimes players like to have their characters die when it’s dramatically appropriate to do so (such as after a big moment of self-sacrifice). Or, you may just be tired of your character and decide that you want to move on and create a new one. The point is: you never have to let your character die, but the option is there if you want it.

### EXAMPLE

After she is *gored*, Amy decides that she wants her character to live on. She chooses recovery.

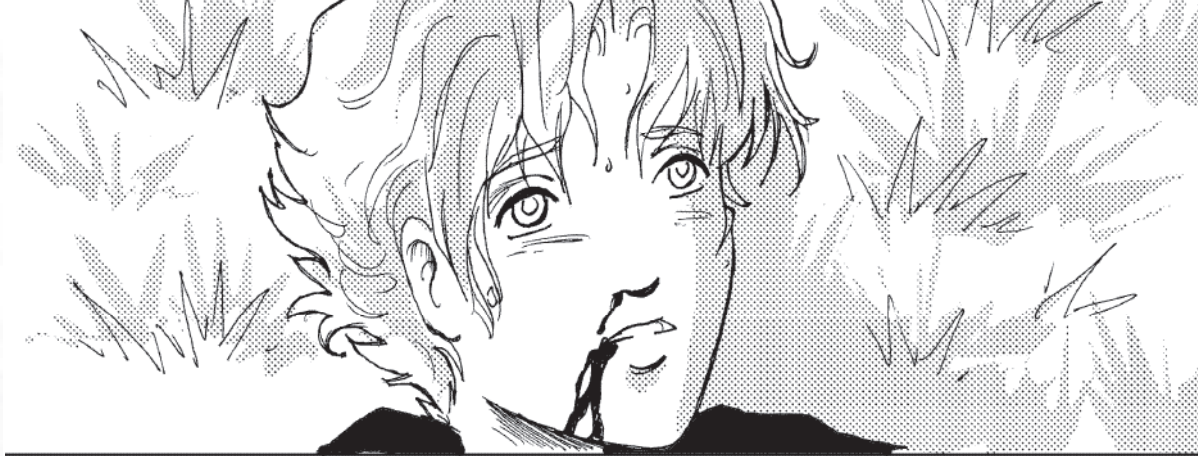
## THE PRICE OF RECOVERY

If you choose to recover after being *gored*, your character manages to stave off death, but is left with a grievous reminder of her injury. When your character recovers, you must roll a die and consult the permanent injury table below:

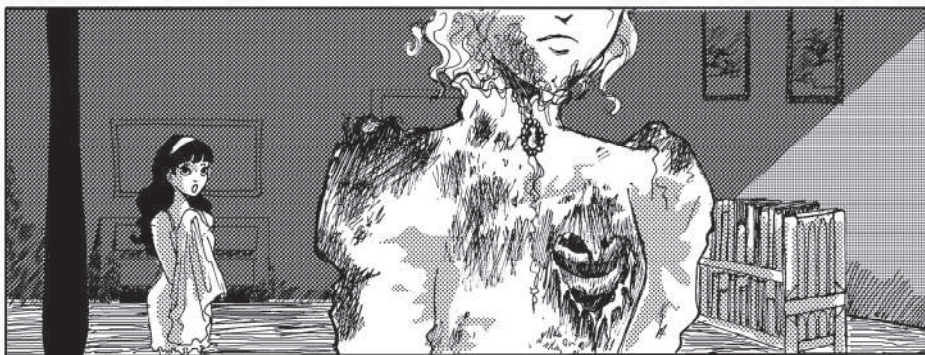
ROLL	PERMANENT INJURY
1-2	Facial Injury (-2 Charm)
3-4	Hand Injury (-2 Strength)
5-6	Foot Injury (-2 Speed)
7-8	Arm Injury (-2 Strength)
9-10	Leg Injury (-2 Speed)
11-12	Body Injury (-2 Strength)
13-14	Eye Injury (-2 Awareness)
15-16	Head Injury (-2 Knowledge)
17-18	Loss of Confidence (-2 Willpower)
19-20	Death’s Door (-2 Luck)

### Example

Amy rolls a die and gets a 16. “16” on the permanent injury table is “Head Injury.” Amy reduces her character’s knowledge rating by two. Her character remains incapacitated until Marty’s character revives her with a Lazarus Apple.







## BECOMING A GHOST

Any human character who dies can choose to become a ghost (remember, guildsmen are not human and cannot, therefore, become ghosts). If you choose for your character to become a ghost, roll on the permanent injury table as you normally would when recovering from being *gored* (see page 62). Your character's attribute ratings remain the same in death (after accounting for permanent injury, of course) but she loses any traits she had in life. Your character gains the *Ghost* trait and can choose traits from the *Lost Soul* trait list until she has the same number of traits that she had in life.

## EXAMPLE

After being *gored*, Marty decides that her character is going to “give up the ghost.” Since her character was a human agent, she also decides that she wants to *become* a ghost. Before she died, Marty's character had four traits. She erases the old traits and writes down the first of her new traits: *Ghost*. She then chooses three additional traits from the *Lost Soul* trait list on page 22.

## WOUNDED AND GORED NPCS

If an NPC is *wounded or gores*, it dies at the end of the scene unless it receives medical attention of some-sort. The only exception to this rule is when the attacking character does not intend to kill her opponent. For instance, if a character gets in a fist fight with a bully at school, she's probably not intending to kill the poor guy. In this case, a *wounded or gores* NPC is simply incapacitated until it makes sense that they recover. Obviously, ghosts cannot be killed (they're already dead), but they can be incapacitated by magic weapons and spells. Only the Host has the power to destroy souls and it doesn't happen very often.

## FEAR AND MADNESS

Dealing with angry ghosts and unbearable souls can be just as hard on your character's psyche as it is on her body. Some creatures and events are capable of inflicting mental damage.

### MAKING A MENTAL ATTACK

Some characters are capable of attacking the minds of their enemies. To make a mental attack, make a roll using the appropriate attribute (usually *willpower*). If the roll is successful, the target suffers mental damage equal to the result of the roll. If the roll is failed, nothing happens. In other words, mental attacks use basically the same rules as physical attacks.

#### EXAMPLE

Clint's ghost NPC has the *Terrifying Shriek* trait, allowing it to make mental attacks on the player characters. It flies toward Isaac's character and lets out a shriek. The ghost's *willpower* rating is 12. Clint rolls a die and gets an 8 . . . a success! Isaac's character suffers 8 points of mental damage.

### MAKING A FEARSAVE

After mental damage has been determined, it's time to determine whether or not the damage inflicted was enough to frighten the victim or drive her mad. We call this making a "fearsave." To make a fearsave, the victim of the mental attack rolls a die. If the result is *higher than* the amount of mental damage she's taken, she shrugs off the attack and remains active. If the result is *equal to or lower than* the amount of mental damage taken, she is *frightened* by the attack.

#### EXAMPLE

Having just been screamed at by an angry ghost, Isaac needs to make a fearsave. He's trying to roll higher than the 8 points of mental damage that he took. He rolls a die and gets a 3 . . . failure! Isaac's character is now *frightened*.

### BEING FRIGHTENED

*Frightened* characters are so scared that they either stand completely frozen in terror or flee the scene entirely. Either way, *frightened* characters cannot take action except to scream or attempt to flee the source of their fear. *Frightened* characters remain *frightened* until the end of the scene, at which time they automatically regain their composure and can act normally.

#### EXAMPLE

Isaac decides that his *frightened* character will stand frozen in complete terror. He'll remain in this state until the end of the scene.



## GOING MAD

Some experiences are so frightening that they leave scars on the mind. There are two ways that a character can go *mad*: If a *frightened* character takes mental damage and fails her fearsave, she goes *mad*. If a character (in any state) ever takes so much mental damage (20 or more) in one instance that she could not possibly succeed at a fearsave, she goes *mad*. Characters who have gone *mad* are either hysterical or catatonic and cannot take any action. *Mad* characters remain *mad* until they receive bed rest or psychotherapy. When your character goes mad, you must choose whether to recover or to “lose it.”

## EXAMPLE

Clint decides that his ghost NPC will try to drive Isaac’s already *frightened* character into insanity. The ghost makes a mental attack, inflicting 11 points of mental damage. Isaac rolls his fearsave and gets an 8 . . . failure. Since he was already *frightened*, he goes *mad*. Isaac decides that his character falls to the ground with a catatonic stare locked on his face.

## THE PRICE OF RECOVERY

If you choose to recover after going *mad*, you will recover as soon as you receive either bed rest or psycho-therapy, but will still bear a mental burden caused by the trauma you’ve experienced. As soon as you recover, roll on the Mental Disorder Table below:

ROLL	MENTAL DISORDER
1-2	Depressed (you receive the <i>Depressed</i> trait, page 30)
3-4	Hallucinations (you receive the <i>Hallucinations</i> trait, page 32)
5-6	Voices (you receive the <i>Voices</i> trait, page 44)
7-8	Phobia (you receive the <i>Phobia</i> trait, page 42)
9-10	Obsession (you receive the <i>Obsession</i> trait, page 41)
11-12	Me, Myself, and I (you receive the <i>Me, Myself, and I</i> trait, page 40)
13-14	Imaginary Friend (you receive the <i>Imaginary Friend</i> trait, page 33)
15-16	Nightmares (you receive the <i>Nightmares</i> trait, page 41)
17-18	Bizarre Habit (you receive the <i>Bizarre Habit</i> trait, page 28)
19-20	Paranoid (your character receives the <i>Paranoid</i> trait, page 41)

## Example

Isaac decides that he wants his character to recover from his madness. He rolls a die and gets a 4. “4” on the mental disorder table is “Hallucinations.” Isaac’s character gains the *Hallucinations* trait and begins to see screaming ghosts around every corner.





## LOSING IT

If you decide to “lose it” after going *mad*, your character goes completely insane and must be institutionalized (or just wander around mumbling to herself). In this case, you retire the character and make a new one. Like character death, this option is mostly for players who are tired of playing their current character or feel that it would be dramatically appropriate for their character to go insane.

