THE WORLD OF

☥ Bloodshadows ™

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Bloodshadows ™

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INTRODUCTION

Jack Deacon hated working divorce cases. As he stood outside the door of the rundown inn, he thought about all the backaches he'd gotten peering through keyholes in exchange for barely enough gold to keep his bank balance breathing.

He'd made the mistake of sharing a warm drink with a cold blonde, who was dead certain that her husband was having an affair with a streetsinger. She wanted a scare thrown into him and was willing to pay for it. Deacon took the job and spent the rest of the night comforting her in her time of grief.

Now he was waiting for the noises inside the rented room to reach the proper pace and pitch. Once they did, he drew his revolver, put on his best "inn cop" face, and kicked the door hard enough to splinter the lock. There was a brief flare of arcane energy as the cheap doorseal that was supposed to guarantee privacy quit without a struggle.

The dim light of a mounted glowstone was just enough to show Deacon what he'd gotten into. The guy on the bed wouldn't be messing around anymore, not with his throat torn out and his blood all over the sheets.

And the woman on top of him wasn't no lady …

She sprang at Deacon, fangs gleaming, long, coarse hair replacing soft flesh, sharp, black talons emerging from her fingertips. There was only one thing worse than a 'shifter whore, and that was one who enjoyed her work a little *too* much.

"Claws in, kitten," Deacon muttered, pulling the trigger. The bullet caught her in the shoulder and sent electricity playing up and down her lithe body. She hit the floor and started to transform again, but if Deacon was expecting a naked Human, he was in for a surprise. The thing on the floor had gray, slick skin and no features to speak of, although it still managed to scream in pain. Deacon wondered if her client had known what he was getting.

Maybe he asked for his money back, the detective thought, reflecting on the bloody scene that surrounded him.

"Drop the gun and turn around," someone said.

Deacon did as he was asked. He'd seen too much to be shocked at the sight of the dead man sitting propped up on an elbow, gun in hand, although how the guy was talking with no throat to speak of was a good question.

As the suddenly spry corpse shoved a revolver into his ribs and prodded him into the next room, Deacon remembered just why it was he hated sorcery …

A DARK JOURNEY AWAITS

The universe of *Bloodshadows* is one where fantasy and horror, magic and technology, men and monsters meet and merge. Here, sorcery, alchemy, and the ritual magic of blood cults exist side by side with smoking revolvers, cold stiffs and dark deceptions. It offers adventurers the chance to gain riches and power, provided they can survive in places where nothing is ever as it seems.

The world of Marl has been at peace for centuries, with only dim memories of a brutal war almost a millennia ago. Part of an ongoing struggle between Order and Chaos that has touched many times and many planes, this bloody clash saw things of the shadows fighting beside Humans. In the end, much of the planet was devastated and the war moved on to someplace else, leaving Marl forever changed.

Now civilization can be found only in the cities, each unique in its level of technology and the sorceries used there. All deal in their own ways with crime, corruption and mysteries too frightening to be solved. In the streets and towers, the rich manipulate events to suit themselves, the poor labor in flesh mills and talisman factories, and those in the middle dream of the day they can afford cars powered by elemental magic. In the netherworlds of the cities, vampires stand on bloodlines to get their daily ration, beautiful shapeshifters sell their favors on street corners, and Human/Ogre 'breeds make good livings as legbreakers.

Between the cities lies the Wilderness — dangerous, deadly, and largely unexplored. Here, creatures who have had hundreds of years to grow powerful and cunning wait for the unwary, luring them in with promises of power before consuming their souls. Travel from city to city is laden with risk, but gold flows like water for those brave enough to attempt it.

Marl once again stands on the brink of the abyss, for the war has returned to this world. Order, Chaos and a mysterious third force struggle in the shadows, cults and creatures their soldiers, in what may be the final battle of an eternal conflict.

As the tale of *Bloodshadows* begins, the war has begun in earnest in some cities, and not yet touched others. For many, it brings death, but for those with the strength, skill, and intelligence to survive, it means opportunity …

THIS VOLUME

The World of Bloodshadows presents all the source material you need to start adventuring in this dark and deadly new roleplaying universe. To begin play, you will need this book, the *MasterBook* rule book, and two ten-sided dice. The game can be played with or without the MasterDeck, although its use is recommended.

This book contains information on the *Bloodshadows* universe, the cities, the Wilderness, and the Godwar that rages anew. Also included are sections on cults and the more monstrous residents of Marl, magic, equipment, and special rules for creating player character creatures. Finally, a sample city, adventure hooks and a beginning adventure are included to get you started in your *Bloodshadows* campaign.

CHAPTER ONE

MARL

"**F**ound your husband," Deacon said, jerking his thumb over his shoulder at the walking corpse.

The adjoining room had turned out to be occupied by his client, the blonde with the "wandering" mate. She was sitting in the chair, a little pistol in her shapely hand.

"You're a funny guy," she said.

"Then how come you're not laughing?"

Her husband spoke up. He was vocal for a dead guy. "I don't like this, Vera. Maybe we should just beat it. The 'shifter's dead and —"

Vera's face turned hard. "So what? He killed her, didn't he? They can't tie it to us. This is the sweetest deal we've ever stumbled on and if you think I'm backing out now, you're crazy! Go back in there and get the rest of yourself — there's no point leaving the sentinels anything to work with."

He did as he was told. She seemed the type who was used to people doing what she told them. "What's this all about? Nobody's going to cough up any gold on my account. You snatched the wrong guy."

She smiled. It wasn't as pretty an expression as it had been the night before. "It's not about ransom, Deacon. Somebody wants you for their own reasons. Me, I don't ask questions. But there's enough dough in this to get me out of Galitia and if you have to get iced, well, that's a tough break." Her features softened. "But we had last night, right? And you liked that, didn't you?"

Deacon shrugged. "Sure, kid. Same as I like hearing banshees sing in the shower."

She thought about slapping him, then realized it would mean getting close enough to let him grab the gun. She was mean, but she wasn't stupid. She stayed put.

"We're going on a trip," she said coldly. "As soon as Harv is finished cleaning up. You've got business in Selastos."

Deacon knew the name, of course. A mid-sized city in the interior, a little more upscale than Galitia. "That's a long way through a lot of Wilderness."

Vera chuckled. "That's what I thought, too. Now I know better. Once we're there, we drop you off and get our gold. Then we live high, and you —"

"I stop living," Deacon finished for her. "I get the picture. Tell me, sister, how do you manage to sleep at night?"

Her features took on a strange sadness for just a moment before she answered. "Sometimes I don't. Sometimes I get two-bit detectives to keep me company."

Harv picked that moment to walk back in, his throat sloppily put back together. Vera went back to being all-business. "Let's go. There's a car downstairs."

Deacon waited until they were in the hallway before he made his move …

THE WORLD OF MARL

"This world wasn't made for the weak. The idea that on some far-off Judgment Day they will inherit is a lie created by the wolves to keep the sheep content.

"And I have news for you: Judgment Day is already here."

— Hieronymus East,
Galitia

Long before the Godwar returned, the world of Marl had more than its share of dangers. Those who lived out their lives within the walls of a city or town enjoyed some security, providing they paid extra for good doorseals, stayed out of certain neighborhoods, and were careful not to anger the alchemist who lived next door. Of course, every day the newscribes wrote about people who made that one mistake every living thing is supposed to be allowed and wound up on a slab in the city morgue. If they were lucky, the coroner wouldn't turn out to be a closet necromancer who'd have them shambling around, wearing out shoe leather, until the local law got around to blowing their brains out. If they were unlucky, their relatives would save a few coins by slapping them in the ground at a poorly guarded cemetery, where they'd stay until a resurrectionist dug them up for parts or sold the body to a flesh mill.

Those who ventured out of the cities — by choice or misfortune — faced a different kind of peril. Roads were few and far between, much of the Wilderness was unmapped, and the legends of monstrous things that lived in the forest, mountains and rivers were more fact than fantasy. More than a few travelers found themselves arriving at their destinations far sooner than they'd planned, having wandered through an arcane gateway, only to discover that a little piece of Hell had come along with them. More than a few never arrived at all.

With a three-way war breaking out in the darkened streets of the cities, there's no real safety to be found anywhere anymore. Cults who have played nice with each other for centuries are letting their hate shine through. City governments try to keep the lid on as the body count goes up. Creatures who have long survived in the shadows, side by side with Humans, are drawn out by the smell of blood. Portions of Marl are *thunder* potions waiting for the spark that will make them explode.

Now, more than ever, those who can handle a gun, toss a spell, or scout a path through the

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Wilderness are in demand. Beleaguered city officials, local law, and all three sides in this new Godwar are all hiring skilled freelancers to take on jobs that need doing. For somebody who knows their way around a fight or a grimoire, the only thing easier to find than employment these days is a quick death.

GEOGRAPHY

There might have been a time when Marl's continents and oceans were known as well as the counterspell for your home doorseal, but that was long ago. Walk into a library today and ask for a map of the world and you'll get a tracing of the outlines of a couple of continents and the paths of a few rivers. Maybe there will even be a handful of islands included, if they aren't located too far off the coast. All of this comes from the hands of sailors over the years, and it's anybody's guess how accurate they are.

If you're looking for maps of the interior, you might find one showing the area right around the city you're standing in. Don't expect a Galitia merchant to have a map of Guildsport on hand. If he does, it will probably be general locations, with no detail provided. And some maps are so old, they still list as viable cities places that were sacked and burned in the last war and survive only as ruins.

ARCHER SAYS

My name's Archer. In my wasted life I've been a newscribe, crewman on a trader, and did a few years inside for reading *fire* spells in a crowded theater. Somebody tossed a little gold my way to make sure you get the straight dope about Marl, so here it goes.

There's one thing the sharpie's leaving out, and that's the fact that not everybody who sits on a bar stool with a piece of parchment sticking out of his pocket and talks about his travels is legit. Some of these cons haven't been farther than a block from their own houses in their lives. But there's always a mark willing to part with his cash in exchange for the "one, true map to the lost treasure of whatever."

I don't care if you're in downtown Dela or on the Guildsport docks, there're vultures, vultures everywhere. I knew a mug who bought a map off an ex-courier and hired the guy to guide him through some mountains. Five minutes after they're outside the walls, the courier's pals show up and do a smash and grab. Can't be too careful these days.

Maps of river routes are available, if the town you're in is on a river. Charts of the oceans are guesses at best, lies at worst. Any sailor on an ocean-going ship will tell you they hug the coastline. Never know what might be waiting under the waves, hoping for a schooner to snack on. But somebody willing to take a few risks and produce a true map of the big blues could make enough to pay for a two-month drunk.

If charts of the waters are rare, maps of "gates" are close to impossible to dig up. These portals act as shortcuts from one place to another, but since you can't see them with the naked eye and they've been known to move around, gold spent on a gazetteer of them is probably gold wasted.

The best sources for information on Marl's layout comes from the people whose jobs take them outside the city walls: couriers, traders, salesmen, and the like. Most will share what they know for the right price, and some will even act as guides if they see a way to profit by it.

HISTORY

Marl's early history is the same old song: Humans emerged from the mud to run the planet, building crude settlements and using any excuse to bash each other's brains in. War was a welcome break from hunting and gathering. It's always been more fun to take what the other guy has than go out and get your own.

Finally, the ones who were best at cracking heads started carving out empires. Ideas about law, politics, and culture were tossed back and forth among those who couldn't get real jobs. Civilizations rose until they became too top-heavy, and then fell again. Wars broke out at the drop of a gauntlet and there aren't too many acres of Marl that didn't serve as a battlefield/graveyard at one time or another.

Marl was always a little different, though. The earliest histories mention creatures that were more or less than Human, depending on who you talked to. Some were captured and displayed in circuses. Some made a life for themselves inside the cities, as laborers or bosses, predators or prey. And some stayed out of sight and settled in the Wilderness, taking on anyone who wandered out there. Although you won't find many historians willing to admit it, the boundaries of empire were defined by how far you could expand before running into one of those things. When your scouting expeditions began getting torn to pieces, it was time to call it a day and be content with what you had.

From the very beginning, sorcery was a part of life on Marl. Armies counted on their scryers to tell them where the enemy was and whether or not it was a good day to fight. In the old days, wizards

wore wild clothes as a way of impressing the generals — that is, until they found out the enemy aimed for the sorcerers first. Maybe that's why magic users started trying to fit in with the rest of society, instead of acting like a breed apart. From there, it was a short jump to the idea that everybody should know some magic, if only enough to get by.

Things went on this way for about two thousand years.

Cities were built and abandoned, nations came into being, and weapons and spells got better. Impressed spells, tougher armor and battle axes in place of clubs never brought about the "Golden Age" that was promised, but apart from a few plagues, things proceeded about as one would expect for a world in its Middle Ages.

Suddenly, everything changed. It started with the cults tearing at each other and spread from the borders of empire into the hearts of the cities. Next thing you knew, you couldn't toss a dead spellslinger without hitting a civil war in progress. But it wasn't a war for territory — no, this was a fight for minds and souls between those who believed in Order and those allied to Chaos. Before it was done, the empires had been swept away and the great armies destroyed.

And that wasn't the worst of it. Humans didn't fight this war alone. Both armies featured the dark things that legends spoke of and a soldier might find a shapeshifter by his side in combat and the Undead marching over the hill. All the "rules of battle" were abandoned in what came to be known as the Godwar, not a difficult action to take when one saw fields of enemy dead rise again to resume the fight.

As swiftly as it began, it was over. There was no winner — the battle simply moved on to another field, somewhere else. Most of the cities lay in ruins and the new ones that were built seemed more like fortresses than towns. Those non-Humans who survived faded back into the shadows of these cities, maybe waiting for the day the Godwar would return.

The biggest change was in the Wilderness. The entities who had always thrived there had increased in number during the war and no massive army existed anymore to keep them in check. All anyone could do was hide behind the city walls and hope they were strong enough to keep the creatures out. This made the cities even more isolated than before and populations were forced to become self-sufficient or starve.

Cities have grown and changed over the nine centuries since the end of the first Godwar. From one place to the next, you'll find a different kind of government, different religions, and different types of magic practiced. Sometimes two neighboring cities will seem so different that it's hard to believe they're on the same planet, let alone only a few hundred kilometers apart.

THE CITIES

The heart of Marl is its cities. These range from metropolises like Galitia (pop. 3,000,000) to isolated towns like Guildsport (pop. 10,000, give or take a few hundred). There are fortified settlements out in the Wilderness with smaller numbers of people, but one in a thousand lasts long enough to grow into a city.

Differences between cities can be small or large. How they're run varies, with everything from dictatorships to second cousins of anarchy, and the whole lot in between. Most have their own money, too, though gold, silver and other precious metals are used for any dealings with other towns.

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ARCHER SAYS

Every kid learns about the Godwar in grammar school, in between the alphabet and why you shouldn't turn your little sister's pigtails into cobras. What it was all about depends on who you talk to — I don't think anybody around now really knows, but I've heard some pretty wild stories. Order? Chaos? Pretty simple names for such broad concepts, if you ask me.

And the things that scared the life out of everybody back then? Ask me, they were always here, just waiting for an excuse to make themselves known. You'll meet some folks who try to say it's all just stories. But most know better; they know they're out there, in every city, living what passes for their lives even if it means taking yours. Hell, I've seen the bloodlines, I've diced with goons that could make you go cold inside with a look, and I've watched guys go all hairy and fetch their own slippers. And that doesn't even touch what I saw in stir. Best you can hope is that there's more of us than there are of them.

No matter the differences, all cities face the same major problems: feeding the people and protecting them from predators, inside and out. Most grow their own food in fields right around the town, protected by a series of walls. Fish or game is a treat most places, although larger cities will breed their own stock for slaughter.

Outer walls protect the cities from invasion or unexpected visits by Wilderness creatures. Since travelers who pass through gates have been known to pick up a monstrous stowaway or two, they'll be checked over before being allowed to walk into the settled areas. Along the same lines, some cities have laws against vehicles from outside being allowed in. You have to check them at the door and pick them up on your way out.

Most cities can't afford an army, so local law handles any threats, inside or out. A few have special units devoted to dealing with non-Humans and there are rarer outfits trained to search out gates in the surrounding area and kill anything that might be lurking inside them.

Cities are linked by couriers and traders. *Teleportation* and *send thought* spells can also keep cities in contact with each other, but you don't want to trust anything — or anyone — important to them (see Chapter Seven, "Magic"). You can count on towns along a river being aware of each other, but don't be surprised if two cities on opposite sides of a mountain haven't got a clue about each others' existence.