## EXAMPLE

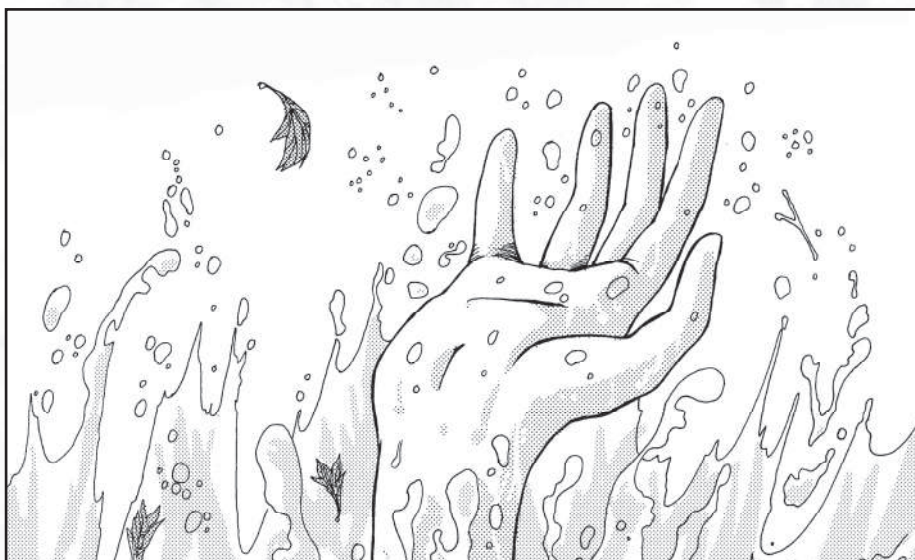
After Marty’s character goes mad, she decides that it would be dramatically appropriate for the character to spend the rest of its days locked up in an asylum keeping bizarre diaries and rambling about the “ghost guilds.”

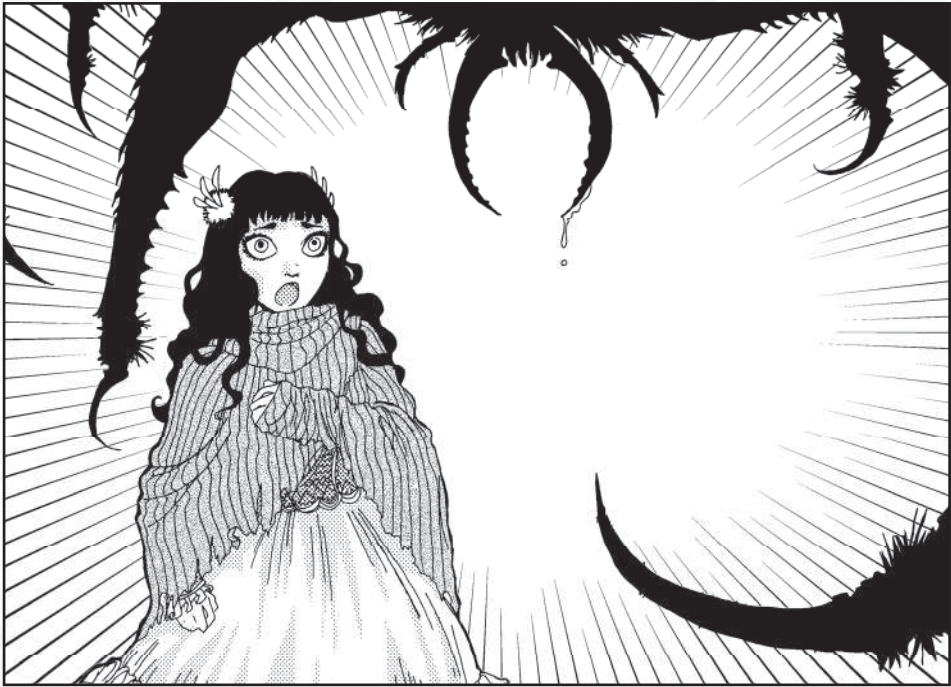
## INCIDENTAL DAMAGE

Sometimes characters suffer damage from sources other than attacks. Fire, falling, drowning, being in a car crash, all of these things represent what we call “incidental” damage. Whenever a character suffers incidental damage, the GM rolls a die and the character suffers damage equal to the result. Incidental damage is *never* reduced by traits that reduce damage. The character makes killsave as normal.

## EXAMPLE

Amy’s character falls into a well. The well is pretty deep, so the GM decides that the fall will inflict incidental damage. The GM rolls a die and gets a 13. Amy’s character suffers 13 points of damage. Amy rolls her killsave, attempting to get higher than 13. She rolls a die and gets a 17 ... success! Amy’s character survives her fall without any significant injury.





## SCARES

The mental equivalent of incidental damage is called a *scare*. When a character witnesses an event that is particularly shocking or horrific, she suffers incidental mental damage. After damage has been determined, the character makes a fearsave as normal.

## EXAMPLE

Marty's character is hanging around in her bedroom. When she opens the closet door, a bloodied corpse falls out. The GM decides that this is shocking enough to be considered a *scare*, so he rolls a die and gets a 17. Marty's character takes 17 points of mental damage. Ouch! Marty rolls a fearsave and gets an 8 . . . failure. Her character is *frightened* and runs screaming from the room.

## DAMAGING OBJECTS

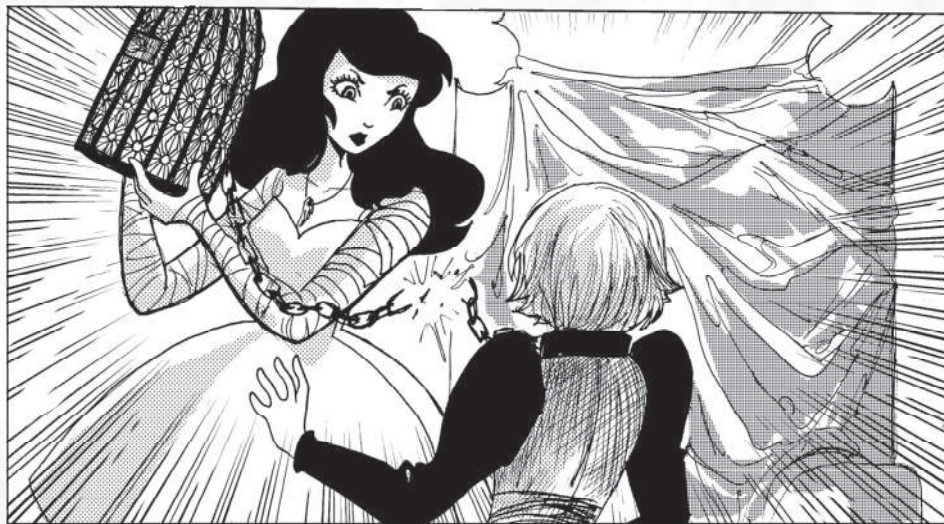
Like characters, physical objects can be destroyed and disabled by attacks and incidental damage. If a character wants to destroy or disable an object, she makes an attack roll as normal. If the object takes damage from the attack, it must make a killsave (just like a character would). If successful, the object withstands the attack and remains functional. If the object fails its killsave, it is destroyed or disabled. The GM is responsible for making killsaves for all objects, except those that involve the personal possessions of a PC, in which case the roll is made by the controlling player (and can be



influenced with spirit tokens). The GM also decides whether or not it makes sense for an object to be damaged or disabled by a given type of attack. It's unlikely, for instance, that a character would be able to destroy a huge boulder by punching it. Objects suffer incidental damage from most of the same circumstances that characters would (falling, burning, etc . . .). Again, it's up to the GM to decide when it's appropriate for an object to take incidental damage.

### EXAMPLE

Marty's character wants to stop a burglar who's escaping on a motorcycle. She levels her revolver and takes aim for the motorcycle's rear tire. Marty's character has a *speed* rating of 10. She makes an attack roll and gets an 8 . . . success! She adds her revolver's +6 damage bonus to the result for a total of 14 damage. The GM must now make a killsave for the tire. He rolls a die and gets a 3 . . . failure! The tire explodes, sending the burglar sprawling off of his bike. Furthermore, the GM decides that the burglar himself suffers incidental damage from the wipe-out.







# CHAPTER IV

GAMEMASTER'S SECTION





## GAMEMASTER'S SECTION

Playing the role of the gamemaster is a challenging and rewarding way to play the game. It requires more preparation and effort than playing a single character, but allows for a lot of control over the direction of the game. It's also a great chance to play a wide variety of interesting characters and use your imagination to send your buddies on memorable adventures that they will talk about for years to come.

### VAULT CREATION

As the gamemaster, part of your job is to create all of the vaults and locations that the players will explore through their characters. Follow the guidelines below to create fun, exciting vaults.

#### STEP 1: WHO IS THE RESIDENT SPIRIT?

Who is the dreaming ghost that haunts the vault? How did he or she die? What keeps the spirit from moving on? What is the ghost's personality and demeanor like? Does the spirit have any weaknesses? What can the players do to put the spirit to rest? Always have more than one solution in mind and be open to new ones devised by your players.

#### STEP 2: HOW DO THE CHARACTERS GAIN ENTRY?

Most vaults have some sort of puzzle or riddle that must be solved before the characters can enter. How do the characters gain access to the vault? Do they have to solve a riddle? A puzzle? Do they have to offer a gift or do a favor for the spirit? It's good to have multiple possible solutions to any puzzle. Puzzles can really stall a game if the GM insists on a single solution and the players just don't see it.

#### STEP 3: WHAT IS THE VAULT'S ENVIRONMENT LIKE?

Keeping the resident spirit in mind, imagine what the environment of the vault may be like. Remember that the vault is a manifestation of the resident ghost's tortured dreams. These dreams are sometimes realistic and sometimes full of surreal landscapes rife with symbolism. Draw a rough map of the vault to get a basic idea of its physical layout. When you're creating the layout of the vault, try to include two or three dramatic set pieces: structures and areas that will instill a sense of awe and be exciting for the players to interact with.

#### EXAMPLE ENVIRONMENTS

Haunted castle, dilapidated mansion, sewer system, dark forest, UFO crash site, natural cave, massive library, ancient pyramid, cloud kingdom, moon-like desert, giant clock tower, raging river, the inside of a massive snow-globe, automated factory, ancient cathedral, cabin in the woods.