Economically, towns thrive by producing the goods their people need to survive. Any luxuries can be used for trade, but there is no trade for necessities — the areas in between cities are too dangerous to count on a trading vessel or convoy making it through.

Picture this: a guy from Galitia walks into Gimm. He's used to wide avenues with a fair amount of auto traffic and the sight of railrunners carrying mill workers to their jobs. Now he's seeing narrow, cobblestoned streets where the people are riding beast-drawn wagons. There's no stench of flesh mills in the air, no loads of corpses being sold for their skin. Instead, he sees miners hauling silver to smiths, to be turned into plates, cups and knives. The streetsingers are giving out tunes about troubles with the lightmage union, a group that doesn't even have a guild office in Galitia. The colleges are teaching rites he's never heard of and the local law politely suggests he do his business and move on. Getting his bearings is half this guy's battle, and he'll start all over again if he survives his trip to another city.

Even the makeup of the population can change from place to place. Some creatures might be native to one city, but never seen anywhere else. A good example of this is Selastos, where the menial labor is done by taxim, reanimated dead possessed by industrious demons. Their presence is accepted by the locals, although they have few rights under the city code.

For more details on the city of Selastos, see Chapter Four.

THE WILDERNESS

Few people that you meet these days can tell you very much about the areas between the cities. Vast tracts of land, most of it unexplored, the rest abandoned centuries ago, separate the towns better than any man-made barrier ever could. Go out there and you might find ruins of ancient cities, a few crazed exiles, and mysteries that will pay off big if you live to solve them. The creatures you'll meet out there are a far cry from the ones in the cities — more powerful and more *alien* than *anything* you're likely to have seen before.

One thing you won't find is roads, except maybe the occasional path worn into the earth by traders. The only security to be had on a journey is the kind you hire yourself — armed guards, scouts, and guides who make good money if they get you where you want to go in one piece.

The Wilderness is also where you find the gates, capable of transporting you across a continent or maybe to some other plane altogether. There are all sorts of theories about how these things come to be. Some believe they're created by Wilderness

A WALK IN THE WILDERNESS

Day 3, Sixteenth Hour — *Less than twenty-four hours outside of Gimm, we became separated from our escort. Nora thinks it was the storm and we'll run into them again. Jenks isn't talking, but I know what's on his mind. The path we were on must have contained a gate. With the guards on flank, we passed right through it without even being aware. We're not sure where the one who scouted ahead might be — hell, we're not even sure where we are. It doesn't look like the terrain around Selastos, I've seen that. The mountains to the west shouldn't be there, for one thing, and the river we're traveling along isn't familiar either. The terrain is too rough for the car and we've had to abandon it.*

Day 3, Nineteenth Hour — *We found Dorn, our scout, not long ago. He was badly bruised but couldn't tell us what he'd fought. He'd emptied his rifle at the thing and hadn't stopped it. I checked the gun — his story holds up. Nora says this is a sign we'll make it to the city all right, or at least come across some other travelers. I hope she's right. But it's hard to feel certain of anything when it starts getting dark around here.*

Day 4, First Hour — *Awakened by the sound of Jenks screaming. I wasn't two seconds getting to him and he was already dead. Torn to bits. Dorn was there, too. Didn't seem too upset. Said he didn't see a thing. I asked him if he'd gone blind when we went through the gate.*

Nora told me to calm down. I hadn't realized I was shouting.

Day 4, Seventh Hour — *Traveling again. Still no signs of even a town or a settlement. Just plains and mountains and this damn river that's never known a boat. Nora heard a noise and thought it was one of the ... things they say is out here. Dorn told her not to be stupid. Anything that came after you here wouldn't bother sneaking up. What would it have to be afraid of?*

I asked him how he knew so much. He said he just did, that's all.

Day 5, Twenty-First Hour — *Dorn took first watch. He insisted. Just like he did the night Jenks died. But I'm going to fool him. I'm not going to close my eyes. I'll see when the thing comes out of him to kill us and I'll shoot. It all makes sense now. Dorn encountered something in the gate, fought ... and lost. It hasn't been stalking us because it's been right here with us.*

Day 5, Hour Unknown — *Dorn is dead. I saw him start to jerk and twitch, saw something tearing its way out of him. I fired. I fired until he went down a lay still. I fired until there were no more bullets left in the gun. I wanted to be sure he — it — was dead.*

I didn't let Nora get too close to the body. Why should she have to see? She started crying. I told her to shut up. I'd just saved both our lives.

Day 6 — *We started traveling again this morning. Nora isn't talking. Probably better that way. I can't stand her whining anymore.*

We made it over the mountains today. There's a town down in the valley. It made us both feel better just to see the walls and the buildings inside. We'll be there by tomorrow. Too dangerous to climb down at night. We'll be all right until tomorrow.

Now — *I told Nora she was beautiful. The most beautiful woman I'd ever seen. I told her that, when we reached the town, we'd be married. She didn't answer. Maybe there was too much blood in her mouth.*

I woke up and found her like this. Here and there. Just parts now.

It wasn't in Dorn. It was in me. I never knew. I swear I never knew. When I saw it coming out of him, I saw what the thing wanted me to see. I know that now.

And I know it wants me to go into the town. It says they'll take me in. Humans are like that.

Maybe if I tell them before they open the gate, someone will kill me. Please, Cair, let someone kill me.

I can't do it myself. I'm out of bullets.

creatures and travel with them, like mobile traps; others think they're left over from the Godwar. Most likely, everyone is partially right. Some gates do appear and then disappear, while others seem to be permanently fixed in one spot.

SORCERY

They say that when the first man saw a bolt of lightning hit a tree and the limbs burst into flame, he realized that there were gods and devils out in the ether greater than he. What he thought the day he concentrated hard and caused lightning to flash from his fingers nobody knows, but that was when primitive Humans on Marl realized the power of magic. It took another thousand years before someone decided arcane energy was a natural force that could be manipulated like any other. Long before there was any industrial revolution, there was a sorcerous one, and the blending of technology and magic is a fact of life today.

Bloodshadows

ARCHER SAYS

Don't let anybody fool you. Every city I've ever been to has been run by the same three outfits: the cops, the crooks and the big rich. First thing you better learn when you walk through the gate is who's who and how do they feel about each other. Sometimes you can get your job done by playing them off against each other; other times, they're sealed tighter than a dead man's lips and you ain't going to pry them apart.

If that's the situation, my advice is play nice with all three as much as you can. If you can't, at least don't hack them all off at the same time. That's a fast ticket to a cell or a slab.

Over the course of centuries, all of the mystic arts have enjoyed a few minutes of fame in the big cities. Alchemy, necromancy, pyromancy, and assorted "other-mancies" all enjoyed their moment in the spotlight. Certain types of magic became popular in certain areas, so that, today, sorceries practiced in one city might not be found — or welcome — in neighboring towns.

It's impossible to overestimate the effect that the arcane has had on daily life all over Marl. Early on, it was realized that there would always be some who favored "untainted" technology and others who felt spells should stand on their own without being impressed into tools. Most people embraced a compromise — a merging of the magic arts with those of the woodworker, the smith and other craftsmen. Sorcery mixed with technology is a standard now, with neither dominant over the other. A guy who wants protection on the streets can buy regular lead slugs for his gun, if he likes; or he can pay a little more and get bullets will spells built into them, runes carved on the shells to tell him which ones. A smart guy buys both, since you never know what you might run into.

The average person probably knows enough sorcery to make minor repairs to their car or change the glowstones in their apartment. For more complicated tasks, *specialized mages* must be called in, some who charge by the hour, some by the spell.

The bigger the city, the more places you can learn about the principles of magic. These range from expensive and exclusive academies all the way down to cut-rate night courses offered upstairs over the neighborhood curio shop. If you don't have time to take a class, there are plenty of "do-it-yourself" grimoires out there, not to mention shady characters selling spell scrolls in alleys. There's no guarantee, of course, that these spells will do what they promise to in the way they promise. Some

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cities have entire districts filled with people who tried to do too much with too little magic, or vice versa, and were maddened, maimed or cursed as a result.

See Chapter Seven, "Magic" for more information on spell design and casting.

TECHNOLOGY

The average guy wakes up in the morning in a good-sized city. He rolls out of bed and stumbles into the bathroom, waving a hand in front of the mounted glowstone to get it to turn on. If his rent's paid up, the *heat water* spell on his pipes is still working. He showers, shaves and flips on his crystal set to get the morning news. The only stations he can pick up are inside the city, and then only if he bought a crystal from the broadcaster.

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ARCHER SAYS

Know why the city of Gimm's got more sorcery-powered cars than any other kind? 'Cause the biggest of the big rich owns the elemental mages in that town, that's why. He couldn't stomp out all the steam engines, but anybody trying to bring fuel in for a combustion job will wind up drinking the stuff while looking down the barrel of a .45.

Sometimes there's a good reason why some gadget isn't in Galitia that might be in Dela. And sometimes it just means there's a body that doesn't want it there. Better find out which before you try and sell one in the city limits.

He heads down to his neighborhood diner and orders a cup of coffee. Maybe he chats with some of the guys coming off nightshift at the flesh mill, if he can stand the smell. His coffee gets cold—the woman behind the counter puts the cup in the palm of her hand, thinks real hard and brings it to a boil again.

The guy stands and glances at his watch. It's slow and he curses as he thinks about how much a temporal spell costs. He turns to leave, but there's a commotion out on the street. Somebody knocked over a streetsinger and stole her alms, but there's a sentinel in pursuit. The law fires and hits, but the lead slug only slows the thief down. He's in the midst of shifting to a winged form when the sentinel shoots again. This time, the bullet wraps its quarry in coils of glowing energy, pinning his arms, and he hits the ground like a stone.

After the mess is cleared away, the guy steps out on to the street. He's late for work and the railrunners in this part of town are pulled by beasts. Well, he can always blame it on one of the animals breaking down.

He glances up and down the street and goes out to stand on the railrunner stop, thinking about how one of these days he'll save enough to buy one of those elemental-powered cars. Then he'll take that sweet kid behind the counter out to a nice restaurant, one of those places that serves *tuy* meat imported all the way from Dela.

It's a good dream. It'll get him through the day …

THE CREATURES

Some people still like to pretend that the unnatural, the cursed and the damned don't really exist. They're exaggerations of history or the products of hysteria. But the truth is that things other than Human have always been a part of Marl, only more visible at some times than others.

Marl's creatures can be divided into three broad categories: those who can pass, those who can't,

Jaime Lombardo & Ron Hill

and those of the Wilderness. The first broad title covers Vampires, some shapeshifters and anything else that looks near-Human (or can make itself look that way). These find it easiest to coexist with Humans in cities, can move about fairly freely and, in some places, have gained a measure of acceptance. This won't save *them from being* hunted down by local law, though, if enough deaths are traced to their door.

The second group are those who, usually because of how they look, stand out in a crowd. Prejudice and fear (most of it justified) keeps them in the shadows. While some aren't completely inhuman, they've drifted well away from the ability to identify with the ordinary mortals around them.

This makes them dangerous and unpredictable enemies. Their nature and way of life makes them prone to madness, and you don't want to be the one to tell such a thing it's crazy.

Both of these first two groups were most visible during the days of the first Godwar. Since then, they have come to be regarded in most places as undesirables, but few people have ever actually encountered one or would necessarily know if they had. With the Godwar returning to Marl, more and more things are emerging from the shadows to fight — or profit from the fighting — again.

The creatures of the Wilderness are breeds apart and hated by Humans and non-Humans alike. It's the presence of these which makes travel between cities, down rivers or over oceans so deadly. Hard information on these things is sketchy and difficult to come by — even most descriptions are unreliable. But they are numerous enough and powerful enough to make most of Marl's citizens content to hide behind city walls for their entire lives.

RELIGION

At the same time that magic was coming into its own in ancient Marl, religion took root as well. Worship of gods and demons sprang up in many places at once, but the form this took was vastly different from place to place.

No single religion dominates Marl. Even before the first Godwar, civilized areas were too distant from each for one creed to take hold and spread. Instead, an assortment of cults came to be, with each city having its own patron gods — or devils. Today, a large metropolis will boast dozens upon dozens of cults within its walls, some having thousands of members and others no more than five or ten.

But you can't judge a cult by its size. The one with only half a dozen members may lay claim to prominent bankers and businessmen. They'll have more money and influence than a cult with five thousand acolytes, all poorly educated mill workers.
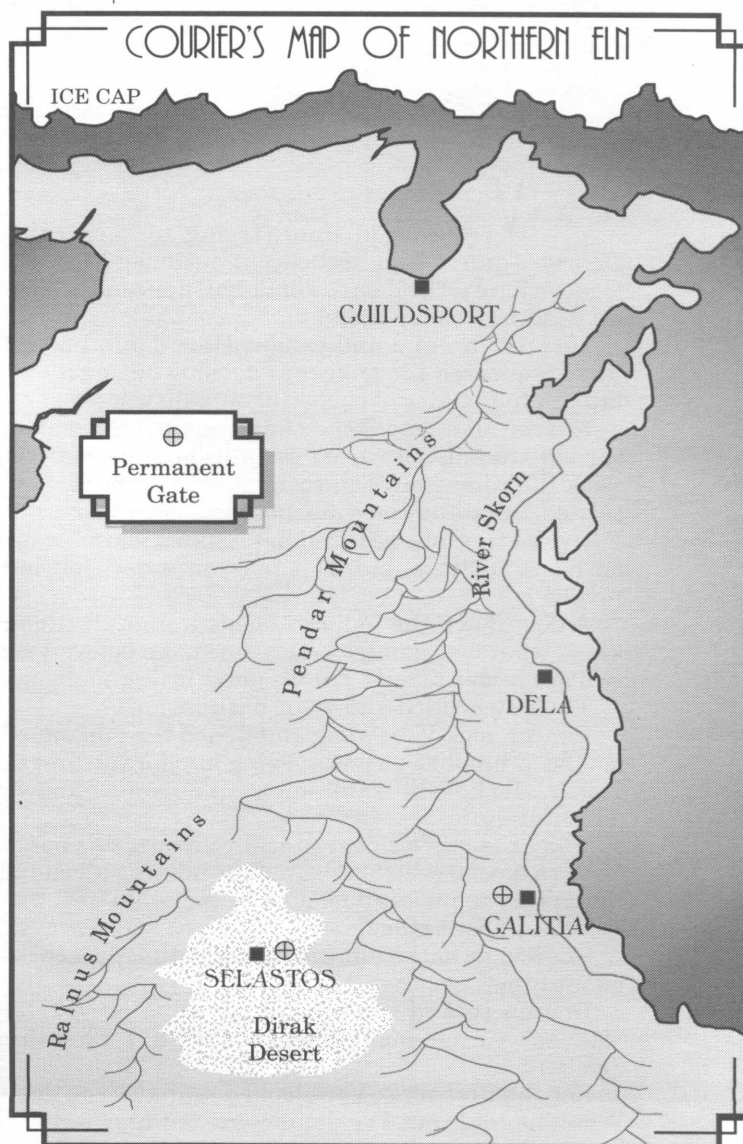
In a few cases, travelers have found identical gods being worshipped in adjacent cities, under completely different names. Cultists will often not even be aware that their god is also worshipped by others, and will show no inclination to link up and form a larger group. The gods may not all be jealous by nature, but their followers often are.

Cults vary radically in behavior. Some come across as very civic-minded, giving money to charity, funding the opening of hospitals, and working hard to maintain a good reputation. Others are isolationist, seeming to take pride in the fact that their ways seem strange to outsiders. Finally, there are the blood cults — violent, deranged, sacrificing members or innocents out of love for their god or just for the fun of it. Unfortunately, these three groups are not mutually exclusive — the Ancient Order of Sura may build parks for kids to play in all day, then sacrifice those same little ones under the trees that night.

The cults have taken on new importance as the Godwar returns to Marl. They're the scouts, the spies, and the expendable troops in this battle, and are more dangerous than ever before.

For more information on the cults, see Chapter Two.

COURIER'S MAP OF NORTHERN ELN

ICE CAP

GUILDSPORT

Permanent Gate

Pendar Mountains

River Skorn

DELA

Ralnus Mountains

GALITIA

SELASTOS

Dirak Desert

Thomas ONeill

CHAPTER TWO

THE GODWAR

Vera was in front, trying to keep calm. Harv walked behind, pointing Deacon's gun at him, trenchcoat buttoned high to hide the mess that was his throat. Deacon figured he'd have about half a second of surprise between success and winding up dead in a cheap motel.

He spun around and caught Harv's gun hand, forcing the weapon down. Harv's finger squeezed the trigger and a slug buried itself in the ratty carpeting. An instant later, a half meter of carpeting and floor were gone, eaten away by the bullet's spell.

Deacon slammed Harv's hand against the wall until he dropped the gun. Vera had turned around, but wasn't certain she wanted to risk shooting when somebody might stick their head out of a room at any moment. She stood and watched while Deacon turned Harv and consciousness into strangers.

By the time she realized her "golden goose" was armed again, Deacon had the gun on her. "Too late, kid. Not making a decision is making a decision. I'll take that revolver."

A door down the hallway opened. A guy with suitcases under his eyes wanted to know what was going on. Deacon spoke before Vera could. "Inn detective, sir. These two are under arrest. Things got a little rough. Sorry if we disturbed your sleep."

The guy nodded and went back inside.

Deacon took Vera's bag and fished the gun out of it, slipping it into his pocket. She looked at him like she was seeing him for the first time. "I never really wanted to hurt you … Jack," she said softly. "You must know that. But I need the money so desperately."

"Play the other side, sister. I've heard this one before," Deacon growled.

Vera moved a little closer. "But now it's all changed. You and I, together, we could find a way to make some dough. We could own this town, lover."

"What about Harv?"

She looked at the lump on the floor that passed for her husband with disgust. "What about him?"

Deacon tucked his revolver into his pocket, but kept his finger on the trigger. "Maybe we could make a deal at that, kid. First things first: who hired you to put the arm on me?"

For the first time, Vera looked scared. "You don't want to mess with him, Deacon. When he finds out I've double-crossed him — you have to take care of me, Jack. We have to get out of here."

"Sure, angel, sure," Deacon said soothingly. "We'll go someplace, all right. We're going to take that car you have downstairs and visit your boss. Get going."

Vera's eyes went wide. "You can't be serious! Do you know what you're saying? He'll kill you!"

Deacon smiled. "Not if I kill him first, kid."

"Think of the Godwar as two opponents playing chess on multiple boards at once. They turn their attention to each board in turn, their conflict shifting from one to the other. Then one day they glanced at a board — Marl — and saw some of the pieces were moving on their own. That's when they knew there was a third player in the game."

— Alexander Scratch, Selastos

The battle between Chaos and Order that's known on Marl as "the Godwar" has gone on since before recorded time. When the universe began, Chaos was in command of the swirling dust and gases that were the whole of creation. But as planets formed and began to circle stars, Order took its place, imposing laws on nature and all life to come. The two forces were evenly matched and provided a balance to the universe — but from the start, it was an uneasy peace.

No one knows for certain how or why the war started. It's possible that one or the other of these cosmic entities saw an opportunity to seize the universe for itself alone and used its followers on some long-forgotten world as its army. That battle ended in stalemate — but the war was far from over.

Over the millennia, believers in Order and Chaos have clashed on different worlds and different planes. The battles have been fought with every kind of weapon imaginable, from stones and clubs to long-range missiles. But the bloodiest fights have been on worlds — like Marl — where sorcery is a powerful part of life. Maybe people who are already used to manipulating a force of nature are more sensitive to the call to war.

Regardless of where the Godwar is fought, it follows a pattern. Those who are fanatically devoted to one side or the other are the first to start killing. Eventually, like a wildfire, the conflict spreads until it encompasses even those who really don't know what they're fighting for or against. A skirmish might be won, but more often than not, the battles end in stalemate; with their armies in one spot devastated, Order and Chaos turn their attention to someplace else and the war begins again.

Now the pattern has been broken. A third force has arisen on Marl to challenge the two long-time enemies. It is a three-way war and the chances are great that final victory will go to one of the factions at last. It's this possibility that has sparked the Godwar on Marl again, after so many centuries.

THE SECOND GODWAR

As noted in Chapter One, Marl's first taste of the Godwar took place in that world's Middle Ages. It was fought by massive armies of men and creatures armed with swords, spears, maces, battle-axes and, of course, magic. Hundreds of cities were left in ruins, millions (perhaps billions) were slain, and empires that had lasted for centuries were destroyed. Then, as if a light had been switched off, the war ended — Order and Chaos shifted their attention somewhere else and Marl was left to rebuild.

Nine centuries later, cult feuds that had simmered beneath the surface in some cities for years erupted. Bodies began to pile up in city morgues. Local law-enforcers suddenly found themselves facing a full-fledged cult war, and realized that the dozens of disparate groups had organized themselves into three factions, and were fighting over something more than who controlled which blocks downtown.

NOTE TO GAMEMASTERS

The Godwar is meant to be a backdrop to your *Bloodshadows* campaign, and does not have to be the focus of it. Your party may be affected directly by the conflict — say, by being hired by one of the sides to do a job, or by the city government to protect something from all the combatants — or more indirectly — a blood cult conjures up an entity of power, then loses control of it and the party must stop the creature to save their own lives. It's even possible that your party may be working in an area where the war has not yet reached, and their adventures will have little or nothing to do with the struggle.

The point of all this is that it is up to you, the gamemaster, how much you want to incorporate the Godwar into your campaign. The struggle makes a great jumping-off point for adventures, since all three sides are hiring freelance spellslingers and the like. The "cross and double-cross" that's part of the early days of any war adds intrigue and danger to even the simplest of missions.

But if you and your players prefer to explore some of the fascinating cities of Marl and stay away from any complex entanglements with the Godwar, feel free. The war is intended to add a richness to the *Bloodshadows* setting, but it need not overshadow your entire campaign.

ALLEGIANCE VS. ALIGNMENT

Characters in *Bloodshadows* may have allegiance to Order, Chaos or the Oathbreakers, be aligned with one of the three, or have no alignment at all. The vast majority of the people of Marl fall into the latter category — however, most creatures and spellcasters are at least aligned to a faction.

Those who enjoy allegiance are completely committed to a combatant, and tend to be those in the higher echelon of the "army." They are, for the most part, intimately involved in the Godwar and much more powerful than the average being. They can be the ones to hire the player characters to perform a task or act as a means to keep them "on the map" (i.e., the characters want to wander off into a part of the city that has nothing to do with your adventure. A Chaotic entity should be enough to discourage them).

Characters with allegiance can range from extremely skilled Human spellcasters to beings of almost godlike power. They usually have large numbers of operatives at their command and are very dangerous to cross. In some cases, their influence may extend well beyond one city.

Player characters will be much more likely to have an alignment than an allegiance. An aligned character can enjoy some benefits (for instance, it's easier to cast spells involving certain arcane knowledges if you're of the right alignment) without having to be plugged into the war. Characters of different alignments are much more likely to work together toward a common goal than those of different allegiances. Aligned characters are the "grunts" in the war, and many have not yet even been actively recruited. They remain freelance ops on hire to whoever has enough gold to pay them.

Finally, there are characters who have no alignment at all. This is most common in Humans who have little or no skill at magic. These types are sought out by all three sides for their ability to perform missions without leaving behind telltale residual magic energy (see Chapter Eight) that enemies could home in on.

Keep in mind that characters can change alignments during the course of adventuring, as well as change allegiances (although this is much rarer). Alignment shifts tend to be subtle — a spellcaster will learn, over time, rites of the opposite alignment and slowly begin to drift toward it. Even if his thinking does not change — he may still consider himself Order, for example — how he is perceived by others may change. Those around him may shy away, believing him to be turning toward Chaos, and Chaotics may make an effort to recruit him for their cause. While there are game effects to a shift in alignment (see Chapter Seven, "Magic" for these), it is something that should be roleplayed as well, because the reactions of those around the character are a big part of the experience.

From the cults, the battle spread up and outwards. Those with power and allegiances to a side began to organize their intelligence networks and assassins in preparation for war. Creatures who had survived the first Godwar and been living in Human guises had their memories and powers restored. Others emerged from the shadows to align with a faction, in some cases only because there is perceived safety in numbers. Mobilization and maneuvering began, with each side trying to gain some advantage over another.

These days, the Godwar cannot be fought with great armies and great battles that last for weeks on end. Instead, the struggle takes place in the alleys and dark streets of the cities, much like a gang war. Violence is sudden and bloody and innocents caught in the middle are out of luck. People who live in cities touched by the war learn quickly to avoid certain neighborhoods, though they probably have no idea why the murder rate has risen so steeply and so swiftly.

In the cities where the battles have begun in earnest — places like Galitia, Gimm, and Corel — local law and governments have been overwhelmed and are doing their best to maintain some control. This usually involves rounding up known cult members and slapping them in cells to let them "cool off" and sending out squads to hunt down non-Humans, whether they're suspected of a crime or not. The climate is one of fear, and those who have guessed the cause of all this know things will get bloodier before they get better.

THE TRIAD

The three forces at war on Marl are Order, Chaos and a mysterious third faction known only as "the Oathbreakers." Note that the former two operate under many different names, depending on the region you are in — Order is Akar, Sta, Ria, Ison, among others; Chaos, Yanus, Saer, Neref and more.

Karl Waller

This split carries over into many parts of life on Marl. The nature of creatures can vary depending on which force they are aligned with, certain arcane knowledges are inextricably bound to one faction or the other (see Chapter Seven, "Magic"), and much more.

ORDER

"I don't say Order with Chaos would be that great. But it might be the only way to avoid a bloodbath."

— Atrophos, Gimm

Uniform. Immutable. Controlled. These are the principles of Order, a force striving to impose rules and limits on the universe. It has long viewed its elder, Chaos, as destructive and irrational and sought to exterminate it from all planes.

On Marl, as on most worlds, there are more followers of Order than Chaos. Humans, as a species, tend to yearn for stability and shy away from the randomness of Chaos. And creatures aligned to Order need numbers just to survive, because their very nature makes them predictable and so easier to kill.

There are no beings who are forced from their creation to be of one loyalty or another, although some creatures may feel more comfortable with Order than Chaos or the Oathbreakers. There are,

for instance, more Order Vampires than Chaos Vampires. An Order Vampire knows it must feed once every three days or risk succumbing to blood starvation; a Chaos Vampire, governed by constantly changing rules or none at all, may need to feed once a week this month and once a day the next. Chaos Vampires have been known to starve just because they cannot keep up with their changing needs.

By the same token, Chaotic shapeshifters outnumber Order ones. Chaos lends itself to the act of changing form and an alignment to Chaos makes shifting easier (see Chapter Five, "Character Creation").

Basically, a being aligned to Order must follow certain rules. An Order shapeshifter may change only on certain nights, under certain conditions. He may be confined to only one form (although this allows him to become very skilled at using that shape). An Order Vampire will be vulnerable to certain things for their entire existence and their behavior will follow a pattern. This is why there must be more Order creatures to ensure their survival — once you have identified an Order vampire, you know that they must spend the day hidden and can track them down. There are no such certainties with Chaotic creatures.

More Order creatures are able to pass as Humans than Chaotics. The latter boasts more who

are monstrous in appearance and must stay in the shadows.

Finally, those arcane knowledges bound to Order are easier to build into spells, since they are stable and better able to function as part of a whole. Many beginning sorcerers will learn basic Order spells before moving on to more complex rites.

CHAOS

"We won't be bound, chained or imprisoned by somebody else's rules. That's what makes us different from Order."

— Isken Cor, Selastos

For the average person, Chaos and its soldiers are probably the most frightening of the three forces at war. Out of control, unstable, Chaos offers a glimpse of the darker side that the veneer of civilization hides.

Because of this, Chaos is often dismissed as inherently evil. In truth, it's nothing more than the other side of a cosmic coin, no more good or evil than Order. But Chaotics are less concerned with consequences than Order followers, so they care little if their acts of violence are seen by others. One of the reasons Order so fears Chaos is that its bloody actions bring down Human hatred on all Unnaturals, the guilty and the innocent.

Chaotics are fewer in number than their Order foes, but overall more powerful. They are often marked by a monstrous physical appearance, since their very nature is unstable and in flux. They have shown themselves to be better able to deal with Wilderness creatures, since both have drifted some distance from Humanity. Special units put together

by towns to deal with Wilderness problems will often prominently feature Chaotics.

What makes Chaotics so dangerous is their unpredictability. There is no way to guess what, if any, limits a Chaotic might have on its powers or why it does things as it does. It's not likely to tell you, either — the ignorance of its enemies is its greatest weapon.

Chaotic magic is the most difficult to master of the three major types. Again, this is because of its constantly changing nature. This makes it extremely hard to get Chaotic knowledges or theorems to fit securely in a pattern. Chaotic magic is blamed for many of the unintentional sorcerous "suicides" that take place everyday in major cities. Casters who aren't skilled enough to handle these sorts of spells risk madness, death and sometimes worse by experimenting with them.

THE OATHBREAKERS

"This war's going to be won by its deserters."

— Unknown, Galitia

The most mysterious aspect of the Godwar is this faction, born from Marl and drawn from the ranks of its enemies. Even their true name is unknown — they are called "Oathbreakers" by both Order and Chaos, for it's believed that they were all at one time allied with one of the two major forces. Why they turned away and how they hope to prevail against two such ancient powers is also a question with no answer as yet.

What is known is that there seem to be two distinct groups under this banner, who enjoy an extremely uneasy alliance. Oathbreakers who have drifted from the side of Order seem to be bound to the planet. Their magic is that of the earth, the rock, the water and air. Their gods are ones of nature, though they're worshipped in basements, alleys and abandoned warehouses rather than the Wilderness (Oathbreakers are strange, but they're not crazy).

Although they are relatively few in number, they hide their loyalties so well that they're often mistaken for soldiers of their enemies. It's this — and the fact that earthmages can't be killed casually, for their loss means possible famine — that has allowed the Oathbreakers to survive even this long. The majority of the Order Oathbreakers seem to be
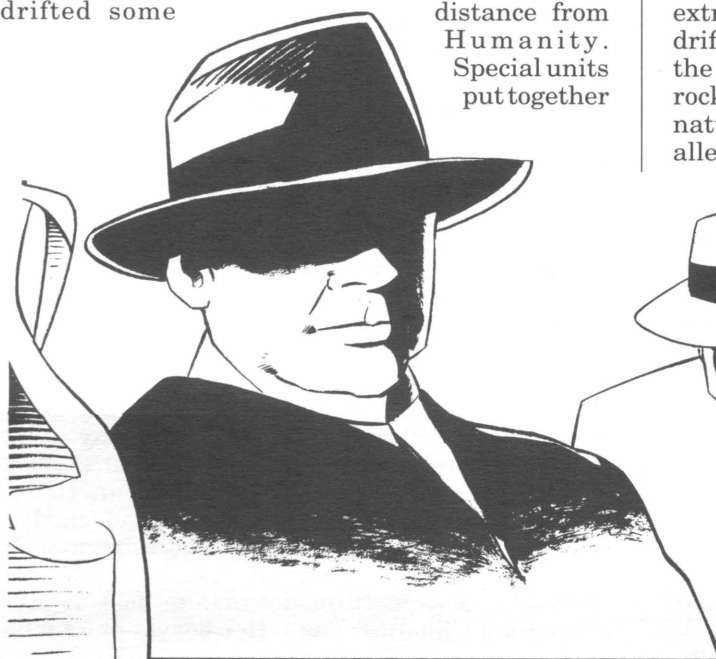
Dan Schaefer

Human or humanoid.

Those who abandoned Chaos are of a very different nature. Their magic centers on technology — their spells are cast solely on or through equipment and weapons. On one end of the scale are those sorcerers who enjoy slapping together bizarre mechanicals and powering them with arcane and dangerous sorceries. On the other are those who have gone so far as to merge with their machinery through dark magic. Some of these have lost any shred of their previous identity completely and are now something completely *other*. Those who have seen one up close say that it's impossible to tell where the being ends and the machinery begins. These may be the most powerful and dangerous Oathbreakers, but they are also the most unstable. Insanity and bloodmania is common among Oathbreaker Chaotics.

Just how powerful the Oathbreaker faction as a whole might become is a mystery even to its followers. They are exploring uncharted territory and developing new schools of magic as they go. Their rites are conducted in strict secrecy — Oathbreakers who reveal hidden truths to outsiders are murdered and their corpses hideously mutilated as a warning to other members to keep their mouths shut.