#### STEP 4: WHAT CHARACTERS INHABIT THE VAULT?

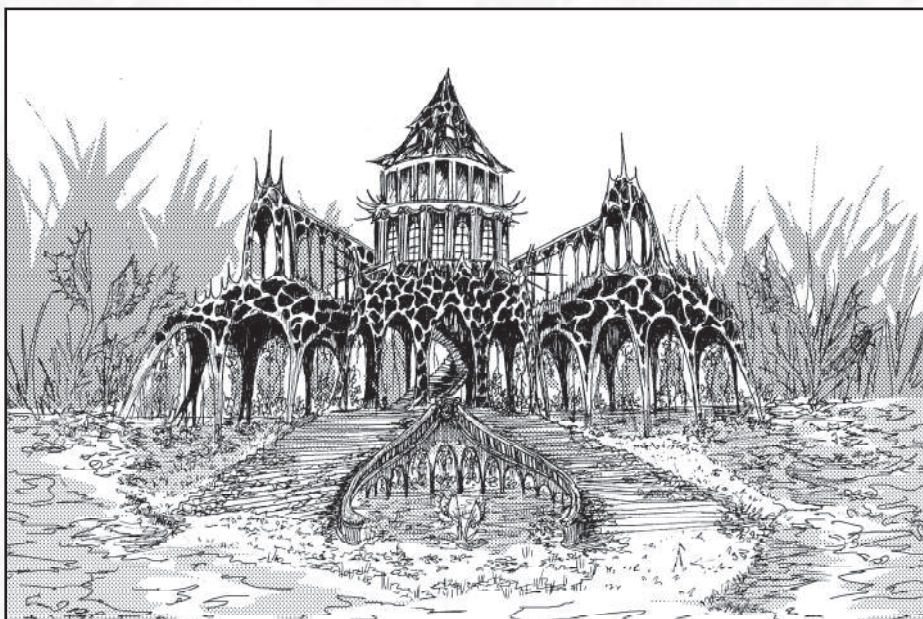
Very few spirits dream of complete isolation. Vaults are commonly filled with a variety of characters that are somehow related to the dreaming spirit's burdens and interests. These characters may be loyal servants of the dreaming ghost or they may be its enemies. What kinds of characters inhabit the vault? Are the characters loyal to the resident spirit? How would these characters react to outsiders such as the player-characters? After you've come up the basic concept for the vault's inhabitants, make sure to create game statistics for any NPCs that the players might interact with (see NPC creation, page 75).

#### STEP 5: WHAT ARE SOME EVENTS THAT COULD HAPPEN?

Once you've conceived the basic components of the vault, make a list of events that could happen within the vault. The best events are those that force the players to react in some way without forcing them to react in a *specific* way. For instance, if a monster attacks, the players could react by fighting back, running away, or attempting to bargain with the creature. Every vault should be an eventful place, where the player-characters have a lot to interact with and a lot of dangers and challenges to keep them on their toes.

#### EXAMPLE EVENTS

A minion of the dreaming spirit attacks, part of the environment collapses, the PCs encounter a riddle, a deadly trap is sprung, an NPC approaches the PCs asking for help, the PCs get the feeling that they're being watched, an NPC professes her love for a PC.



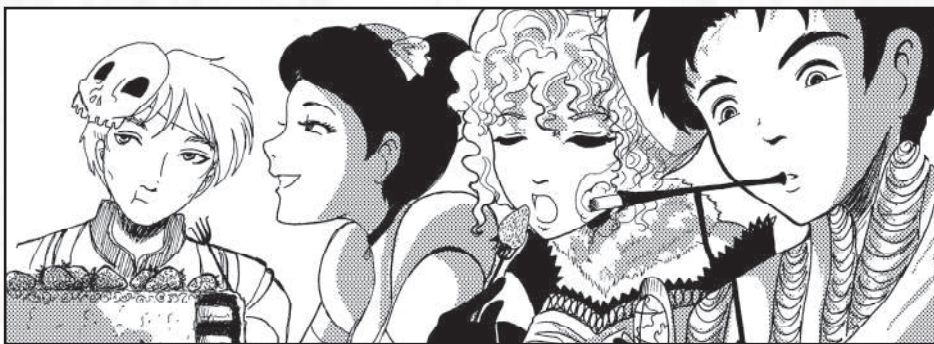


## ADVENTURES OUTSIDE THE VAULTS

Of course, the player-characters don't spend all of their time in the vaults. It can be just as fun to focus on their adventures in the day-to-day world. Human agents, for instance, often have to deal with the challenge of balancing their guild activities with their career or school-work, not to mention their personal relationships with family and significant others. Guildsmen also have responsibilities outside the vaults. Guildsmen are often sent on ghost hunts to re-stock the guild's vaults with lost souls. On occasion, they are called to assist other guilds in the region to work out paperwork, hunt unbearables, and any number of other tasks.

It's probably best to balance the focus of your play sessions between the PCs' adventures in the vaults and the events of their outside lives. This can help to develop the PCs in more detail and give the game a sense of reality and depth. Make sure that each character gets some time in the spotlight. If you've focused on one character's activities for a while, try switching over and giving someone else some time to shine. Everyone should feel like their character is an integral part of the game and that their actions are moving the story forward.





## NPC CREATION

As GM, you'll have to create a lot of NPCs for the players to interact with. The following guidelines will help you flesh out an NPC's game statistics in no time at all.

### STEP ONE: CONCEPT

Decide on the basic concept for the NPC. Use your imagination to really make your NPCs interesting and exciting for the players to interact with. When conceptualizing an NPC, keep in mind what its role will be within the context of the game. Is the NPC pretty much just a combat encounter for the PCs? Is it a socially oriented character? You'll want to arrange the NPC's statistics to support its intended role in the game.

### STEP TWO: ASSIGN BASE SCORE

"Base Score" is a term that refers to the overall competency level of a given character. The higher a character's base score, the higher its attribute ratings. Player characters, for example, have a base score of 12. When assigning attribute ratings to an NPC, you can assign two ratings equal to the base score, two equal to the base score minus two, two equal to the base score minus four, and one equal to the base score minus six. For example, if a character's base score is 12, you may assign two 12s, two 10s, two 8s, and one 6 to its attributes. A character with a base score of 16 would have two 16s, two 14s, two 12s, and one 10. You can assign any base score to an NPC that seems appropriate. Use the following examples as a guideline:

Base Score 8: The equivalent of a human child. A weak character.

Base Score 10: The average human being. A minor character.

Base Score 12: Default base score of PCs. A heroic character.

Base Score 14: A more-heroic-than-average character.

Base Score 16: A particularly competent hero or villain.

Base Score 18: A very powerful character. Probably a VIP in the story.

Base Score 20: A super powerful entity or the main villain of the campaign.



### STEP THREE: ASSIGN TRAITS

Like player-characters, NPCs have traits that define their capabilities. The number of traits allowed for an NPC depends on its base score. Use the following table to determine how many traits your NPC receives.

BASE SCORE	# OF TRAITS
Less Than 8	1
8	2
10	3
12	4
14	5
16	6
18	7
20	8

Of course, you can choose fewer than the NPC's maximum allotment of traits. Choose traits that complement your concept for the character. NPCs have access to any traits that the GM wants to give them and are not restricted to any particular list.

### STEP FOUR: ASSIGN EQUIPMENT

Give your NPC whatever equipment you feel it should have (again, without the normal restrictions that player-characters would have). Once it's kitted out, your NPC is ready to hit the table running.

### NPCs ON THE FLY

Often times while GMing, you'll find yourself suddenly in need of an NPC that you hadn't anticipated before the game. When this happens, simply decide on the base score of the NPC and assign its attributes and traits as you use them. For example, let's say you have an NPC with a base score of 12. You just need this NPC for a quick fight scene, so rather than go through the entire NPC creation process; you just assign the NPC's attributes as you need them. When it attacks, for instance, you might assign one of its 12 ratings to its *strength* attribute. The main idea here is to be consistent. Write down the NPC's attributes and traits as you assign them so that you can have a record in case you need the same NPC later. It can break the players' suspension of disbelief if an enemy character has 10 *strength* one minute and 12 *strength* the next.

# ADVICE FOR THE GM

## ON MISTAKES

Good gamemastering is a skill and, like any skill, it is learned through a lot of trial and error. As you GM more and more games, you'll begin to develop a sense of what types of things are fun for your group and what sorts of things cause problems. Remember that it's alright to make mistakes. You might make mistakes with the game rules, or you might run a session that just isn't fun.

It can be frustrating to put a lot of effort into running your game and have it fall flat, but don't be discouraged. Try instead to learn from your mistakes. Even the best gamemasters run a flat session once in a while. Remember that everyone *including the GM* is supposed to have fun during the game. So relax, have fun, and let your imagination out to play. If it doesn't always go well, don't stress yourself out. Remember that it's just a game.

## PACING

One of the most difficult skills to master as a GM is your sense of pacing. Pacing refers to your ability to keep the game moving and keep the players interested. If the players are engaged in a slow, plodding investigation, it might be good to spring some action on them. If they've just fought a platoon of monsters, it might be good to inject a scene that slows things down and allows the players (and their characters) to catch their collective breath.

It's difficult to give advice on pacing because there is no hard and fast formula that works 100% of the time. Good pacing requires the intuition to gauge the needs of your game on the fly. Notice players yawning and putting their heads down? Time to spice it up with something unexpected. Is everyone getting bored with lots of monster fights? Let them do some socializing. As a general rule of thumb, try to go back and forth between fast-paced scenes (battles, action, etc) and slower-paced ones (socializing, puzzles, etc).





## CONFLICT AND CHOICES

And now for the big guns. . . If you can understand the following two ideas, you'll immediately improve your skill as a gamemaster. What are these magical concepts you ask? Two things: conflict and choices. Repeat that to yourself so it sticks. *Conflict* . . . and *choices*. These are the two things that drive the game forward and keep the players on the edge of their seats.