When the Godwar resumed, both Order and Chaos thought to bring the Oathbreakers in on their side and tip the balance. But the Oathbreakers proved to be as elusive as a witch wind and haven't shown any interest in allying with anyone. They are shadowy figures seen out of the corner of your eye, only their
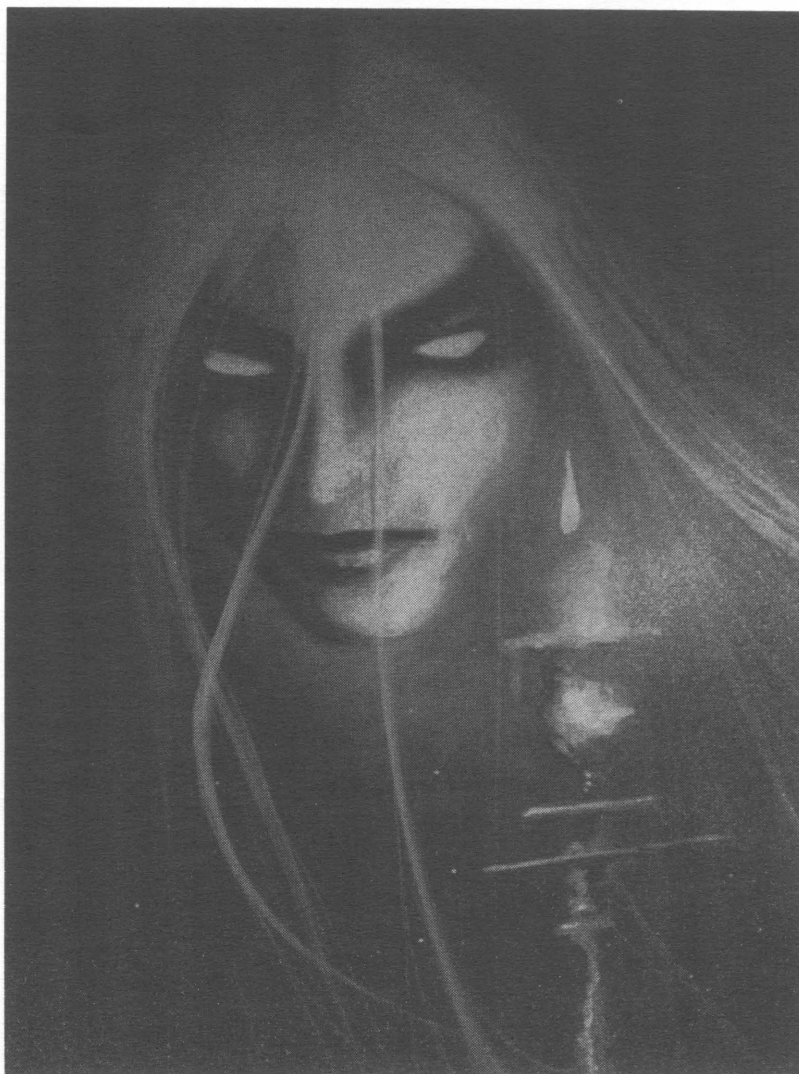
strange sacrifices left behind to mark their passing. They may prove to be the saviors of Marl — or they may, in the end, preside over its final destruction.

Thomas ONeill

CHAPTER THREE

DENIZENS OF MARL

Deacon and Vera emerged from the inn into a Galitian midnight. A black car sat at the curb, its uniformed driver waiting impatiently. Dark suit, gloves, hat pulled low — somebody had gone to a lot of effort to hide the fact that he'd been dead a few days ago. Not surprising, since sentinels are quicker to accept walking corpses than they are driving ones.

Vera, the gun barrel in the small of her back, did her best to look like everything was jake. She climbed into the back seat and Deacon was about to follow when something clicked in the chauffeur's decomposing brain. He reached a rotting paw out for Deacon and managed a snarl.

Deacon took a second to size him up. Most lively dead were chosen for brawn, not brains, and were long past feeling pain. But this one had to have a little more upstairs if he was a driver, so he and his nerve endings were probably still on speaking terms. Deacon smacked him across the bridge of the nose with the revolver. His hip pockets bounced on the ground.

Vera chose that moment to slip out the other passenger door and make a break for it. Deacon was on her in three strides. In a better neighborhood, their brief struggle would have been dismissed as a "lovers' spat." Around here, people lost interest once they saw there wouldn't be any punches thrown.

Deacon herded her back toward the car. "Get in. You drive."

"You're crazy!" she pointed out.

"Runs in the family," he replied, shoving her behind the wheel. "We all take stupid risks for not enough dough and fall for the kind who live on trouble. Let's go."

Vera was smart enough not to waste any more energy on protesting. She started the car, listening to the barely discernible hum of elemental energy from the motor. An instant later, they were on the road, heading for the main gate that led out of Galitia.

"What are you going to tell the sentinels at the walls?" she asked. "They'll want to know where we're going this time of night."

"We'll use whatever story you'd cooked up, kid," Deacon answered. "After all, we're partners now, right?"

The guards weren't a problem. Vera told a sweet, sad story about a sick brother in Denrick with just the right mix of sincere concern and seduction. When she was done, the sentinel was ready to carry her all the way there. She settled for the iron gates getting opened.

THE DENIZENS OF MARL

These are some of the most prominent creatures that inhabit Marl. Unless otherwise noted, they can *all* be used as player characters. However, it is recommended that the gamemaster review each creature first, and not allow players to create characters from a particular species if he or she thinks it will upset the balance of the game.

Reading the entries is fairly simple. Each species is introduced by one of its own kind (if possible) in a short, italicized speech. Then there is a species "overview" that covers the basic description of the species. This description is by no means exhaustive — gamemasters and players alike should feel free to expand upon it to fit their *Bloodshadows* campaign.

Next follows the "Standard" stats for the creature. This is not necessarily an average — rather, it is a listing of attributes and abilities that are *most likely* found in a creature of this species. For example, a "Standard Human" has an Agility of 8 — by no means do all Humans, or even most Humans, have an Agility of 8. But it is a more likely attribute value than any other would be. Unless otherwise noted, the attribute maximum is still 13, while the minimum is 5. Not all the creatures listed as "Standard" have 68 Attribute Points, though, unless otherwise noted, they would begin with that many if they were player characters. Gamemasters can use the standard values listed for quick-start gamemaster characters.

Most species also have "Skill Notes" listed, and a few have "Attribute Notes." These are guidelines gamemasters and players can use to construct logical creatures. For example, the "Standard Relkazar" is said to "... focus on combat and interaction skills," and they are "... seldom interested in ... magic skills." This doesn't mean there are *no* Relkazar mages — just that they are less likely to exist than other types of Relkazar.

The table with the heading "Background Notes" should be considered the same way. Each creature has a listing that describes what columns its Advantages and Compensations may be taken from, and most also describe a few that *must* be taken for the creature to be representative of its species. Gamemasters and players may wish to construct "non-standard" creatures (when they become used to the *Bloodshadows* world), but these are strongly recommended. For example, Sketh have the following Advantages and Compensations: One Column One (1CI), Two Column Three (2CIII), and One Column Four (1CIV). They are supposed to take several Special Abilities, and two Compensations. But a gamemaster may decide to create (or allow a player to create) a Sketh without those Special Abilities, or different ones, or the gamemaster may even alter the number of Advantages and Compensations the character may have. Unless otherwise noted, the Columns and numbers of Advantages and Compensations must still balance out.

This is all allowed. The creature will not be a "mainline" reflection of his or her (or its) species, but that's quite all right — the world of *Bloodshadows* is a magical one, after all.

When a creature has a "Natural Tool" (usually stemming from one or more Advantages), it is also listed, for ease of reference.

Finally, most creatures have an "Alignment" listed. This entry simply describes whether the creature has a predilection for Order, Chaos, or the Oathbreakers — or a mix, or none at all.

Special Note: All creatures of Marl, other than Humans, *must* choose a Compensation in addition to those that "balance out" their Advantages (see the *MasterBook* chapter on "Background Generation" for more information). They must all take "Prejudice (CII)." If they have higher levels of "Prejudice" as mandatory Compensations, this is not necessary. This is because Humans are the predominant species and run most things on Marl (or at least think they do).

She repeated the *performance* a few more times until they were out of the city and on the road. After they'd been driving fifteen minutes or so, she turned left sharply and started up a dirt path into the mountains.

"Where are we going?"

"You'll find out," she answered, steering right for a narrow pass between two rock walls. As the car reached it, there was a sickening sensation, like their bodies were turning inside out.

Then auto and riders were gone ...

HUMANS

"Somebody asked me the other day, 'How come Humans have lasted so long? How come we run the planet and not some other species?' In other words, what we got that they ain't got?

"Well, I'll tell ya: we haven't *got claws or teeth, we can't fly or walk through walls, and the only shapeshifting I've seen done was when my wife put on all that weight right after the wedding. We're smart enough to build cities, all right, but that's not*

enough, no, sir. You ask me, what we got is numbers — we breed like rabbits, right? And there's always been just too damn many of us to kill off. So, eventually, we just overwhelm everybody else and we're sitting on top. I'm no sage, maybe, but that's how it seems to me.

Humans are the predominant species on Marl, with maybe a half a billion crawling, walking or hobbling around (nobody's been able to take a census, naturally). The cities you'll see were built by Humans for Humans, same as most of the goods you'll see in markets. You want to get along someplace, you speak the language the local Humans speak. And you do your best to look like one, if you possibly can.

Humans are intelligent creatures, or at least do a reasonable imitation of them. They're fraught with weaknesses — they need to eat and breathe and most need six to eight hours of sleep a night to be worth spit. They drop dead from the damndest things, and are constantly working on new and better ways to off each other. At the same time, they insist that killing is against their nature and all the crime in the streets is the result of some mysterious lapse of "standards." Ask a Shapeshifter who's seen a bunch of Humans with clubs and guns on his tail and he'll tell you that the only times Humans are behaving naturally is when they're destroying something. (Of course, that's 'Shifter talk all over …)

Humans value different things: some want only peace and quiet, and are willing ignore a lot to preserve it. Some want money, sex or the envy of others. And some are convinced they'd already have all those things if it wasn't for *fill in the blank*. They're the dangerous ones, at least according to most Unnaturals (a Human-centric term for all those who aren't of their species).

To be fair, though, Humans are good at a lot of things. They're at least as adept at building as they are at destroying, and they're renowned healers. Also, when you consider that Humans aren't natural sorcerers (like some Unnaturals), their knowledge of the mystic arts is impressive. Once they realized they could harness magic for their own use, they were tireless in their efforts to bend it, shape it, and master it. Where some Unnaturals might be confined to certain types of magic or spells, Humans are blank slates at birth. The kinds of sorcery they learn seems to be based on personal interest and practicality. Small wonder that most of the breakthroughs and new schools of magic have come about as a result of Human work.

There's nothing easier to understand than Human resentment of Unnaturals. After all, Humans are born hunters, and they're good at it. They don't like having to think of themselves as prey for something else. Your average Vamp, Orris or Tulpa

BACKGROUND NOTES: HUMAN

Advantages/Compensations
3CI, 2CII, 1CIII
Mandatory A/C
None
Recommended A/C
Any
Restricted A/C
If Humans choose "Special Abilities," they may diverge from pure Human-kind and have to take Compensations that reflect that divergence.

is used to being hunted by something, so they can dodge Humans at the same time that they're feeding off them. If the Godwar were to reach the kind of scale it did nine centuries ago, it would be a disaster for Unnaturals as well as Humans — with their favorite food source gone, it's doubtful they'd last very long.

It's a mistake to assume that a Human in a party of Unnaturals is always going to be the weakest and the least talented. Most Humans live out their lives in one city and have still seen more of the world than your average Undead (whose universe revolves around simple survival, more often than not). Some Humans are creative and charming when they have to be, and most are good liars.

STANDARD HUMAN
AGILITY 8
DEXTERITY 8
ENDURANCE 9
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 10
INTELLECT 9
MIND 8
CONFIDENCE 9
CHARISMA 9
Skill Notes: Humans can have virtually any skills, and generally have more skill adds than many Unnaturals.
Natural Tools: Humans receive an automatic +1 to all spellcasting attempts in addition to their other Advantages.
Alignment: Humans run the gamut of all alignments and boast a *significant number of* neutrals as well.

THE DEMONIC

These Unnaturals have certain unusual characteristics and abilities that probably come from a source outside of Marl. They are feared and hated

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by Humans and most other Unnaturals, mainly because of the sheer power of some of these abilities.

RELKAZAR

"Any city on Marl has its share of the supernormal, of course. But nothing that quite compares in cunning, intelligence or sheer power to we Relkazar. Almost all of us are aligned to Chaos, which prompts me to suggest that you put your gold on that faction to win this war.

"You see me now in my natural state, a rather impressive-looking winged creature who somewhat resembles your concept of a gargoyle, I understand. Perhaps there's a connection, perhaps not. In this form, I can soar over the city, lift weights far heavier than you Humans can manage, and my hide is tough enough that lead bullets merely bounce off.

"With all of this power at my command, you might wonder why it is that I let my true self be seen so rarely. This question shows why you are a Human, and I a Relkazar. My greatest strength is my ability to transform my body into pure essence and possess the minds and bodies of those weaker than I. Only the telltale reddish hue of their eyes betrays my presence. Of course, their pitiful little minds are seared to ashes by proximity to the glory of my intellect, but that is neither here nor there. I will use a body for as long as it serves my purpose, then abandon it for another.

"What's that? No, I suppose I am not quite so powerful as some of my demonic brethren. I cannot, for instance, possess creatures that do not have some rudimentary intelligence. On the other hand, I can walk among you with an ease that many of my Chaotic allies envy, and don't require a sulfurous cloud to accompany my appearances. Given a few seconds to see a host's end coming, I can vacate that shell and find another. The only true threat to me is

a foe who can take me by surprise.

"I'm presently employed as a spy, a task for which I'm obviously well suited. I can go anywhere, overhear anything, and go undetected as long as no one gazes into my eyes.

"Wait a moment. Do you see that man over there? No, the tall one. He'd be ideal for the job I'm doing right now: nondescript, average looking, wouldn't stand out in a crowd to a blood relative.

The Relkazar is one of a handful of creatures whose appearance wasn't noted on Marl until the Godwar resumed. It's possible that they are simply summoned as needed by Chaotic priests. They act as scouts, spies and sometimes assassins, and are almost never seen in their natural form. You're much more likely to encounter them in the body of a trusted friend, albeit one who won't look you in the eyes.

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STANDARD RELKAZAR (NATURAL FORM)

AGILITY 10
DEXTERITY 7
STRENGTH 13 (15)
ENDURANCE 10
TOUGHNESS 13 (19)
INTELLECT 8
MIND 7
CONFIDENCE 9
CHARISMA 8

Skill Notes: Relkazar focus on combat and interaction skills. They are seldom interested in learning magic skills or even those that they do not see an immediate use for. Some wiser Relkazar, however, have been known to pick up one or two "secondary skills" they use for parts they play — it suits their cruel sense of humor.

Natural Tools: Wings, speed value 10; claws, damage value STR+3/18; hide, armor value TOU+6/19. Relkazar are not Shapeshifters, although they are often mistaken for them. A Relkazar possesses his victims and takes complete control over them. At that point, the Relkazar's Intellect, Mind, Confidence and Charisma stats act in place of the victim's, but the victim's physical attributes remain the same. The Relkazar will be able to use physical skills of the victim for as long as he is in

BACKGROUND NOTES: RELKAZAR

Advantages/Compensations
3CIV
Mandatory A/C
Advantages: Special Abilities (CIV): Flight, Natural Armor, Natural Weaponry (HTH), Attribute Increase II (Strength +2), Possession II
Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CIV): Ability Loss IV (they lose the use of all their Advantages except Possession II when they possess someone); Infamy (CIV): universally despised, +8 to DN of all interaction attempts against those who know what they are; Achilles' Heel (CIII): *entity* spells against them add +3 to their effect values
Recommended A/C
Advantages: They may not choose any more
Compensations: Quirk (CIII): Vengeful (Major), they hate to lose
Player character Relkazar may choose two CIII Compensations in exchange for one CIV, as long as they take the mandatory Compensations (listed above)
Restricted A/C
They are not allowed any more

possession of the body, but none of the victim's mental skills will be available to him.

While possessed by a Relkazar, the victim's eyes will gleam red.

**Alignment:** Relkazar are most often affiliated with Chaos.

SKETH

"Runrunrun. MadSketh, madSketh, makeyoumadtoo. Nobother — pleasure. Onebigparty. Forus, notyou, notyou."

Sketh are minor demons, humanoid in appearance, who stand roughly fifty centimeters high and are covered with matted, black fur. They are commonly found in groups of three to five, though one by itself is enough to disrupt a crowd.

A Sketh attacks by running past its targets, brushing against them as it goes. Once contact is made, (an *unarmed combat* attempt at +2, since contact is the only objective) the victim is temporarily unable to gather his thoughts and is often unable to carry through with planned action. A Sketh can turn a peaceful group of people into a frightened mob in a matter of minutes.

Due to their speed and their ability to appear indistinct to the naked eye, Sketh are extremely difficult to target. This makes up for the fact that
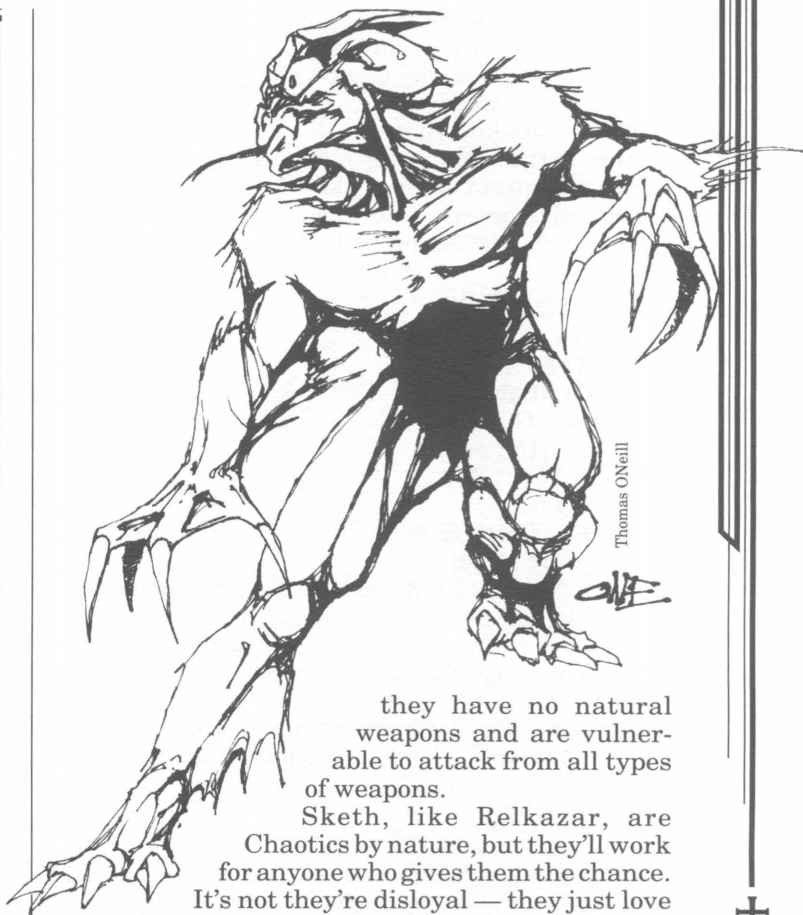
they have no natural weapons and are vulnerable to attack from all types of weapons.

Sketh, like Relkazar, are Chaotics by nature, but they'll work for anyone who gives them the chance. It's not they're disloyal — they just love their work.

Conceivably, Sketh could be devastating weapons for one side or the other, were it not for the fact that an eternity of speed has left their thoughts scattered. Few so far encountered have seemed

BACKGROUND NOTES: SKETH

Advantages/Compensations
1CI, 2CIII, 1CIV
Mandatory A/C
Advantages: Special Abilities (CIII): Blur, Enhanced Senses (+3 to smell); Special Abilities (CIV): Speed, Confusion
Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CIII): Metabolic Difference (they require a meal every three hours); Stench
Recommended A/C
Advantages: Any
Compensations: Those that limit their skills and/or Attribute values, especially the intellectual and interactive ones
Restricted A/C
None

able to grasp the intricacies of long-term strategy — they live for the moment.

The dead giveaway of a Sketh's presence is its smell, a musky odor that will quickly fill any room it's in. It's not known if any effort was ever made to eliminate this aroma, but alchemists in some cities turn a nice profit selling "Sketh bombs." The scent is enough to drive off most people who recognize it as the harbinger of the little demons' attack.

STANDARD SKETH

AGILITY 13
DEXTERITY 9
ENDURANCE 9
STRENGTH 7
TOUGHNESS 10
INTELLECT 7
MIND 6
CONFIDENCE 9
CHARISMA 8

Skill Notes: Sketh learn *stealth* and maneuvering skills very well. They seem almost unable to learn intellectual skills (though, in the case of a player character Sketh, this is up to the gamemaster).

Alignment: Sketh are often Chaotic, but have been known to work for all factions in the Godwar.

SUCCUBI

"Come on over. That's it, don't be shy. I don't bite or scratch like some of these others. Not unless that's what you're into.

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"We're just going to do a little ... business. I give you some pleasure or some pain — like I said, whatever lights your fire. And I get something in return: some of what you're feeling, a little bit of your soul that I promise you'll never miss.

"Sure, there are a lot of other broads in here that will do it for gold. But they can't do what I can, brother, and don't you forget it.

"I've been on the game maybe ten years. It's what my kind does best. I've been married three or four times, but none of them could keep up with me. That's when I doped it out: if they're going to die on me anyway, why not marry rich old guys and live high? I've got enough dough stashed around town that I could kick back and retire. Not like these others — I do this 'cause I want to.

"So why don't you just lie back and relax? What do the healers always say — 'you won't feel a thing?' Oh, you'll feel something, all right, brother. We both will, you'll see."

Succubi (and their male counterparts, Incubi) are vampiric entities who feed off strong emotions. While fear and anger are just as nourishing sustenance for one of these, they've found that these emotions are harder to produce and maintain in Humans (their chosen prey). So a Succubus will use her sorcerous abilities to determine what a potential victim is attracted to, then alter herself to resemble that type. During a sexual encounter, she will drain off some of the emotions her partner is feeling. This has the combined effect of leaving him confused and more prone to suggestion as well as irresistibly attracted to her.

The conduit for these emotional energies are the eyes. A Succubus who gets greedy and drains all the feeling out of a victim will burn out his orbs, leaving them blackened pits as if someone had taken a hot iron to them. The victim, not surprisingly, dies. For a short time, Galitia was plagued with headless corpses in the red-light district, the

Bloodshadows

result of a sloppy attempt by a Succubus prostitute to cover up her killings.

Of course, not all of these entities behave in the same way. There are some willing to invest the time and the energy to provoke despair, hopelessness and other negative emotions in their victims. Though fewer in number than the other sort of Succubus, these actually account for more victims in a year. The reason is that "negative Succubi's" prey often wind up killing themselves before the entity has drunk its fill.

Succubi can be found anywhere there is potential prey: brothels, bars, docks, etc. Often, they link up with other Unnaturals who find use for their ability to "distract" Humans. Sentinels assigned to big city vice units are normally treated with spells to protect them from the allure of Succubi.

STANDARD SUCCUBI (OR INCUBI)

AGILITY 9
DEXTERITY 8
ENDURANCE 8
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 9
INTELLECT 9
MIND 8
CONFIDENCE 11
CHARISMA 13

Skill Notes: Most Succubi and Incubi concentrate on interaction skills. Many consider it a source of pride not to know any combat skills. Quite often, they also possess high knowledge skills — especially in regards to their current and past locales. Knowledge of magic is also not unknown.

Natural Tools: They are usually beautiful, and they often possess the knowledge to use *facade* spells.

Alignment: Most of these Unnaturals create the illusion that they are unaligned, but an equal number seemed to attached to either Chaos or Order.

TULPA

"Try to imagine what it's like to be the only one of your kind in existence. Think about the loneliness, the isolation, the feeling of always being disconnected from everyone around you. Close your eyes and concentrate on this until you believe it with every fibre of your being — and you won't have a clue what it's like to be a Tulpa.

"There are thousands of us, scattered all over this world. We came into being about five minutes after Humans did and our fortunes have been bound to theirs since then. We're the dreams and nightmares of your species, appearing just long enough to intrigue you and then disappearing before you can get too close. Maybe it's just the nature of our existence
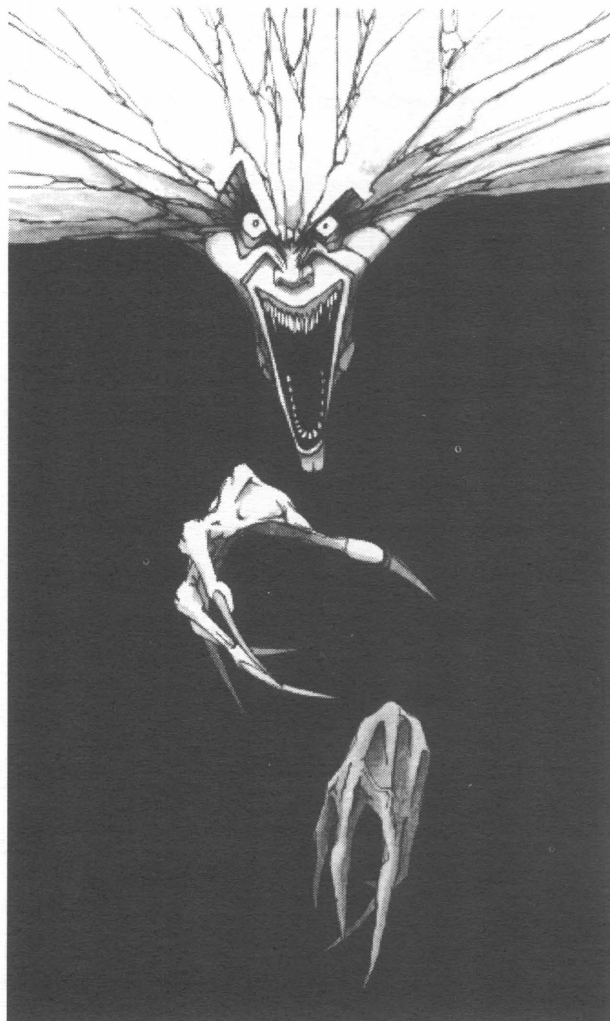
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or maybe it's a little game we like to play — you'll never know, will you?

"See, we're not cowards like most of the other Unnaturals you'll run into. We don't hide inside people like Relkazar, or pretend we're Human like Vampires or furniture like Orris do. We thrive on letting the rubes get a look at us, then watching the fun when nobody believes them. I've heard it said that there's some higher purpose served by this behavior, but no one ever told me about it. I must have been out that day."

Exactly what Tulpa are — whether they even belong in the same class as Relkazar and Sketh — is open to debate. The powers listed for them below are those they're known to possess, but they may have many more that haven't been displayed yet.

There are two schools of thought about Tulpa nature:

A. They are dreams made real, created consciously through meditation and sorcery or uncon-

BACKGROUND NOTES: TULPA

Advantages/Compensations
1CI, 3CIV
Mandatory A/C
Advantages: Special Abilities (CIV): Fear, Shapeshifting I (into whatever those near them are most afraid of, but with no special abilities), Teleportation
Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CIII): Ability Loss II (they may not change shape as long as they resemble what those around them fear most)
Recommended A/C
Advantages: Any
Compensations: Any
Restricted A/C
None

sciously by worry and fear. Those who believe this point out that Tulpa often resemble whatever the people in a particular city are most afraid of (Vampires, Wilderness creatures, etc.); that they appear in bunches, then vanish for long periods; and that they seem most interested in simply being seen, then disappear.

B. Others say that Tulpa are some sort of vampiric demon capable of taking on the form of whatever people think about or fear. They are the con men, petty criminals and swindlers of the netherworld, taking advantage of the energy available when an entire community worries about the same thing. At first, they will behave exactly as someone would expect the creature they resemble to do; after a while, they will become hostile and destructive. They appear and disappear at will. Supporters of this argument point to the fact that Tulpa have been blamed for "zones of fear."

Apparently, if Tulpa spend enough time in one area, the area takes on some of their ability to spark fear in others. Anyone passing through the zone — which can be as small as a closet or as large as a city block — will suffer an *intimidation* attack (value 18) for every round they remain nearby. The target will feel nervous, fearful and may lose its sanity too much time is spent in a zone. Once outside the zone's boundaries, the target returns to normal (unless it was driven insane).

What are the properties of Tulpa? They can evidently resemble any number of things, with no restrictions on size or shape (it's doubtful they take on the powers of the thing they resemble, however). They can cause irrational fear in others. They can appear and disappear in an instant (either through teleportation or phasing). They will normally take on the appearance of something on people's minds, but

seem to rebel against having to wear one form for too long and take their anger out on those they're haunting.

How deeply Tulpa are involved in the Godwar is unknown. The safest bet is that there are some on all three sides, putting their cunning to good use without really caring who wins in the end.

STANDARD TULPA

AGILITY 9
DEXTERITY 8
ENDURANCE 8
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 9
INTELLECT 8
MIND 9
CONFIDENCE 10
CHARISMA 12
Skill Notes: Tulpa may have virtually any skills. They always have at least one add in *shapeshifting*.
Natural Tools: The Tulpa naturally shapeshift into whatever those around them fear most. They can teleport, and they inspire fear in others, gaining a +5 to all *intimidation* and *interrogation* against those in a one meter radius (though the may beat the fear by generating a 12 *willpower* or Confidence total or higher)
Alignment: Though Tulpa seem to be Chaos creatures, there have been those that profess to be supporting the Oathbreakers or even Order.

THE BREEDS

Breeds are a collection of individuals. There is no one "Breed" species. But there are enough occurrences of certain types of Breeds that they can be listed here.

Once, perhaps during the last Godwar, vitomancy (the sorcery of life) was used to create crossbreeds between different animals and between pure races (such as Humans) and other pure races or animals.

Since then, vitomancy has lost popularity among those who study magic — at least the study of crossbreeding has. But there are still many mixed races out there — the Breeds who now "breed true."

HUGORS

"Break things. Get paid. Life's good."

Hugors — or "Hugos" as they're often called — are the result of crossbreeding between Humans and Ogres. They are tall masses of muscle, with a greenish cast to their skin, foul breath, and coarse, black hair covering most of their bodies. Most Hugos encountered so far have been more brawn than brain, although there's rumored to be a small cult of Hugo scholars in the mountains near Selastos. What they're studying no one cares to guess.

There's a popular theory that Hugos enjoy symbiotic relationships with each other, since they always travel and work in pairs. Separated from their life-mates, their prodigious strength seems to fade.

Hugos find work as heavy laborers, sentinels, bouncers or strikebreakers. For the most part, they keep to themselves in the poorer neighborhoods of major cities, since they're not really accepted by either Human or Ogre communities.

STANDARD HUGOR

AGILITY 9
DEXTERITY 7
ENDURANCE 13
STRENGTH 13
TOUGHNESS 12
INTELLECT 7
MIND 6
CONFIDENCE 7
CHARISMA 6

Skill Notes: Hugor characters should seldom, if ever, possess magic skills. They also shy away from most skills that depend on their limited Intellect and Mind attributes.

Alignment: Most Hugors seem to lean toward Order, and there's no reason to think that will change anytime soon.

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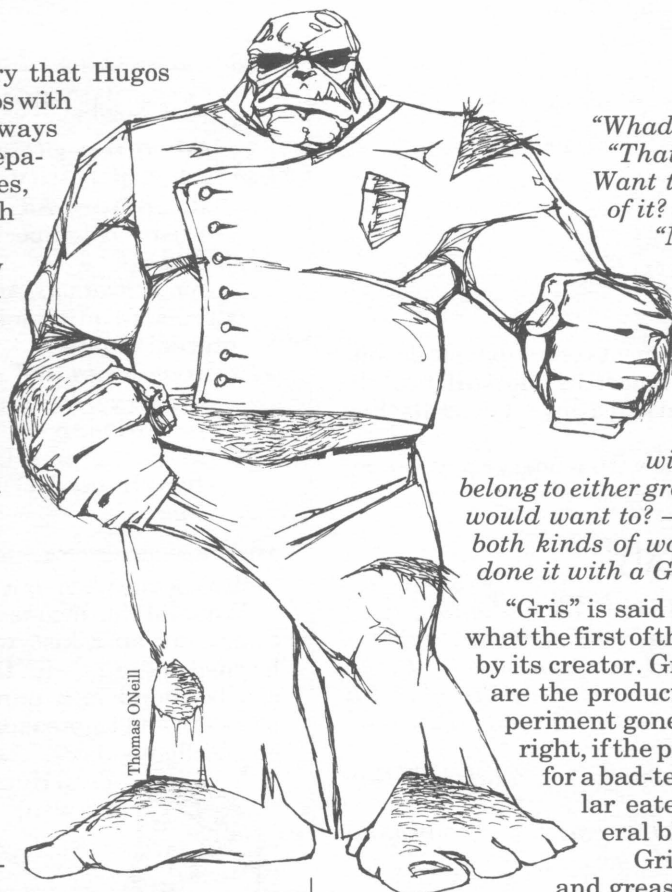
GRIS

"Whadda you want?
"That's right, I'm a Gris. Want to make something out of it? Good. You'd lose.
"My Pa was an alchemist. My Ma was a burner and a glass tube. Somebody mixed Hugor and Human blood, along with some other odds and ends, and came out with me. I don't really belong to either group — and who the hell would want to? — but I can breed with both kinds of women. And once you've done it with a Gris ..."