### CONFLICT

Conflict is *the* central ingredient of a good story. A story without conflict is like soda without carbonation. Conflict can come from many different places. Some sources are external (scary monsters, physical danger) and others are internal (one character loves another but can't tell her because she's engaged to someone else). In an adventure game, every scene should have some conflict and excitement. A good gamemaster will learn to seek out conflict in the game and drive it forward. Take the example of the forbidden love. What if the love sick character finds out that his beloved's fiancé is an evil magician, trapping ghosts in his basement and using their energy to fuel his dark powers? Conflict! If you're observant, you'll find sources of potential conflict all over the place. When you find them, bring them out in the game, and you'll have red hot play sessions.

### CHOICES

Choices (more specifically, *meaningful* choices) are the bread and butter of the players' interaction with the game. Without choices, the players get bored. Picture the following scene: You have created a vault in which the players meet a ghostly NPC called Nina. Nina tells the PCs to follow her and you describe the bits of the vault that they pass as they do so. Nina leads the characters to a doorway and says, "Beyond this door is the master of the vault. You can put her to rest using this gem." She hands the characters the gem and disappears. The PCs take the gem into the next room and, after a brief confrontation, put the spirit to rest. What's wrong with this scenario? It would make a perfectly good manga, right? Well, the problem is that the players didn't get to make any choices. They just followed the "script" of events that the GM had prepared. They weren't able to affect the outcome of the game in any interesting way.

Players need to be able to affect the outcome of the game through their actions. Whenever you deny them that, the game will feel boring. There are many ways that the GM can inadvertently deprive the players of choice, and this always leads to problems. The biggest pitfall that GMs fall into is trying to script the *outcomes* of the players' actions. Trust me, dear reader: the players will almost never do what the GM expects them to do. Unpredictability is part of the fun of role-playing. I think it's important to embrace this fact. When you're GMing,

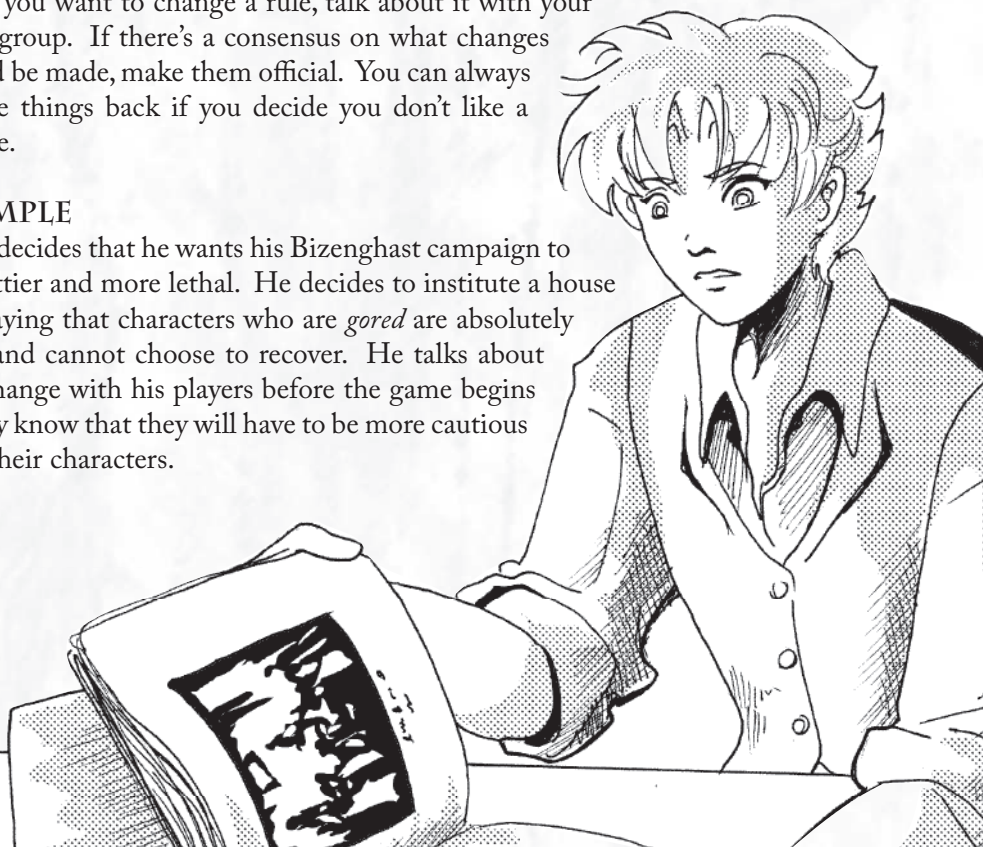
don't worry about planning the way that things will play out. The moment you make a plan, the players will (inadvertently) modify it with their actions. If you try to funnel the players' actions toward a pre-determined end, you *will* bore them. They can intuitively sense when their actions really make a difference in the game and when they're just a pawn in the GMs predetermined "story." So, as a GM, how do you avoid these pre-planning pitfalls? The simple answer is: create situations ... create environments ... create interesting characters ... never create *outcomes*. Simply create the elements of the game that the characters can interact with and then sit back and let the players go. The outcome will be totally different than you expect it to be, and that's awesome. That means that the session you play with your players will be unique experience that no-one could've predicted.

## MAKING-UP HOUSE-RULES

I'd like to think that this game works well without any tinkering, and that the rules are pretty comprehensive in their scope. However, it's still not likely that the rules will please every single would-be player who reads them. If you decide that one of the game rules doesn't work for the way you'd like to play the game, feel free to take it out or change it. Once you've purchased this book, the game is yours. Do whatever you need to do with the rules to make it fit your style of play. House-rules work best when they are clearly stated before the game begins. It's frustrating to everyone involved if the rules keep changing on the fly. If you want to change a rule, talk about it with your game group. If there's a consensus on what changes should be made, make them official. You can always change things back if you decide you don't like a change.

## EXAMPLE

Mike decides that he wants his Bizenghast campaign to be grittier and more lethal. He decides to institute a house rule saying that characters who are *gored* are absolutely dead and cannot choose to recover. He talks about this change with his players before the game begins so they know that they will have to be more cautious with their characters.







## MAKING IT SPOOKY

Alright, now we get to the fun stuff. Bizenghast can be a spooky game. This section will give you some ideas about how to create a spooky atmosphere for your game sessions. You can play the game in a lot of different ways. You could be very serious and horrific, or you could be slap-sticky and light-hearted. Most games are probably somewhere between those two extremes. Have a talk with your players the first time you sit down to play. What kind of tone does everyone want for the game? If everyone wants a serious game, one person constantly cracking jokes will mess that up. It's a good idea to make sure that everyone is on the same page.

## HOW SPOOKY?

You want to create a spooky atmosphere for the game, but you don't want to go so far that you make someone uncomfortable. Before you sit down to play, check with each of your players and make sure that everyone is on the same page with the level of horror, violence, and gore in the game. Make sure that everyone will be comfortable. Yes, this is supposed to be spooky, but it's also supposed to be a *game*. Games should be fun for everyone involved. A lot of unpleasant experiences can be avoided by having a simple conversation before the game.

## LESS IS MORE

If you're trying to create a spooky atmosphere, it's best to be a little bit subtle in your descriptions. A tiny fleck of blood on a napkin can be just as eerie as an entire room soaked in gore. Remember that the root of what makes things spooky is that they are unknown, unexplainable. Be somewhat vague in your

descriptions of monsters and ghosts. Let the players' imaginations fill in the details. The players' own minds can be spookier than any description that you could give. The more mysteries that your descriptions evoke, the better.

## THE ROOM

A lot of the atmosphere of your game depends on the physical atmosphere of the place where you play. In my opinion, the big essential element is a table. Sure, you could role-play sitting on the floor in the living room, or lounging about on pillows, but playing around a table has a number of advantages: The table gives everyone a place to put all their stuff. Dice, character sheets, notes, snacks, and the like are all important parts of the game. The table also draws everyone's focus and helps to filter out distractions. Pretty much any table will do, but a sturdy, wooden, dining table works particularly well.

## LIGHTING AND MUSIC

Lighting can go a long way toward making your game more atmospheric. I quite enjoy playing by candlelight (just make sure you're careful when open flames are involved), but make sure there's enough light that everyone can read their characters sheets and die results. Creepy music can also add a lot to a game. Play it very lightly in the background so that it doesn't overpower everyone's voices. It's usually best to use instrumental music (so the players aren't distracted by lyrics). Movie soundtracks work great for this.

## YOUR PERFORMANCE

Part of being a good GM is being able to put on a good performance. Like a storyteller sitting around a campfire, you want to captivate your audience with chilling descriptions and thrilling twists. Alter the tone of your voice, use inflections and most importantly, be enthusiastic! All of these behaviors are contagious and before you know it, you'll be entranced by your group's collective story-telling.





## SAMPLE GUILD: ROSEMARY FALLS

The town of Rosemary Falls is a tiny mining community in the Midwestern United States. The town was prosperous and wealthy in the 1800s, when mine operations were at their peak and the town had about four times its current population. During this period, the town flourished with lavish Victorian homes. The Falls were a desirable place for the businessmen of the era to retreat from the big cities and dip their toes into the mining business.



### **Watcher Rowan**

#### Attributes

*Awareness 20*

*Charm 14*

*Knowledge 20*

*Luck 18*

*Speed 16*

*Strength 16*

*Willpower 18*

#### Traits

*Clairvoyant*

*Connected*

*Linguist*

*Magic Spell: Bewilder*

*Magic Spell: Bind Ghost*

*Magic Spell: Death's Journey*

*Magic Spell: Summon Guild Staff*

*Magic Spell: The Forbidden Name*

#### Equipment

*None*

The town flourished in this way for nearly twenty years. Then, the mines were cursed with a string of unusual deaths. Rumors spread like a plague and many miners began to fear the mines. Some claimed that a deadly underground gas had been released. Others whispered speculations of a sinister curse. A common wives tale of the time was that the digging had disturbed an Indian burial ground and the mines were now cursed by vengeful spirits. Whatever the truth was, the fear of the mines eventually led to the downfall of the town's economic baseline. The businessmen returned to their cities en masse, leaving their fabulous Victorian mansions to rot. The town's population dropped drastically over the next few years, and soon it was a mere shadow of its former self.