"Gris" is said to be short for "grisly," what the first of these breeds was dubbed by its creator. Gris are not natural, but are the products of an alchemical experiment gone very wrong ... or very right, if the potion-popper was going for a bad-tempered, squat, muscular eater of garbage and general blight on society.

Gris have yellowish skin and greasy black hair. Most live on the underside of the city, running numbers or whorehouses. A few have branched out into the Tarik bootleg liquor trade. The first thing a new sentinel is taught is not to take on a Gris without plenty of back-up, and to try and keep them off the streets if at all possible, since they drive down property values. Even Hugors are more desirable in a neighborhood.

BACKGROUND NOTES: HUGOR

Advantages/Compensations
2CI, 1CIII, 1CIV
Mandatory A/C
Advantages: None
Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CIV): Symbiosis II
Recommended A/C
Advantages: Additional Attribute Point (CIII): applied to Strength or Endurance; Skill Bonus (Any Level): applied to combat skills; Special Abilities (CIII): Attribute Increase I (applied to Strength or Endurance)
Compensations: Infamy (CI or CIII): Hugors are often tied in with criminals
Restricted A/C
None, though it is unlikely Hugors will have magical abilities

BACKGROUND NOTES: GRIS

Advantages/Compensations
2CI, 3CII, 1CIII
Mandatory A/C
Advantages: None
Compensations: None
Recommended A/C
Advantages: Special Abilities (CIII): Omnivorousness, Enhanced Senses
Compensations: Infamy (Any Level); Prejudice (Any Level); Any Compensation that restricts their Charisma or interaction-based skills
Restricted A/C
None

STANDARD GRIS

AGILITY 9
DEXTERITY 8
ENDURANCE 11
STRENGTH 12
TOUGHNESS 11
INTELLECT 9
MIND 8
CONFIDENCE 8
CHARISMA 6

Skill Notes: Gris learn lots of combat skills, but they are smart — as smart as most, if not all, Humans — and they can learn any other skills they have access to.

Alignment: Gris side with whoever pays them, plain and simple.

ELKIST

"You got sumthin' to say? Then shuddup and lemme talk — that's what you're here for, right?

"I'm part Ghoul, part sumthin' else, I dunno what. I'm all muscle and mean. Play straight with me, and we'll be pals. Get out of line and I'll use your ribs for a shoe rack.

"I've never met the bum who could take me. Day I do, I got this little trick. See?

"Aw, siddown. It ain't that bad. It's only my hand that's gone missing. Not like it was somethin' important, like my head. And no cracks, bub, or I'll haveta give you a blackjack facial."

Elkist are crossbreeds between Ghouls and a demonic species that apparently no longer exists on Marl. The name "Elkist" comes from them, and can be translated roughly as "parts is parts." This applies both to their own strange appetites — they have a taste for internal organs, particularly the stomach and liver — and their ability to go intangible.

This is a talent inherited by the Breeds which helps make them such feared combatants (and accounts for the fact that Elkist were invariably heavyweight champions in Galitia's freestyle fighting rings until new rules were passed that banned their stepping into the ring with Humans). An Elkist can cause any part of its body — hands, feet, arms, legs, head, neck, torso — to turn intangible, although it seems they do not have the ability to cause more than one part to do at a time. (Elkist have never been seen to go completely intangible.).

It is possible for an Elkist to "trade up" intangible parts. If the right arm is out of phase and the left arm about to be attacked, the Breed can bring the right

limb back and phase out the left one simultaneously.

What all this means is that surprise is the key to taking out an Elkist, which is why so many have learned not to sit with their backs to the door. They can be found in a number of cities as sentinels, brawlers and legbreakers, and some have proven to be excellent sailors. Their diet consists of living or dead Human flesh, a fact most seem to want to keep quiet (for obvious reasons). Elkist are said to be the only fighters who can hand you your head when you can't even see theirs.
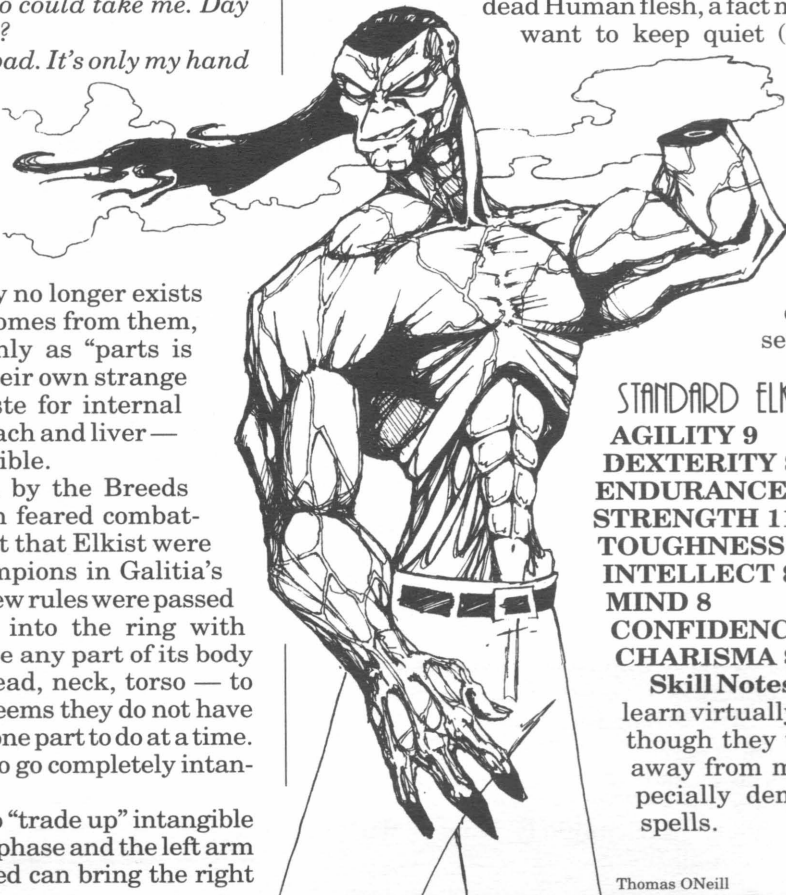
STANDARD ELKIST

AGILITY 9
DEXTERITY 8
ENDURANCE 9
STRENGTH 11
TOUGHNESS 11
INTELLECT 8
MIND 8
CONFIDENCE 8
CHARISMA 8

Skill Notes: Elkist can learn virtually any skills, though they tend to shy away from magic — especially demon-related spells.

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Alignment: Like the Gris, the Elkist are much more concerned with earning a living than fighting for ideals — they work for pay.

THE SHIFTERS

Unnaturals who can assume different shapes than their "natural" one are included here. Many species may have access to abilities or spells that alter their appearances or abilities, but 'Shifters are able to go through these changes "naturally," because of what they are.

SHAPESHIFTERS

"Get a load of these guys, will ya? 'Oh, poor me, I'm better and stronger than Humans and can do things they only dream of. Why doesn't anyone like me?' Yeah, life's a bitch, all right.

"So let's cut the crap. I'm a 'Shifter and I've never been anything else, or wanted to be. All I have to do is think about it and my skin turns black and sleek, my nails and teeth grow, and you won't hear me on a bet until it's too late. I'm quick, I'm precise, and I can have your organs out and on the market before you know they're gone.

"'Course, I'm only one of many. 'Shifters come in all shapes and sizes — me, I'm called a 'Hellghest,' but I'm damned if I know why. Probably another Human term — I've never known a 'Shifter who named himself something screwy like that.

"That's an important thing to know. Most Werecreatures — you know, the guys who go around with their snouts in the air all the time — are part-Human. 'Shifters are a breed apart. Some of us may look Human, but we're not. We're a thousand different species all collected under one name.

"I doubt there's a city that doesn't have some 'Shifters in it. One might look like a great cat with three heads, another one like the ugliest 'breed you've ever seen, but they're all 'Shifters under the skin. Even those who don't have any."

Shapeshifters are among the most common Unnaturals on Marl, ranging from the diminutive *qim* all the way to the Wilderness 'Shifter known simply as the *deathreach*. They are viewed with undisguised contempt by those who still have some ties to Humanity, including Vampires and Werecreatures. Their outsider status means that they aren't welcome in most cities, although this is changing as Chaos gains a foothold here and there. Some 'Shifters react to the hatred of Humans by becoming pure predators, a role to which they're well-suited.

A Shapeshifter can usually assume more than

one form, and none of them need be Human or humanoid. They may gain some of the attributes of the thing they resemble, or none at all. The latter is more common among 'Shifters who can transform into things a great deal larger or smaller than they are in their natural state. These types tend to rely on stealth or intimidation to get their way, rather than combat.

'Shifters can be found on all three sides of the Godwar, though Chaotic 'Shifters are the best known and most feared. Chaotics are often unable to control their transformations, only partially shift or suffer some other flaw due to their alignment. On the other hand, they're also more likely to be able to shift into dozens of forms.

All Shapeshifter characters must have the Background Advantage *shapeshifting* (for more details on this, see Chapter Five, "Character Creation").

STANDARD HELLGHEST
AGILITY 8/11
DEXTERITY 7/7
ENDURANCE 8/10
STRENGTH 8/11
TOUGHNESS 9/11
INTELLECT 9/7
MIND 9/6
CONFIDENCE 10/7
CHARISMA 9/9
Attribute Note: Numbers before the slash are the Hellghest's natural form, a humanoid-shaped mass of soft, gray tissue. Numbers after the slash refer to its second form, a clawed cat-like creature, one of the creature's most common forms.

Skill Notes: Hellghest can take any skills listed, though they are seldom trusting or reliant upon technology. They prefer to learn skills they can use "bare."

Natural Tools: Claws, damage value STR+3/14; its ability to Shapeshift

Alignment: Shapeshifters — Hellghest included — can be found on all sides of the Godwar.

WERECREATURES

"You didn't come here to ask about the fur and fang bit. You know all about that. You want to know the why. Well, I'll tell you: seventy five years ago, my grandfather pissed off the wrong spellslinger. The result was a curse that runs through the men in my family and turns us into wolf-things a couple of nights a month.

"I tried tracking down the sorcerers' descendants once to see what it would take to get the curse lifted. I finally found one, but he wanted to be difficult. He spent one night too many dickering and I ripped his throat out. Thought that was kind of ironic, actually.

"It ain't an easy existence. But if you can keep your appetite under control and don't kill anybody important, you'll get along. Go wild in the streets and you'll wind up dead or in a zoo. My advice: find work and fast with somebody who knows what you are. You're going to go through suits like nobody's business and you'll need gold to keep clothed.

"Could be worse, though. I could be one of those 'Shifters who's got no control over what he turns into or when. I don't know how they manage, pal, and I don't want to find out.

"One last thing. It's true some of us can spread 'shifting to prey, but usually it's only through a bite. There's no reason to cross to the other side of the street when you see me coming out of fear I'll shed on you or something. Besides, if I bite somebody, I kill him, so there's no worry about him 'shifting. It's a lot neater that way."

Werecreatures are distinguished from other Shapeshifters by the fact that they only have two forms — their natural one and the one they transform into. Werecreatures can be Humans who become wolves, bears, serpents and the like or they can be animals who turn into Humans (or, occasionally, other pure races — though these are rare). These changes can be keyed into environmental conditions (phases of the moon, season of the year, etc.), emotional factors (anger, stress, sexual ecstasy), or controlled entirely by the 'Shifter.

Another way in which they differ from Shapeshifters is that a Werecreature will take on all the abilities of his new form. A Shapeshifter may resemble a giant serpent, but might not have the serpent's venom, for example. A wereserpent gets the whole package and more. It is up to the gamemaster how many abilities will have to be purchased "separately" and how many the character gets just for being a Werecreature.

In addition, Werecreatures are far more likely to have the ability to infect their victims with their "curse," creating additional Werecreatures. If Shapeshifters do have the power to do this, they rarely exhibit it — it's been theorized that they're jealous creatures by nature and don't want any more like themselves out there than absolutely necessary.

Werecreatures are capable of leading productive lives, providing they are surrounded by people who understand their affliction or, conversely, are able to keep from getting too close to anyone. Better than virtually any creature, they understand the psychology of both predator and prey. This explains why some cities, like Tarrik, make use of Werecreature squads as an adjunct to their police forces.

All Werecreature characters must have the Background Advantage *shapeshifting* (for more details on this, see Chapter Five, "Character Creation").

STANDARD WEREWOLF

AGILITY 8/10
DEXTERITY 8/7
ENDURANCE 9/10
STRENGTH 10/12
TOUGHNESS 10/11
INTELLECT 8/6
MIND 8/6
CONFIDENCE 9/7
CHARISMA 9/7
Attribute Note: The numbers after the slash are standard for the Werewolf in wolf-form, while the prior number is for the creature's Human form.
Skill Notes: Werewolves seldom learn many

technologically-related skills, unless they are trying desperately to "pass" as Human.

Natural Tools: (in wolf-form only) Claws, damage value STR+2/14; Fangs, damage value STR+4/16; Tough Hide, armor value TOU+6/17

Alignment: Werecreatures can be found on all sides of the Godwar.

THE UNDEAD

These creatures were all, at one time, live Humans (or other species). When they died or, more likely, were killed, they became unliving — the "Undead." They continue to exist through magic. They bear many, some, or no living characteristics. Few can breed (in the manner they were accustomed to when alive), and many seem to never be able to truly die.

It should be noted that, while some of these Undead were created by powerful necromancers or curses, they are in the weak majority. Zombies and "the walking dead" are typical of sorcerous creations; Vampires and Ghouls are usually the product of powerful magic not available to the standard denizens of Marl.

GHOULS

"We'll begin by getting something straight. We are both meat-eaters, correct? You eat the dead of other species — oxen, elk, fish and the like — and never think twice of it. I eat the dead of your species. There is no cannibalism involved, for I'm only Human in appearance, not in outlook. Why, then, do my doings revolt you so?

"Don't deny it; of course they do. I have to steal into kirkyards in the dead of night and dig up my meals, and pray I don't run afoul of a guard or a ward in the process. It's a rare city that has a market that caters to my kind.

"What, I ask, makes Humans privileged flesh? Every other species dies and is consumed, but you Humans think you should be exempted from the food chain. You treat your bodies with spells to keep rot and the worm away and consign your loved ones to a long dirt-nap. If I try to put your dead to some practical use, I have to flee from the mob with stones flying around my ears. Is this just?

"Think about it."

Ghouls are a fixture of every large city and were one of the species to benefit the most from the first Godwar. Thousands of dead made every day a feast for the Ghoul population, and sorcerous warfare — nasty alteration spells hurled at the enemy — led to the creation of many more of this kind.

There is no single type of Ghoul. They can be completely inhuman, with grey, slick skin, long

BACKGROUND NOTES: GHOULS

Advantages/Compensations
2CI, 1CII, 1CIII, 1CIV
Mandatory A/C
Advantages: None
Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CIII): Nutritional Requirement (Human flesh)
Recommended A/C
Advantages: Special Abilities (CIV): Natural Weaponry (HTH) (Claws), Natural Weaponry (HTH) (Teeth)
Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CIII): Stench, Rot I
Restricted A/C
None

claws and sharp, crooked teeth or they can be incredibly similar to Humans with only slightly sharper nails and teeth to mark their true nature. There are ravenous Ghouls who will tear into anything, living or dead, and more intelligent ones who pick their spots and their meals with great care. Along with Vampires, Ghouls are quite good at fitting in among Humans. Many Ghouls have been known to "pass" as Vampires (especially in cities with bloodlines, where Vampires are tolerated).

And, like Humans, different Ghouls have different cuts of meat that they prefer. It's rare to find one who uses every part of a corpse — most seem to prefer the limbs or the ribs, leaving the more stringy, unappetizing bits to those flesh-eaters among the Zuvembie population.

STANDARD GHOUL
AGILITY 9
DEXTERITY 8
ENDURANCE 11
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 12
INTELLECT 8
MIND 7
CONFIDENCE 8
CHARISMA 6
Skill Notes: Ghouls have access to a wide range of skills — many they may have learned before they became Ghouls. However, Ghouls tend to improve the skills they have (especially those that lead to their next meal) rather than learn new ones after becoming Ghouls.

Natural Tools: Claws, teeth or both, damage value STR+3/13

Alignment: Ghouls tend toward Order, at least so far. It would not be surprising for them to join Oathbreaker-Order, however.

ORRIS

"Too many years have passed since I last walked Marl. So much has changed — the buildings, the fashions; I'm still getting used to it all. And my survival depends on learning quickly.

"Ghouls are closer to living than true dead. Zuvembie and taxim are just walking corpses. Orris are suspended in the middle between the two states, rejected by this world and the next.

"Excuse me, I'm getting maudlin. It happens. What you want is details. Well, the substance of my flesh allows me to shape it into other forms — though even an accomplished sculptor like myself cannot hope to fool anyone for very long. I can shapeshift, as long as the form I take on is something nonliving — a rock, a piece of furniture, etc. — and is roughly the same mass as I. That's right, the chair, the table, either could be another Orris. But we have a … truce in place, don't we?

"Unfortunately, there's a price to pay for these talents of mine. While Ghouls eat flesh and Zuvembie eat … well, I don't even want to discuss what they eat … I content myself with the bones. Animal bones, if necessary, but I really prefer those of larger creatures. You'd be amazed the things you can do with bones these days: steam them, grind them, use them for flavoring … I see I'm making you hungry. Perhaps you'd like some soup?"

Orris are, as a rule, longer-"lived" than their cousins, the Ghouls, simply because they are more careful. Bones last a good deal longer than flesh, so a hungry Orris can feast off a years-old grave rather than digging up a fresh one, which is more likely to be guarded.

While there's debate over whether these creatures have always been on Marl, Orris are one of the few species who returned only when the Godwar resumed. Prior to that, most had been locked in the forms they wore when the war ended — those in their natural state had been hunted down and killed. When Order and Chaos marked Marl for a new battle, the peculiar energies involved revived the Orris, and a number of antique collectors got nasty surprises.

Part of the reason the Orris suffered this fate is that they are non-aligned. They never played a part in the original Godwar except as scavengers, and none have taken a side in this one yet, either. Although, when not transformed, Orris tend to all look alike, they are highly individualistic, very much "lone 'Shifters."

Orris are humanoid in appearance, their skin similar to clay, giving them a lumpy, half-finished appearance. Those with artistic talent have found that they can shape themselves into resembling a Hu-man, an illusion completed by paint and make-up. This is fine for slipping through dark and lonely streets, but isn't likely to fool anyone whose eyes work. "So dumb he screwed an Orris" is a phrase applied to anyone who misses the obvious.

Orris also have the ability to shapeshift, but are restricted — perhaps psychologically — to non-living things. The item chosen must be roughly the same mass as the Orris, and furniture seems to be the choice of most. Their ability to remain in the new form for hours at a time has made them attractive to mill owners, who will plant an Orris on the floor to overhear any union talk among workers.

Restricted to a diet of bones, Orris seem to prefer not to think of themselves as Ghouls and some look down on their flesh-eating relations. It's not unusual for a quarrel over a body to erupt into violence between an Orris and a Ghoul — even though neither prizes what the other needs. This happens much more rarely when Zuvembie are involved, since, as the old saying goes, "You can't win an argument with a walking corpse."

STANDARD ORRIS
AGILITY 9
DEXTERITY 7
ENDURANCE 8

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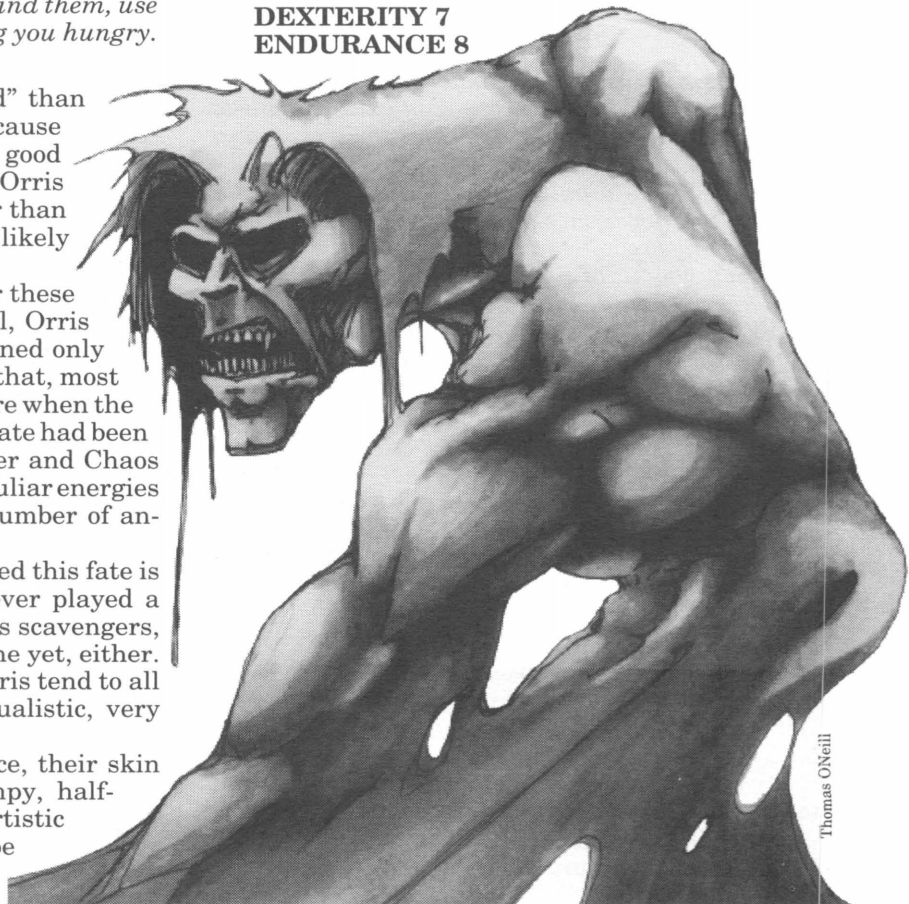
BACKGROUND NOTES: ORRIS

Advantages/Compensations
2CI, 1CIII, 1CIV
Mandatory A/C
Advantages: Special Abilities (CIV): Natural Armor, Shapeshifting I (inanimate items only)
Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CIII): Nutritional Requirement (Human bones)
Recommended A/C
Advantages: Any
Compensations: Any
Restricted A/C
None

STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 9 (15)
INTELLECT 10
MIND 10
CONFIDENCE 10
CHARISMA 9
Skill Notes: Orris fancy themselves as fastidious and knowledgeable — though they are violent when the desire takes them. They will often learn many skills besides those that help them feed, and have a much broader outlook than most Undead.
Natural Tools: Tough skin, armor value TOU+6/15
Alignment: Orris are traditionally neutral in the Godwar.

ZUVEMBIE

"..."

No one is quite sure whether Zuvembie — reanimated dead of various species — are incapable of speech or simply having nothing worthwhile to say. It may well be a little bit of both.

Unlike Taxim, Zuvembie are reanimated by arcane means but are not possessed, and so are a lot closer to dead than Undead. Still, they're cheap labor, don't eat much (those who need to eat at all), and are unlikely to unionize as the taxim have.

There is a downside to using Zuvembie as workers, though — they're slow, not that bright (at least, not that they show) and aren't immune to rotting. A Zuvembie will be good for anywhere from a few days to a few months of work, depending on how ripe he was when resurrected and what spells might have already been in place on the body. Still, factories with extremely low payrolls can be expected to employ a lot of Zuvembies (particularly places like flesh mills, where no living being wants to work if they can avoid it).

There's an old wizards' tale that if you pass a Zuvembie on the street, he probably won't take any notice of you. That's partially true, but it's not something you can count on. Depending on how strong the spell was that reanimated him, a Zuvembie might get sudden flashes of his past life. These usually manifest themselves as brief, intense appetites for food, liquor or sex. Most bars and whorehouses ban Zuvembie — or anybody who looks like a Zuvembie — from the premises to prevent disturbances. (Some cities have laws against giving liquor or drugs to Zuvembie, since it either makes them violent or even more dull-witted than they are, to the point where they'll stand stock-still in the middle of a street and block traffic.)

Zuvembie can be male or female and of infinite variety in a appearance. Poor quality walking dead will have a glassy-eyed stare, etc., but better spells produce better Zuvembie who can almost pass for living members of their species. It is unlikely a player would wish to play a Zuvembie character.

STANDARD ZUVEMBIE

AGILITY 8
DEXTERITY 7
ENDURANCE 13
STRENGTH 13 (14)
TOUGNESS 13
INTELLECT 6
MIND 5
CONFIDENCE 5
CHARISMA 5
Attribute Note: Being relatively mindless, the average Zuvembie has fewer than 68 attribute points. Player character Zuvembie could have higher values, but Zuvembies with genius-level intellects will need a story reason for their state. Generally, player characters should not be Zuvembie.

BACKGROUND NOTES: ZUVEMBIE

Advantages/Compensations
2CI, 1CII, 2CIII
Mandatory A/C
Advantages: Special Abilities (CIII): Attribute Increase I (+1 to Strength)
Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CIII): Rot I, Stench
Recommended A/C
Advantages: Any
Compensations: Advantage Flaw CIII): Infection; Any that lower the creature's ability to use interaction or mental abilities; Achilles' Heel (CIII): Fire; Employment (Any Level)
Restricted A/C
Advantages: Zuvembies should seldom have any Advantages based on interaction — such as "Contacts"

Alignment: Zuvembie can't spell "alignment" in most cases, let alone adhere to one.

VAMPIRES

"Listen up, bloodbag. I'm short a meal tonight, so I don't have a lot of time to spend on you. We'll keep moving while we talk — this isn't a good place to grow roots, if you get my meaning.

"First, I'll give you the moonlight: vamps are stronger, faster and tougher than Humans. We can sense things you can't, turn into mist or animals, and do a few other tricks that are a little less practical. We look enough like you that we can pass and we're just about immortal. Sound good?

"Then here's the dark face: we need blood. Lots of it. Some vamps need more than others or need it more often, but we're all hooked on the red stuff. But maybe that's not right — what we're stuck on is life. Most of the 'great and powerful Undead' are scared of dying and will do anything to avoid it. Not so different from you as you thought, huh? All of us got three ways to go: suicide; stepping into the way of somebody looking to crack our spine; or blood starvation.

"See these scars on my arm? Two years ago, I went too many days without a hit. Couldn't find an open bloodline — you know, where they hand out free bags of the stuff if we promise to be good little bloodsuckers. Got so bad I tore at my arms for a drink. Forgot I don't have that in my veins anymore.

"Yeah, we're life addicts, only most of us don't have much in the way of lives. I wake up thinking about where I'll feed that night; I turn in wondering where I'll feed the next night. In between, I try to remember what breathing felt like. Humans always think living forever means you amass a fortune or learn all the knowledge of the world. Well, maybe some vamps have done that, but nobody I ever met.

"There's a few other stories you might have heard that ain't strictly true. Most of us don't travel in big packs. There's a line, 'One vamp's a meal, two's a feast, three will bleed a block dry.' Get too many bloodsuckers in one neighborhood and they'll use up the good prey, then fight over the rats and bugs.

"I saw that look. Yeah, warmflesh, you're food, that's all. Don't like it? Tough. We hunt you, you hunt us, it's been going on for centuries.

"We don't all wear black all the time to show off our pale skin. Might as well hang a sign around your neck that says, 'Hey, I'm Undead.' We don't all hide out,

either. Some of my 'cousins' have jobs and lives in the cities. Either they haven't advertised what they are or they got hired because of it. Takes all kinds.

"Before, I said 'just about' immortal. Anything that tears the spinal cord or blasts the brain will kill a bloodsucker. About the only Human-type system we still have is the brain and nerves. Some of us can be hurt with other things — sunshine, herbs, whatever — but a lot of the time that's just cause the vamp is hung up on that stuff. It's all in their head, get me? At least, I think so. I know I didn't die and come back to get put down by soup seasoning. As far as I know, we don't die of old age — but I don't know many vamps who've been around long enough to find out. Get the picture? There are more of you than there are of us. We're the ones who should be afraid.

"How do you get to be a Vampire? Simple — stand still and I'll show you. Calm down, warmflesh, I'm not that hungry … yet. Anyway, if I drink too much too fast and kill you, you'd come back in a few days as one of us — or maybe not. Maybe I'd be there to show you the ropes, maybe I wouldn't. If I'm not, odds are you'll get aced before your second meal. It's a tough business.

"Last thing to remember is, just like Humans, we ain't all the same 'cause of what we are. For instance, I eat right out of those little holes in the throat. But I've met vamps who take it home in bags and drink out of glasses or flavor meat with it, especially if they've got a little Ghoul in 'em. Gods and devils, one deadboy kept it in cans in his icebox,

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like a six-pack. It all comes down to taste.

"This is where I get off. I go too long without eating and I might forget we're friends, right? Don't bother looking for me again. If I want you, pal ... I'll find you."

No accurate census has ever been taken, but a large city can usually expect to have Vampires making up about one percent of its population. Much more than that, and there won't be much of any other kind of population.

More than almost any other denizen, Vampires are the object of hatred and prejudice. Somehow, people can accept a bizarre looking Wilderness creature out for their blood, but being killed by somebody who looks so much like themselves is too much to take. The establishment of bloodlines in some very large cities — a welfare program for the Undead — is part of an effort to appease militant Vampires who threatened terrorist acts if their rights were not protected. (Technically, a Vampire who cannot be proven to have slain a sapient being is treated like any other citizen, but this is rarely the case.) Most vamps learn early on to keep what they are a secret.

STANDARD VAMPIRE

AGILITY 10
DEXTERITY 8
ENDURANCE 10
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 11
INTELLECT 8
MIND 8
CONFIDENCE 9
CHARISMA 8

BACKGROUND NOTES: VAMPIRE

Advantages/Compensations
1CI, 1CIII, 2CIV
Mandatory A/C
Advantages: Special Abilities (CIV): Life Drain I (physical)
Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CIII): Nutritional Requirements (Blood); Advantage Flaw (CIV): Infection II
Recommended A/C
Advantages: Special Abilities (CIV): Natural Weaponry (HTH) (Fangs), Hypnotism; Special Abilities (CIV): Shapeshifting II (bat or wolf); Special Abilities (CIV): Intangibility
Compensations: Quirks (CIII): Dependency (Major — Blood); Achilles' Heel (CIII): some common substance or religious artifact
Restricted A/C
None

Skill Notes: Most Vampires are like most people; they do what they do to survive. Most die within the first few months of their undead existence. Those that live longer begin to invest heavily in increasing their Attributes and learning new and better skills. Successful Vampires will try to learn everything they can that will help them survive.

Alignment: There are believed to be more Order Vampires than Chaos ones, and an increasing number of Oathbreaker/Order bloodsuckers.

KARKAS

"Yeah, I've heard all the jokes. 'Pull yourself together.' 'It's not worth going to pieces over.' 'Don't fall apart over it.' Trust me, there's nothing you can come up with I ain't already heard.

"Even my name's a joke. 'Karkas' is a corruption of 'carcass'—you know, a dead guy. Well, I know all about dead: how you die, why you die, where you die. Only thing I don't know is why I'm still here.

"Okay, I'll lay it out for you. I died; I came back; I look like hell and if I'm torn to pieces, the pieces crawl back together and join up again. It's a pretty disgusting thing to see, until you get used to it.

"I'm kind of a storage battery for physical energy. If I want to be a bastard, I'll draw your endurance off you and leave you weak as a kitten. Only problem is, I don't get what I take from you. I'm not sure where it goes, but it's not to me.

"I can give and take at the same time, too. So I'll give you the strength of five guys, but draw off your agility. One punch will flatten a guy's face — but good luck connecting, you big klutz.

"I get by where I can. Some of my friends work in the movies, getting blown apart and then reassembling in time for the next take. I make a few bucks working for a sawbones in the neighborhood. Somebody walks by, I make 'em feel weak and sick and they rush to the doc. He gives me a cut and I eat good that night. Not bad, huh?"

Karkas are Undead, usually back as the result of a curse. Their skin color ranges from pale white to yellow-green, mottled and sometimes covered with sores. Their eyes are blank white and many of those encountered will have unkempt hair and generally poor hygiene (good grooming isn't a big priority when you're dead).

The details of a Karkas' life vary depending on the kind of curse that created them. In general, Karkas can have their bodies shredded into bits and survive. Each cell is capable of independent locomotion, and the body parts will inexorably make their way back to each other, reuniting to reform the whole. In some cases — as with Karkas/Ghoul breeds — destroyed tissue can be replaced with other material, such as grave earth. Most

Karkas seem to be able to regenerate any tissue that is lost so they don't walk around with embarrassing holes in their bodies.

Pure Karkas — not breeds — have the ability to adjust a character's attributes, making the "victim" more powerful in some respects and less so in others. Karkas can rearrange a character's physical attributes (AGI, DEX, STR, END, and TOU) with a successful *unarmed combat* attack.