As it stands today, Rosemary Falls can boast only about two thousand residents. Many of the town's buildings, including the aforementioned Victorian mansions, have fallen into a state of sad disrepair. The town still sits atop a honeycomb of mine tunnels, many of which are still full of minable coal. The stories of the mine's curse persist to this day, and it is practically a rite of passage for area teenagers to go exploring these vacant, underground labyrinths.

## THE CHAPEL IN THE WOODS

The Rosemary Falls guild is located in an abandoned chapel in the woods surrounding the town. This isolated chapel edifice was built in the 1860s. Prior to the town's mining boom, it served as Rosemary Falls' main protestant chapel (at the time, the town was much closer to the wooded hillside where the chapel

sits). As it is now, the chapel is about a mile outside of the town, and is well concealed in a wooded grove. Many of the town's inhabitants are no longer aware of its existence. Most of the local children, however, tell stories of the "haunted church" in the woods. Occasionally, a bold group of teenagers will venture out to the chapel and try their hand at some vandalism. These teens have been known to "disappear" and suddenly find themselves eternally bound to the guild.

The Rosemary Falls Guild is managed by an entity called "Watcher Rowan." He is rarely seen in physical form (even by guildsmen), but his presence is often accompanied by a chill wind that shakes leaves from nearby trees. If he does manifest, it is usually by forming said fallen leaves into a massive, creepy face. His voice, too, resembles the whispers of the wind.

## GUILDSMEN

The arrangement of guildsmen is left unspecified so that you can insert your own characters should you want to use this guild in your game.

## GUILD STAFF

The guild's lower-level staff are known as "wolf-boys." They have mostly been collected from the young vandals who occasionally visit the chapel. The wolf-boys remain vaguely human, but possess a feral, hairy appearance, sharp claws, and slight elongation of the snout and lower jaw (giving a wolf-like appearance). These creatures are pretty dim, but they have sharp instincts and are keenly aware of their environment.

## VAULTS

The Rosemary Falls guild is responsible for a mere 13 vaults. The vaults are located in a wooded cemetery that is adjacent to the chapel itself.

## ENEMIES AND PROBLEMS

The guild has yet to take action against the entity believed to inhabit the mines. Whether it really is a curse, a powerful ghost, or even an unbearable is left to the discretion of the GM.



### ***Wolf Boys***

#### Attributes

*Awareness 12*

*Charm 2*

*Knowledge 6*

*Luck 6*

*Speed 9*

*Strength 11*

*Willpower 8*

#### Traits

*Feral Child*

*Tooth and Claw*

#### Equipment

*None*





## SAMPLE VAULT: THE FLOODED TOWN

This vault contains the dreaming spirit of Jim Holland. Holland was a resident of a nearby town. He was responsible for the upkeep and repair of the town's dam, which held back a large reservoir. Unfortunately, Holland was an inattentive drunkard. In his drunken stupor, he failed to notice a large crack that had developed in the base of the dam. One day, the dam gave way and the town was completely flooded. 86 people were killed, including Holland himself. Holland's soul remains bound to Earth for the suffering he has caused and the overwhelming guilt that he still feels.

### VAULT ENTRY

A placard on Holland's vault reads:

*"Keep to your duties or your soul will sink.  
For the things I have done, I need a drink."*

The PCs can gain entry into the vault by offering the spirit any sort of alcoholic beverage or by pouring such a drink over the entryway. Give the players a chance to figure out the riddle themselves. If they get frustrated, you can have them attempt a *knowledge* roll to figure it out.

### VAULT ENVIRONMENT

Holland's vault is a re-creation of his town after it had been decimated by flood waters. It is a large town, submerged in muddy, brown water. Rooftops and trees poke out of the water, forming the only real dry ground to walk or climb on. The broken dam can be seen looming in the distance. The town is completely silent with the exception of an occasional hammering sound that seems to emanate from the broken dam. Empty bottles of whisky can also be seen floating about the flooded structures.

### HAUNTS

The flooded town is haunted by Holland's projection of the people who died tragically in the flood. All manner of drowned ghosts inhabit the town's murky waters.



## THE DREAMING SPIRIT

Holland's spirit still haunts the broken dam, frantically but futilely trying to repair it in a desperate bid to absolve himself of his failure in life. Characters who venture near the dam will hear the sound of Holland's tools echoing across the waters of the submerged town.

## POSSIBLE EVENTS

The characters hear the drowned ghost of a young girl calling for help, reliving her own death. Will they help her? Is it a trap?

The town's drowned ghosts hate Jim Holland for his negligence. Under the right circumstances, they might be persuaded to rise up against him.

Holland is seen paddling through the town in his row-boat, searching for scrap wood to fix the dam.

The characters find a row boat in which to explore the town. At some point, the hands of drowned ghosts reach up from the water, frantically trying to save themselves. Will the row boat capsize?

The characters come across a large, brick building. More than half of the building is above the water, but the available entrances are all locked. A corpse is seen floating nearby with a key around its neck.

## RESOLUTION

Holland's spirit can be put to rest if he can be convinced that he is forgiven for his negligence. On the other hand, he could be forced to pass on if he is given over to the angry spirits of the townsfolk

### ***Drowned Ghost***

#### Attributes

*Awareness 10*

*Charm 10*

*Knowledge 8*

*Luck 6*

*Speed 8*

*Strength 12*

*Willpower 12*

#### Traits

*Ghost*

*Telekinetic*

*Telepathic*

*Magic Spell: Choke*

#### Equipment

*None*



### ***Jim Holland***

#### Attributes

*Awareness 16*

*Charm 12*

*Knowledge 14*

*Luck 12*

*Speed 14*

*Strength 16*

*Willpower 10*

#### Traits

*Ghost*

*Bound*

*Tough*

*Drunkenness (As Hypnotist)*

#### Equipment

*Weapon (Hammer)*



## SAMPLE VAULT: THE DOLLHOUSE

This vault contains the dreaming spirit of a young girl named “Chrissy.” Chrissy was only eight years old when she died. Her father abused her terribly for years. One night, he took it too far and there was a terrible accident . . . Chrissy’s father pushed her down the stairs. Her spirit is angry and confused by her death and takes out her anger by abusing her favorite toy in life: her dollhouse

### VAULT ENTRY

The entryway to Chrissy’s vault takes the form of a very small door, which the PCs must climb through. A human-sized character will have to get on her hands and knees and squeeze through the door. Any character who is significantly larger than human-size will have a difficult time gaining entry (play this up for humor, it’s not really intended to prevent any of the PCs from entering the vault).



### ***Living Doll***

#### Attributes

*Awareness 10*

*Charm 10*

*Knowledge 8*

*Luck 6*

*Speed 8*

*Strength 4*

*Willpower 6*

#### Traits

*None*

#### Equipment

*None (Generally)*

### VAULT ENVIRONMENT

Chrissy’s vault takes the form of a gigantic, nearly endless dollhouse. This massive structure dwarfs the PCs as if they were the size of the dolls that would inhabit the house. Chrissy lords over the house as a giant . . . a giant in a frilly blue dress. She peeks through the dollhouse windows, re-arranges the furniture, and throws violent temper tantrums that are extremely destructive to the world of the dolls. The house itself is a sprawling labyrinth of wallpapered hallways, fancy sitting rooms, and libraries of faux books. Outside the dollhouse is a massive-scale version of Chrissy’s bedroom when she was alive.

### HAUNTS

Chrissy’s dollhouse is inhabited by a variety of living dolls. The dolls live in cowering fear of their overlord, Chrissy. The dolls are generally polite to Chrissy’s face (in order to avoid igniting one of her temper tantrums), but during the “dark time” when Chrissy sleeps, the dolls meet in secret and plot their escape.

The leader of the living doll's rebellion-plot is a stuffed rabbit named Sassafrass. He is, by far, the bravest of the doll-folk. Sassafrass was once Chrissy's favorite doll and he loves her dearly. Yet, he recognizes that Chrissy the overlord is no longer the same little girl that he protected from boogey-men and closet monsters.

### THE DREAMING SPIRIT

Chrissy is bound to Earth by her anger and confusion over her death. She is not an evil soul, but is trapped in a destructive delirium. She occasionally reaches into the dollhouse and grabs a doll or two. She plays out conversations between the toys. Most disturbing are her make-believe reproductions of her father's scornful words and abuse. Sometimes, she even casts a doll down the dollhouse staircase in a violent re-enactment of her own death. While the PCs are investigating the dollhouse, Chrissy sees them as if they were dolls. They even appear in doll-like clothing (which might be good for a laugh or two).

### POSSIBLE EVENTS

Sassafrass and the dolls hold a secret meeting to discuss their plans for escape. The PCs might find the meeting in progress and get an idea of what the dolls are up to.

Chrissy is heard crying, her sobs echo loudly through the halls of the dollhouse.

Chrissy throws a violent temper tantrum. The dolls flee for their lives while she snatches a victim.

One of the dolls betrays the others and tells Chrissy of the escape plan in the hope that he will be spared from her violent wrath.



### **Sassafrass**

#### Attributes

*Awareness 10*

*Charm 16*

*Knowledge 8*

*Luck 6*

*Speed 10*

*Strength 8*

*Willpower 12*

#### Traits

*Cute*

*Calming Presence*

*Lost Love (Chrissy)*

*Tough*

#### Equipment

*None*



### **Chrissy**

#### Attributes

*Awareness 12*

*Charm 16*

*Knowledge 10*

*Luck 12*

*Speed 14*

*Strength 16*

*Willpower 16*

#### Traits

*Cute*

*Swift Attack*

*Tough (due to her giant size)*

#### Equipment

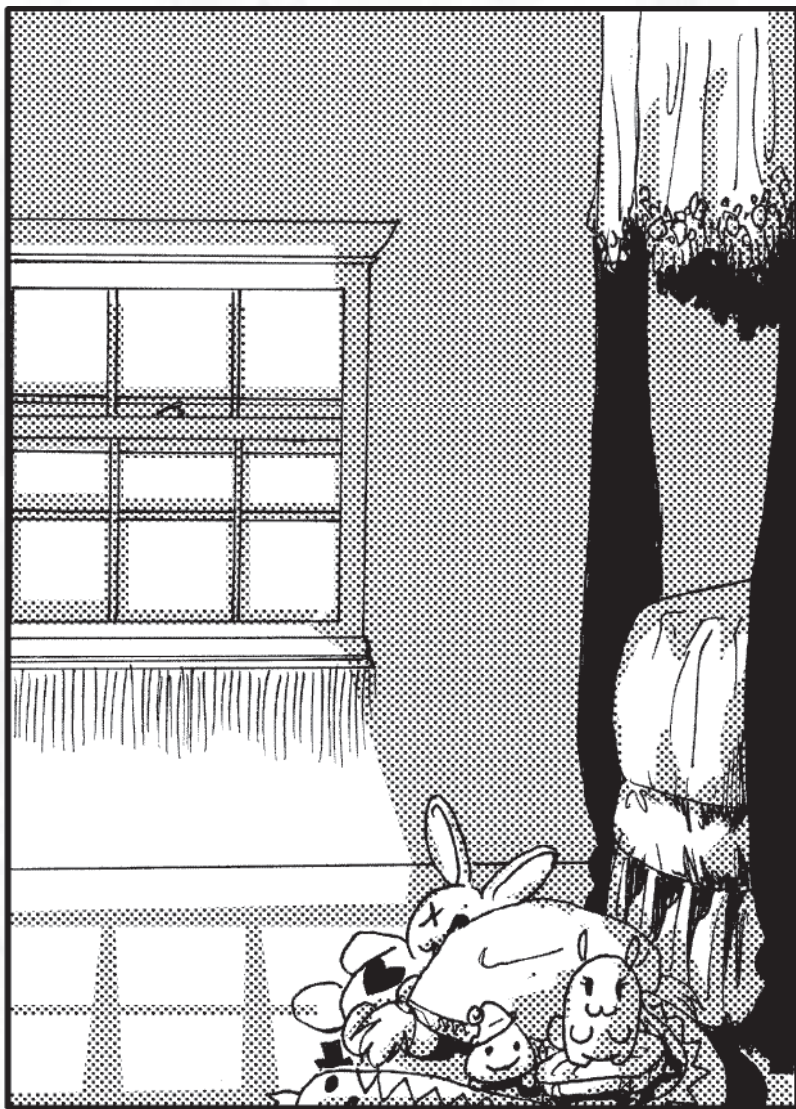
*None*



The dolls manage to escape the dollhouse and hide somewhere safe. Chrissy is bereft and pleads with a sobbing voice for her “family” to return. If this goes on long enough, Chrissy’s spirit may go insane and become even more violent.

## RESOLUTION

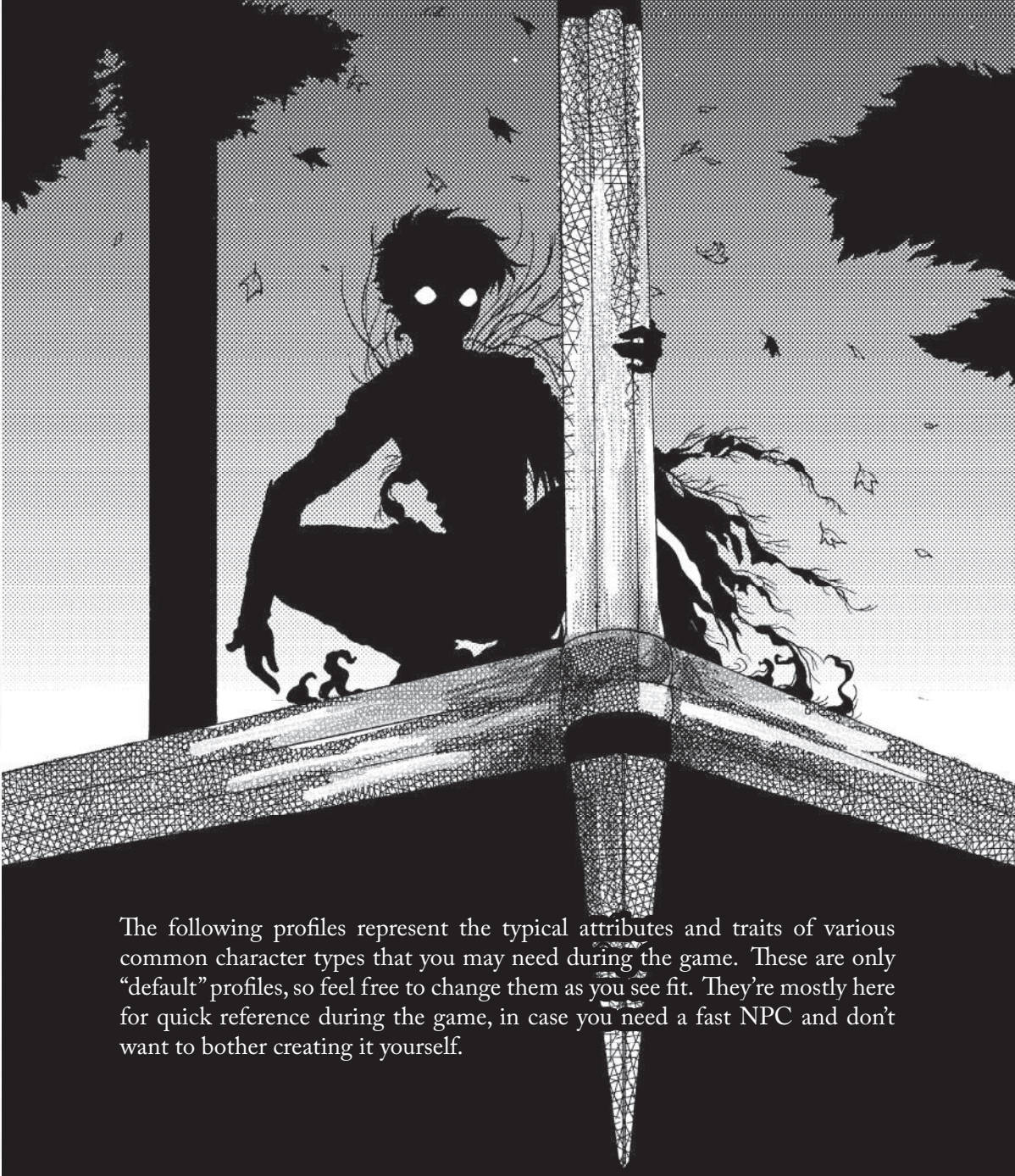
Chrissy’s vault could be cleared in several ways. She might respond to compassion, but it may take the all-out rebellion of her dolls to make her come to her senses. She will be set free if her spirit ever feels safe from the threat of her father or if her doll “family” manages to overwhelm her and free themselves.





# APPENDIX I:

## NPC PROFILES



The following profiles represent the typical attributes and traits of various common character types that you may need during the game. These are only “default” profiles, so feel free to change them as you see fit. They’re mostly here for quick reference during the game, in case you need a fast NPC and don’t want to bother creating it yourself.





## ANIMATED STATUE

Guild agents tend to hang out in cemeteries a lot. Cemeteries tend to have a lot of statues. Combine guild agent boredom with statues and you get animated statues . . . lots of animated statues. Guild agents often employ these statues as allies in a fight or as transportation when they need to get somewhere. Magically animated statues don't talk back, so they make really good companions when you need to get down to business.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness 12  
Charm 8  
Knowledge 8  
Luck 10  
Speed 6  
Strength 12  
Willpower 10

### TRAITS

Telepathic  
Tooth and Claw  
Tough

### EQUIPMENT

None



## AVERAGE PERSON

Not everyone that the PCs encounter is a guildsman or a ghost. This profile represents the average person on the street. Most people are oblivious to the existence of the guilds and many are extremely skeptical about anything involving the supernatural.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness 8  
Charm 10  
Knowledge 10  
Luck 4  
Speed 6  
Strength 6  
Willpower 8

### TRAITS

Connected

### EQUIPMENT

Cell Phone



## COMPASS-BEARER

Compass-bearers are responsible for gathering information and lore that will help the guild team in its operations. This typically involves research, spell-casting, and questioning restless spirits.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness 10

Charm 12

Knowledge 12

Luck 8

Speed 8

Strength 6

Willpower 10

### TRAITS

Guildsman

Magic Spell: Knowledge of the Dead

Magic Spell: Summon Guild Staff

Magic Spell: Transformation

### EQUIPMENT

Improvised Weapon

Lore Book

Lazarus Apple



## DEVIL DOLL

Devil dolls are creepy animated toys with that are bound to obey the commands of their creators. Just about any non-living doll could be animated with magic to become a devil doll. These dolls usually have a telepathic link to their creators, allowing them to receive commands even when their creator is not physically present.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness 11

Charm 6

Knowledge 5

Luck 8

Speed 10

Strength 8

Willpower 6

### TRAITS

Curious

Telepathic

Tooth and Claw

### EQUIPMENT

None





## DIVINER

A diviner serves as its guild's magic expert. Diviners are typically powerful spellcasters and well versed in arcane lore and occult secrets. Though most guildsmen draw on magic to some degree, diviners have access to a great deal more magical power than their comrades.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness 10  
Charm 8  
Knowledge 12  
Luck 10  
Speed 8  
Strength 6  
Willpower 12

### TRAITS

Guildsman  
Magic Spell: Bind Ghost  
Magic Spell: Dreaming Dead  
Magic Spell: Spectral Steed

### EQUIPMENT

Improvised Weapon  
Talisman  
Lore Book



## GUILD MANAGER

Every guild is run by a manager or "watcher" whose job it is to oversee the guild's operations, recruit human agents, and manage the clearing and maintenance of the vaults. Watchers are typically very powerful entities and, like all guildsmen, created by the Host solely to fill their role in the guild.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness 18  
Charm 18  
Knowledge 20  
Luck 16  
Speed 14  
Strength 16  
Willpower 20

### TRAITS

Connected  
Magic Spell: Cat Got Your Tongue?  
Magic Spell: Fiery Wall  
Magic Spell: Unrest  
Magic Spell: Animate Statue  
Magic Spell: Bind Ghost  
Magic Spell: Knowledge of the Dead  
Magic Spell: Summon Guild Staff

### EQUIPMENT

Magic Weapon  
Lazarus Apple  
Talisman



## HUMAN AGENT

This profile represents a fairly typical human guild agent. Every guild employs human agents, as they are required to deal with dreaming spirits. Human agents vary greatly in background and overall competence, though the guilds have a tendency to select human agents who are exceptional in some way. Most human agents lead fairly normal lives outside of their nightly guild activities. Others become obsessed with their work for the guild and withdraw from their normal lives.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness 8  
Charm 10  
Knowledge 6  
Luck 8  
Speed 12  
Strength 10  
Willpower 12

### TRAITS

Connected  
Haunted  
Sensitive  
There's no scrubbing this thing off  
Tragic Past

### EQUIPMENT

Flashlight  
Talisman  
Improvised Weapon



## INTUITER

Intuiters are typically the leaders of their guild team. They specialize in mediation, negotiation, and healing. The presence of a skilled intuitor can often turn the tide of a conflict in the guild's favor.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness 8  
Charm 12  
Knowledge 10  
Luck 6  
Speed 8  
Strength 10  
Willpower 12

### TRAITS

Guildsman  
Born Leader  
Calming Presence  
Magic Spell: Healing Touch

### EQUIPMENT

Bandages x 2  
Lazarus Apple





## LOST SOUL

Lost souls are simply human souls that have, for whatever reason, failed to move on to the next world after their death. These spirits come in any shape and size imaginable, depending on their personality and obsessions in life. Some lost souls retain their human appearance, while others become terrifying and bestial. This profile represents a bog-standard ghostly haunt. Remember that lost souls differ greatly from one another, so don't overuse this particular profile.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness 12  
Charm 10  
Knowledge 10  
Luck 6  
Speed 8  
Strength 8  
Willpower 12

### TRAITS

Ghost  
Bound  
Terrifying Shriek  
Tooth and Claw

### EQUIPMENT

None



## SPECTRAL STEED

Spectral steeds are creatures that are sent by the Host to aid guild members when they need a ride somewhere. Guild members generally have to cast a spell to call forth a steed. These creatures can take on almost any form imaginable. Skeletal horses seem to be a popular choice, but they could come in any number of different forms.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness 12  
Charm 6  
Knowledge 8  
Luck 8  
Speed 14  
Strength 10  
Willpower 10

### TRAITS

Swift  
Telepathic  
Tooth and Claw  
Tough

### EQUIPMENT

None



## SWORD-BEARER

The sword-bearer is the protector of his guild. He is the strongest warrior among the guildsmen and usually the most athletic. Sword-bearers are usually familiar with a broad range of weapons and martial arts styles, which they bring to bear against the enemies of the guild.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness 10  
Charm 8  
Knowledge 6  
Luck 8  
Speed 12  
Strength 12  
Willpower 10

### TRAITS

Guildsman  
Martial Artsy  
Signature Move  
Swift Attack

### EQUIPMENT

Magic Weapon  
Lazarus Apple  
Vehicle



## UNBEARABLE SOUL

Unbearable souls are spirits that are so evil and destructive that they pose a great threat to humans. Unbearables are hunted by guild agents who seek to capture them and return them to the Hive, where they can be destroyed. Like any ghost, an unbearable can take practically any form. Most unbearables take on a monstrous or bestial appearance that reflects their evil nature. Unbearables can be extremely powerful and cases involving them should be treated with extreme caution.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness 14  
Charm 10  
Knowledge 12  
Luck 12  
Speed 16  
Strength 16  
Willpower 14

### TRAITS

Magic Spell: Choke  
Martial Artsy  
Signature Move  
Terrifying Shriek  
Tough  
Tooth and Claw

### EQUIPMENT

None





## WILD ANIMAL

Sometimes, guildsmen will run into wild animals during their investigations. The following is a super generic profile that could be applied to a lot of different types of animals. You may have to add or discard a trait here or there in order to make the profile work for a specific animal, but this should do in a pinch.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness 10  
Charm 6  
Knowledge 6  
Luck 4  
Speed 10  
Strength 8  
Willpower 8

### TRAITS

Sensitive  
Tooth and Claw

### EQUIPMENT

None



## ZOMBIE

Zombies are corpses that have been animated with magic. They retain only the most basic brain-stem function, pretty much restricting them to activities such as walking (usually with a slow shamble), eating (BRAINS!), and perhaps the occasional groan. Zombies are sometimes enslaved by magicians, who use them as servants or entertainment at parties.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness 10  
Charm 4  
Knowledge 6  
Luck 6  
Speed 8  
Strength 10  
Willpower 8

### TRAITS

Terrifying Shriek  
Tooth and Claw  
Tough

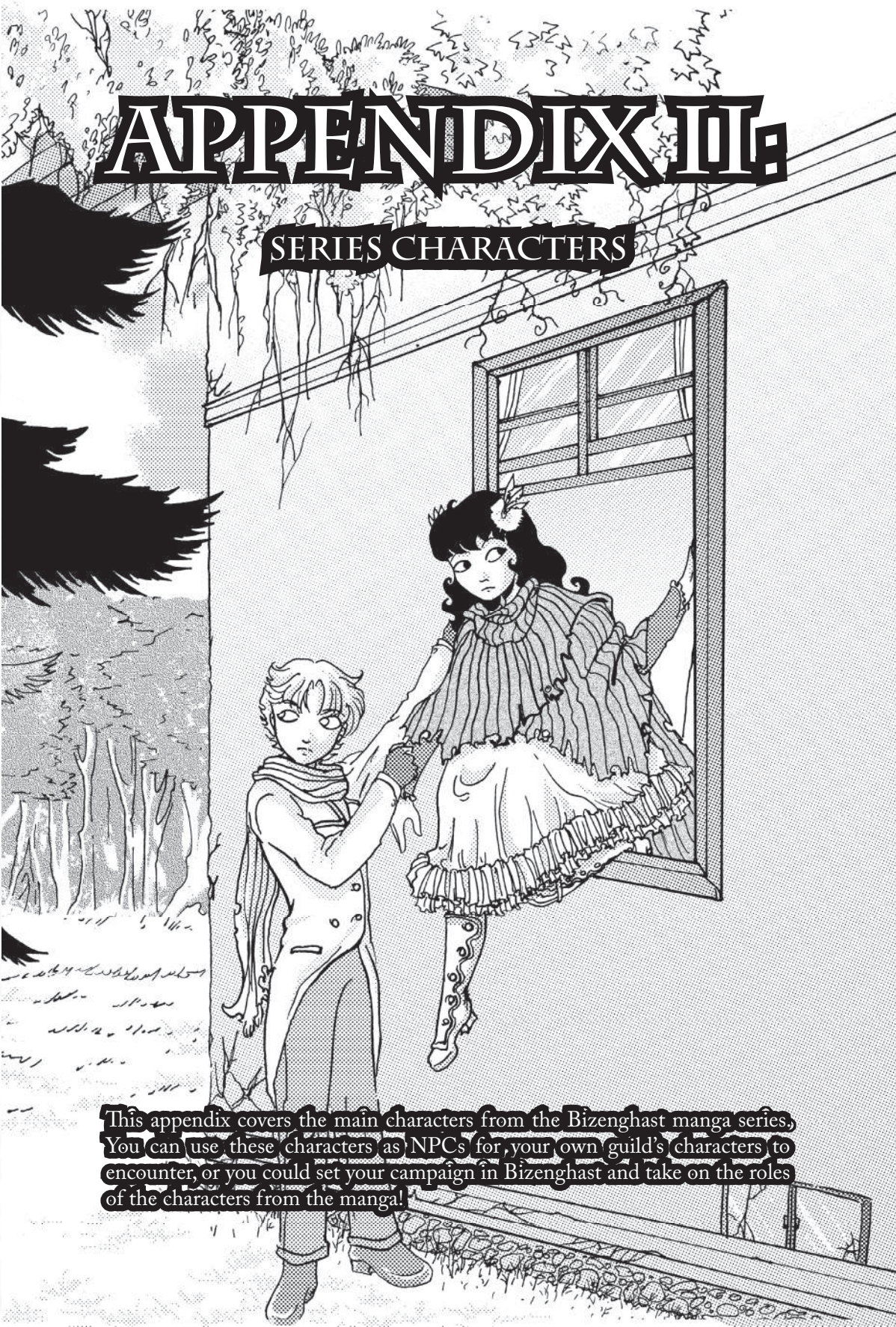
### EQUIPMENT

None



# APPENDIX II:

## SERIES CHARACTERS



This appendix covers the main characters from the Bizenghast manga series. You can use these characters as NPCs for your own guild's characters to encounter, or you could set your campaign in Bizenghast and take on the roles of the characters from the manga!



## DINAH WHEREVER

Dinah is a young girl with a troubled past. After her parents were killed in a tragic car accident, she was placed under the care of her maternal aunt in Bizenghast, Massachusetts. Dinah was contracted by the Bizenghast guild and has since become an experienced human agent.



### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness 14  
Charm 18  
Knowledge 12  
Luck 12  
Speed 14  
Strength 10  
Willpower 14

### TRAITS

There's No Scrubbing This  
Thing Off  
Tragic Past  
Cute  
Depressed  
Haunted  
Hidden Sanctuary  
Sensitive

### EQUIPMENT

Improvised Weapon (Hair  
Pin)  
Lazarus Apple  
Bandages

## VINCENT MONROE JR.

Vincent is Dinah's best friend. Though he is not contracted by the Bizenghast guild, he bravely accompanies Dinah on her nightly adventures in the vaults. His loyalty to her stems from deeper feelings that he has yet to reveal.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness 14  
Charm 18  
Knowledge 10  
Luck 12  
Speed 12  
Strength 14  
Willpower 16

### TRAITS

Calming Presence  
Cute  
Fearless  
True Love (Dinah)

### EQUIPMENT

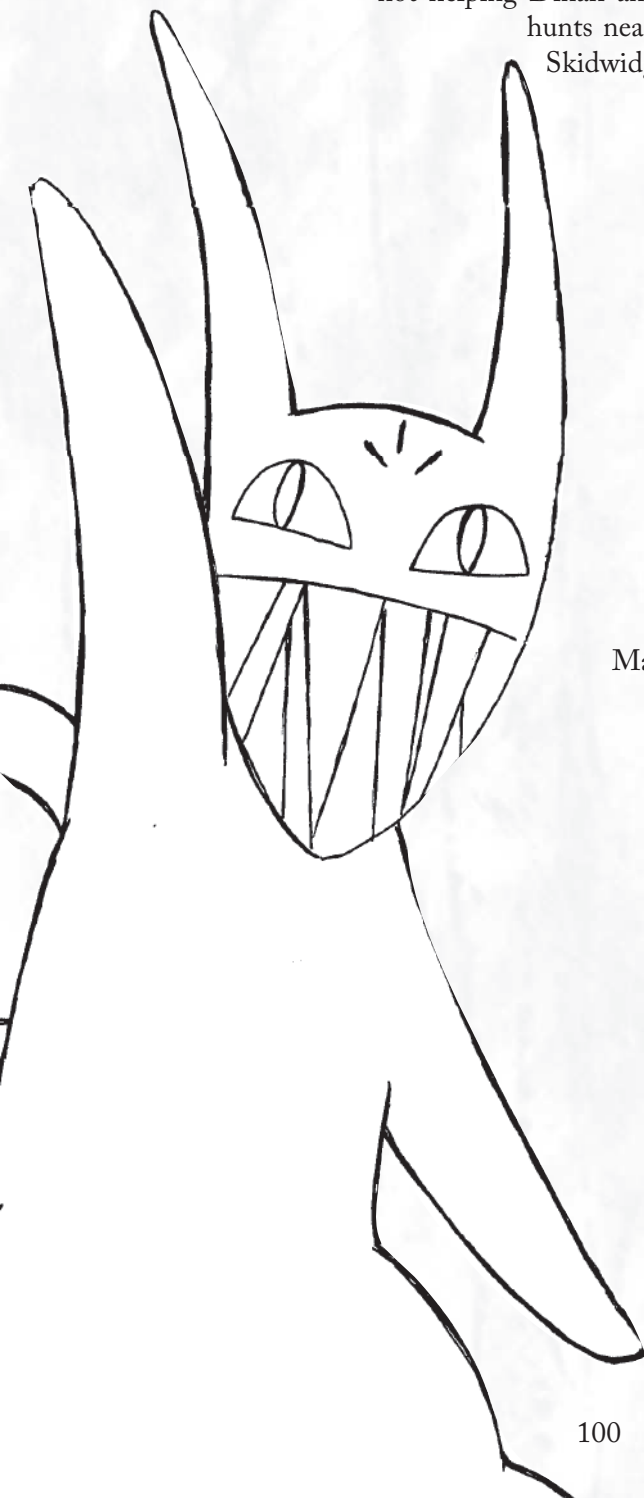
Cell Phone  
Flashlight  
Weapon x 2 (two revolvers)





## EDANIEL

Edaniel is the Bizenghast guild's wise-cracking Compass-Bearer. He prefers to assume his animal-form, which looks like a green, cat-like creature. When not helping Dinah and Vincent with guild business, he hunts near-sighted commies with his buddy Skidwidget.



### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness 12  
Charm 18  
Knowledge 16  
Luck 12  
Speed 14  
Strength 10  
Willpower 14

### TRAITS

Connected  
Cute  
Guildsman  
Imaginary Friend (Skidwidget)  
Magic Spell: Animate Statue  
Magic Spell: Knowledge of the Dead  
Magic Spell: Transformation

### EQUIPMENT

None

## EDREAR

Edrear is the dashing Sword-Bearer of the Bizenghast guild. He wields a magic sword and is protected by a strange, armored exo-skeleton. Edrear's animal form is that of a half-man, half-wolf creature. Edrear is sworn to protect Dinah and has a bit of a rivalry with Vincent for her affections.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness 12  
Charm 14  
Knowledge 12  
Luck 10  
Speed 16  
Strength 16  
Willpower 14

### TRAITS

Guildsman  
Fearless  
Martial Artsy  
Riposte  
Swift Attack  
Tough

### EQUIPMENT

Magic Weapon (Sword)  
Magic Weapon (Bow)





## ENIRI

Eniri is the third guildsman of Bizenghast and Edrear's favorite sister. Eniri has great personal strength and lives according to strict principles, often striking people as mysterious and eccentric. Her job is to aid human agents with magical spells that can protect them from violent ghosts. She is a master of the occult, highly spiritual and, when not assisting human agents, spends most of her time alone, deeply involved in arcane ritual.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness 18  
Charm 16  
Knowledge 20  
Luck 14  
Speed 16  
Strength 18  
Willpower 20

### TRAITS

Guildsman  
Clairvoyant  
Magic Spell: Animate Statue  
Magic Spell: Devil Doll  
Magic Spell: Evil Eye  
Magic Spell: Fiery Wall  
Magic Spell: Foot Track Hoodoo  
Magic Spell: Secret Seal

### EQUIPMENT

Improvised Weapon  
Lazarus Apple  
Talisman  
Lore Book



## ELALA

Elala is the forth and final guildsman of Bizenghast and has knowledge of all the inner workings of the afterlife. Her job is to help the human agents by exuding a calming influence on violent ghosts, and nudging fate in the agents favor whenever possible. She also knows the location of secret strongholds within the mausoleum. Unlike her fierce and mystical sister, Elala is a sweet, soft-spoken and a spirit of the home and hearth. She has a deeper sympathy with human emotions than any of her siblings, and finds contentment in even the most stressful situations. She is Edaniel's favorite sibling.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness 18

Charm 20

Knowledge 20

Luck 16

Speed 14

Strength 16

Willpower 18

### TRAITS

Guildsman

Calming Presence

Clairvoyant

Sensitive

Sixth Sense

Magic Spell: Healing Touch

Magic Spell: Mothwings

Magic Spell: Transformation

### EQUIPMENT

Lazarus Apple

Talisman

Bandages

Lore Book





## BALI-LALI

Bali-Lali is the Watcher of the Bizenghast guild. She takes on a fearsome, spider-like appearance and always wears a jester's hat. She manages the guild's business efficiently, though she does have a tendency to intimidate the guild's human agents.

### ATTRIBUTES

Awareness 18

Charm 18

Knowledge 20

Luck 16

Speed 16

Strength 14

Willpower 20

### TRAITS

Connected

Magic Spell: Cat Got Your Tongue?

Magic Spell: Unrest

Magic Spell: Animate Statue

Magic Spell: Bind Ghost

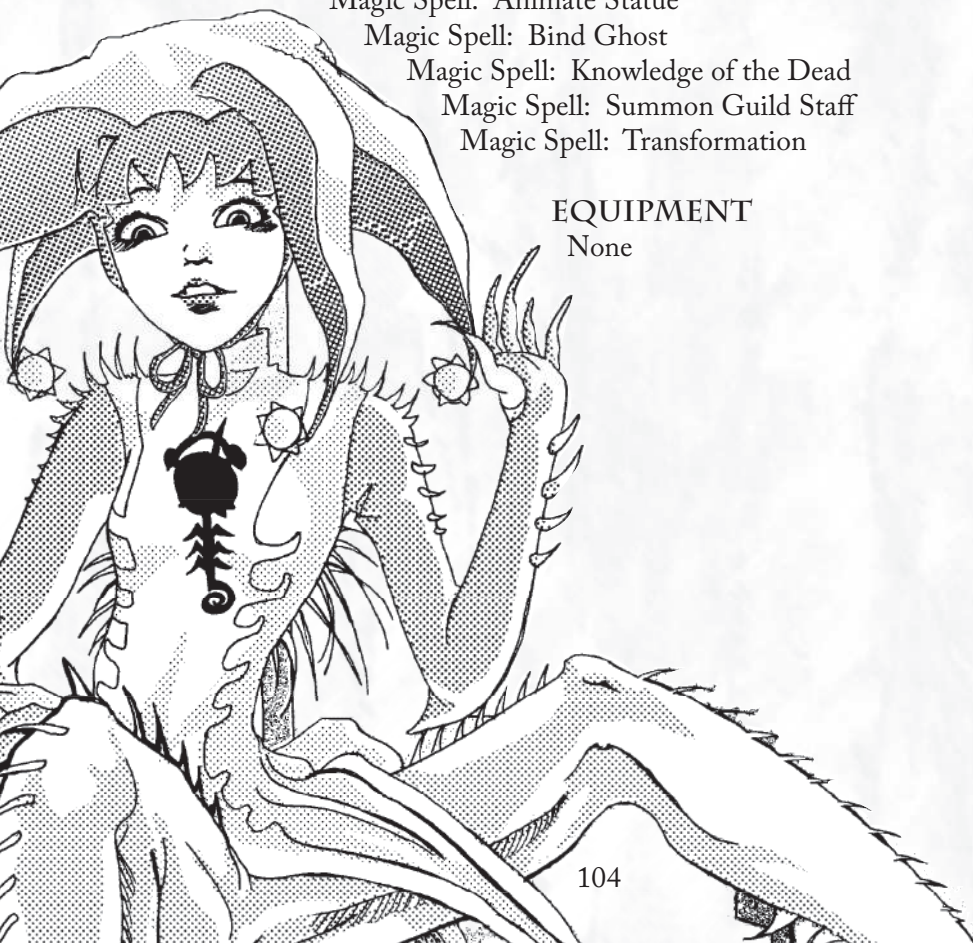
Magic Spell: Knowledge of the Dead

Magic Spell: Summon Guild Staff

Magic Spell: Transformation

### EQUIPMENT

None



Character Name

Guild Position

Bizenghast

Notes

Traits

 Awareness

 Charm

 Knowledge

 Luck

 Speed

 Strength

 Willpower

Equipment

Spirit Tokens