Even though they can recover from it, no Karkas seems to really enjoy being torn apart. For this reason, they tend to avoid combat, working more as runners and in service positions than in high-risk jobs. There are some, though, who never adjust to their new existence and will drain a target until he dies out of pure spite.

Karkas curses usually specify a particular weapon or set of circumstances by which they can be killed without fear of another return. Some will gladly tell you what this is (if they know) for a chance to be rid of the curse; others will

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BACKGROUND NOTES: KARKAS

Advantages/Compensations
3CIV
Mandatory A/C
Advantages: Special Abilities (CIV): Immortality (specify way of killing permanently), Regeneration, Attribute Adjustment (physical)
Compensations: Advantage Flaws (CIV) Rot II, Allergy II (usually a weapon of some kind)
Recommended A/C
Advantages: They are allowed no more
Compensations: None
Restricted A/C
None

con you and send you searching for some obscure piece of junk. When you look as bad as these things do, you take your laughs where you can.

STANDARD KARKAS

AGILITY 8
DEXTERITY 8
ENDURANCE 10
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 11
INTELLECT 9
MIND 8
CONFIDENCE 9
CHARISMA 9

Skill Notes: Karkas characters will always have one add in the skill *scramble*, as discussed under "Special Abilities (IV): Attribute Adjustment (physical)" in Chapter Five, "Character Creation."

Alignment: Karkas have been mostly neutral up to now, but lean toward Order.

PRETAS

"You can't see me or hear me … yet … but I'll talk anyway. See, I was just like you before I changed. Same hopes, same fears, same desires. Then something happened and suddenly I was apart from everyone else, but I still had the same old needs.

"After a while, I discovered that I could work through the living, if I could find somebody depressed or tired enough that they just didn't care anymore. I can move into their mind if the regular tenant's out, see, and really feel *again.*

"Anyway, I can't possess somebody like a demon. But I can nudge them from inside — they can hear me, even if you can't — and get them to do what I want to do. And if they hack me off,
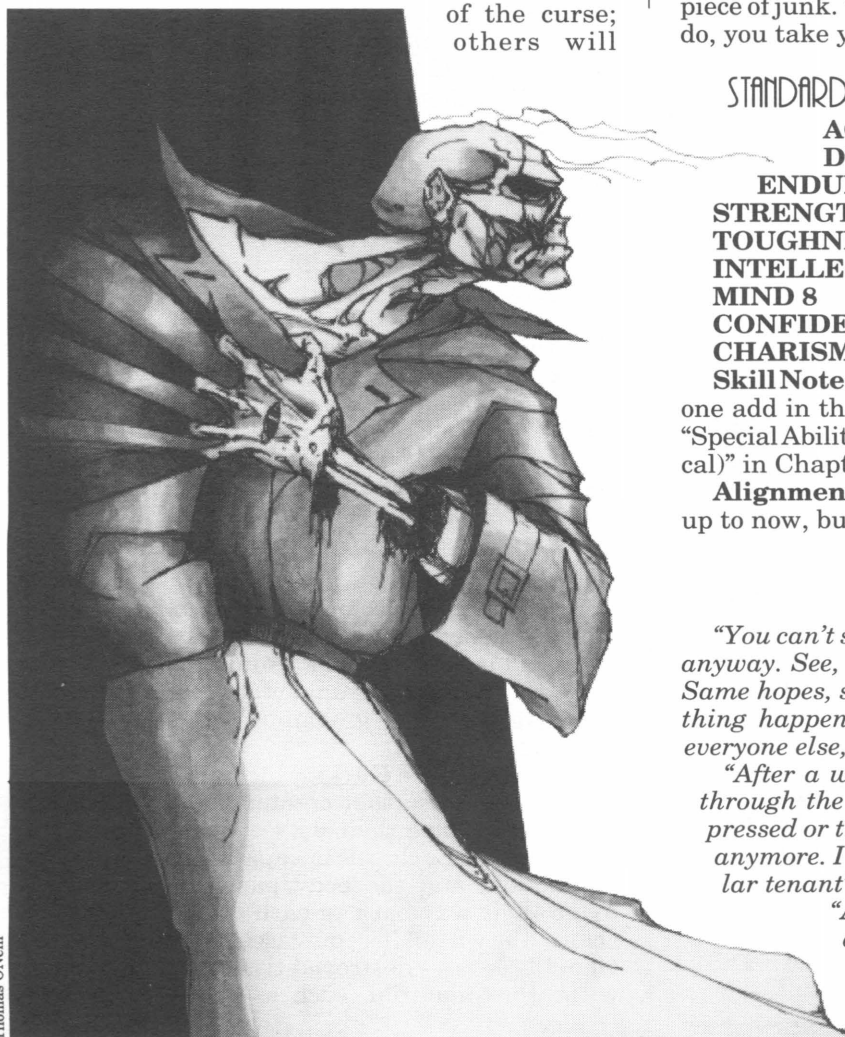
well, maybe I just suggest they find a bridge and jump off, you know?

"It means moving around a lot. Most of my hosts end up in madhouses after a while (tell somebody you hear voices in your head and see where it lands you). But once in a while somebody slips through the cracks and I get to live it up (pardon the pun) for a while. But you don't have to worry, pal … at least, as long as you didn't *hear what I just said."*

Pretas (or "hungry ghosts") are spirits who don't know they're dead, won't accept it, were insane to begin with, or are simply too stubborn to move on. They attach themselves to people who are like themselves — violent, depressed, borderline psychotic, drunks, drug addicts and others who "check out" of their heads for long periods of time. A Pretas will seize that opportunity to move in and start doing the thinking for his host.

It's worth emphasizing again that Pretas can't drive someone's will out and take over completely. But they can nag, cajole, wheedle and bully a host into doing what they want. Some will push the owner of their newfound dwelling to do something horrible and violent, then criticize them if they do and mock them if they don't.

Eventually, a host might cave in completely and turn over all the decision-making to the Pretas inside. Such a person might seem perfectly normal, but their behaviors might change. A Pretas longs to be physical again, and will direct his host to take risks, indulge in all sorts of sensual diversions, and try anything that might enhance sensation. In cities where Pretas are active, sales of aphrodisiacs, *strength* potions and other stimulants are a major industry.

BACKGROUND NOTES: PRETAS

Advantages/Compensations
1CI, 1CIII, 2CIV
Mandatory A/C
Advantages: Special Abilities (CIV): Attack Form Resistance (Non-Enchanted Weapons), Possession I, Intangibility
Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CIV): Ability Loss III (they lose their Intangibility when they are inside a "host"), Reduced Attribute III (-3 to Strength)
Recommended A/C
Advantages: Special Abilities (CIV): Fear, Flight
Compensations: Handicap (CIII): Pretas are often unable, or unwilling, to affect physical objects in their natural form
Restricted A/C
None

Outside of those with the right divinatory abilities, the average person can't see or hear a Pretas unless it enters his mind. Even then, it's rare for the host to get a flash of what the ghost looks like, although he can't help but hear him.

Exorcisms do no good against Pretas, since they aren't demons. It usually takes an act of will by the host to drive one out, and then it will simply find another host. In a few cases, Pretas have apparently been talked into moving on to another plane, although it's possible the spirit was lying.

STANDARD PRETAS

AGILITY 12
DEXTERITY 5
ENDURANCE 7
STRENGTH 2
TOUGHNESS 5
INTELLECT 9
MIND 9
CONFIDENCE 11
CHARISMA 13

Attribute Note: Pretas should seldom be assigned Strength or Dexterity values higher than five or six, since they are naturally intangible. They *can* affect the physical world, though they *shouldn't* be able to do much to it.

Skill Notes: Pretas concentrate almost exclusively on interaction skills, particularly *persuasion* and *charm*. They seldom remember many physical skills they may have had while alive.

Natural Tools: Flight, speed value 10; TOU+10 versus non-enchanted weapons, plus an additional +20 when intangible (which should be almost all the time that they are not in a "host")

Alignment: Pretas are almost uniformly Chaotic. Some have drifted to Oathbreaker/Chaos, hoping to create mechanical shells they can inhabit permanently.

WILDERNESS CREATURES

These creatures are *not* to be considered as player characters. In most cases, they are very powerful, completely alien, and completely unplayable as player characters.

They are *enemies.*

The Wilderness holds many creatures — perhaps more than the cities do. But there is no organization or predictability to Wilderness creatures on Marl. Some may have come from other planes, through the gates, while others may be the product of perverse or perverted magic.

Consider these entries as examples of the species listed here. They are *not* the only examples player characters may encounter, if they are foolish enough to venture into the Wilderness.

Since these creatures are not player characters, they have been listed with skills and Attribute values that are considered "typical," but not "standard." Also, they do not need Background Options — when you, as the gamemaster, construct a Wilderness creature, you don't need to "balance" it. You just assign abilities as you see fit.

Fun, isn't it?

You *can*, however, use the Special Abilities listed in the "Character Creation" chapter as a guideline. Many of these creatures were constructed that way.

QUESKWORMS

No one is quite certain just how many queskworms may exist near any given city on Marl. It may be that very few have been encountered, given the scarcity of tales about them; it may also be that very few travelers have survived to tell any tales.

Queskworms have characteristics of both worms and insects. Their long, slender bodies are encased in a hard shell that acts as armor against enemies. Two stalks emerging from the head serve as sensory organs, while sharp and powerful mandibles allow them to tear their prey to bits before consuming it. Queskworms have been reported as large as three hundred meters in length and one story has the creature devouring an entire trade convoy near Selastos.

A queskworm is born without a shell, and it is during the first six months of its life that it is most vulnerable. Queskworms have two heads at birth, one at either end, so that if the creature is severed in the middle, the result is two living ones rather than a single dead one. After six months, the shell is fully developed and one of the heads, now no longer necessary, drops off.

Queskworms are believed to live in tunnels underground and be attracted by vibrations from the surface. This, they say, is why a lone traveler will rarely encounter one. Convoys with a number of vehicles and/or animals are far more likely to attract the attention of one of these beasts.

These creatures do not know the meaning of the word stealth. They purposely emerge from the ground in front of a convoy, roaring a challenge. Along with

their mandibles, they can also attack by simply crushing anything that gets in their way. Queskworms are meat-eaters, but don't seem to prefer any kind of creature over another.

Works of art made from queskworm shell are extremely valuable, especially in cities like Del or Tarrik. Their shells also make good armor against bullets or even some magic spells — though that is probably why their shells are so hard to come by.

Rumors that there is a city where queskworms have been domesticated are unproven.

STANDARD QUESKWORM

AGILITY 9
Unarmed combat 18
DEXTERITY 5
ENDURANCE 23
STRENGTH 25
TOUGHNESS 28 (34 with armor)
INTELLECT 4
Perception 13, tracking 13, trick 9
MIND 4
CONFIDENCE 5
Intimidation 20, survival: desert 10, willpower 19
CHARISMA 5
Life Points: 5-10 each
Natural Tools: Carapace, armor value TOU+6/34; mandibles, damage value STR+3/28; crushing attack, damage value STR+10/35
Note: Queskworms are huge and powerful, but relatively slow. Above ground, their movement rate is 3; underground, the creature moves at a rate of 8. If a queskworm is about to surface, all creatures within a 100 meter radius need to make a *perception* or Intellect total of 4 or higher to notice.

Roleplaying Notes: Queskworms are highly intelligent animals, but they are overwhelmingly belligerent. It is thought that they consume all the food they need from the soil they inhabit — but that they attack convoys and large creatures because they are "trespassing" on their soil. Regardless, a queskworm will eat virtually anything it kills.

The best way to survive a queskworm attack is to run away (at least, that's the best plan anyone's ever come up with). *Trick shots* against their eye stalks look inviting, but do no actual extra damage — the queskworm is virtually blind. Shoot or cut its eyes and you'll just piss it off.

Thomas ONeill
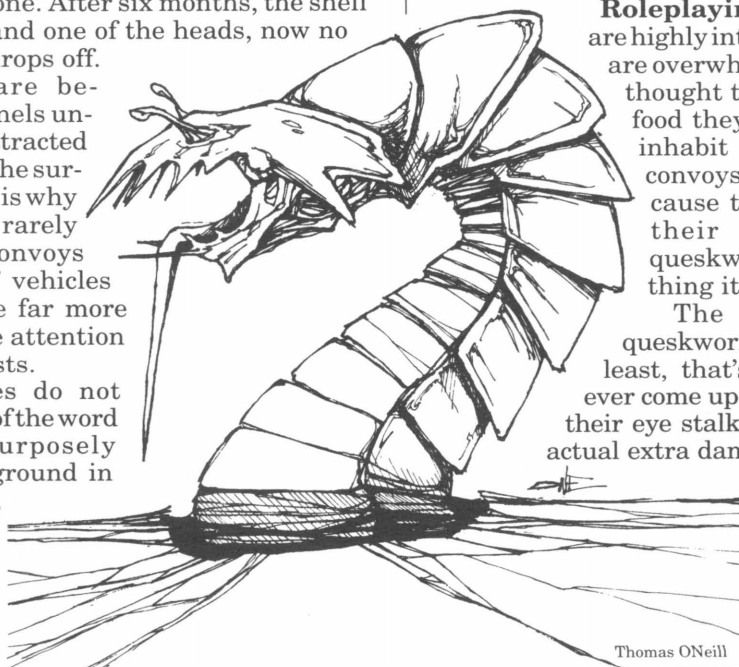
DURAZ

Descriptions vary on just what a duraz looks like. Some say it's reptilian in nature, others that it looks like a Human of grotesque proportions. What is known is that duraz live in gates and that any sorcerer who conjures such a portal risks attracting one of these creatures.

A duraz has the ability to reduce its metabolism until a state something like hibernation is achieved. It will remain that way within a gate until someone tries to pass through, at which point it will come to life and challenge the traveler. If the duraz wins, it will implant its essence in the traveler's body, letting its own physical form crumble. It will then begin to incubate in its host's body, all the while influencing his thoughts (usually pushing him to enter a city, where prey would be abundant). Often, a traveler will be un-aware that a duraz is inside him, the creature having wiped his memory of the combat.

If the duraz is successful in getting inside a city, it will tear its way out of its host and start to feast on the citi-zenry. When local law arrives to hunt it down, it will pos-sess another body and join the search for itself until a chance comes to es-cape the city.

Unlike demonic entities, duraz cannot slip in and out of hosts unnoticed and can be killed if the body they're in dies. In the past, duraz attacks have led to entire neighbor-hoods being massacred by overzealous guards for fear one of the residents might be a host.

Duraz are cunning and possess a good deal of native intelligence. Few live long enough to make the same mistake twice, so elder duraz can be expected to disguise their presence in a body mas-terfully.

It should be noted that no physical damage is done to a host while the duraz is incubating, al-though he may find himself with a greater appetite (since he's now eating for two).

Thomas ONeill

STANDARD DURAZ

AGILITY 15
Acrobatics 16, climbing 16, dodge 17, stealth 17, unarmed combat 18, unarmed parry 16
DEXTERITY 7
ENDURANCE 14
STRENGTH 15
TOUGHNESS 13 (14)
INTELLECT 11
Perception 12, tracking 12, trick 13
MIND 6
CONFIDENCE 10
Con 22, intimidation 20, survival: Wilderness 13, willpower 12
CHARISMA 11
Charm 12, persuasion 17, taunt 15
Life Points: 3-7
Natural Tools: Scales, armor value TOU+1/14; claws, damage value STR+3/18; teeth, damage value STR+2/17

Roleplaying Notes: The duraz has the ability to lower its life processes to almost zero. A character attempting to sneak past a slumbering duraz must make a successful Agility or *stealth* total against a difficulty number equal to the creature's *perception*.

Once a duraz is victorious in combat (it will try to knock its victim unconscious), its physi-cal form crumbles and its intellect, in the form of a fine mist, possesses the host, usu-ally entering through the mouth, nose or ears (use the description for "Possession I" in Chapter Five, "Character Creation"). It then begins to regrow its physical body —it takes three months for the duraz to fully develop, although it is ca-pable of tearing its way out of its host from two months on. While the duraz is in the body, it might simply rest until it can tear its way out, or it may try to *intimidate* or *persuade* its host to do things (like go in-side a city). It may also attempt to *con* its host into believing others are out to get the host, so that the host will kill and feed on fresh prey. The only way to get a duraz out of a body is to kill the body (in which case the duraz is killed) or to *persuade* or *intimidate* it to leave. Certain magical spells may remove it in other ways, but these are the most likely "solutions."

After three months, the host will take one *wound* every day from the duraz's "stretching." These wounds will not heal. The duraz, when it kills its victim, emerges from the host's body to search for new prey.

Characters possessed by a *duraz* will gain the "Metabolic Difference" Compensation, since they will have to eat for two.
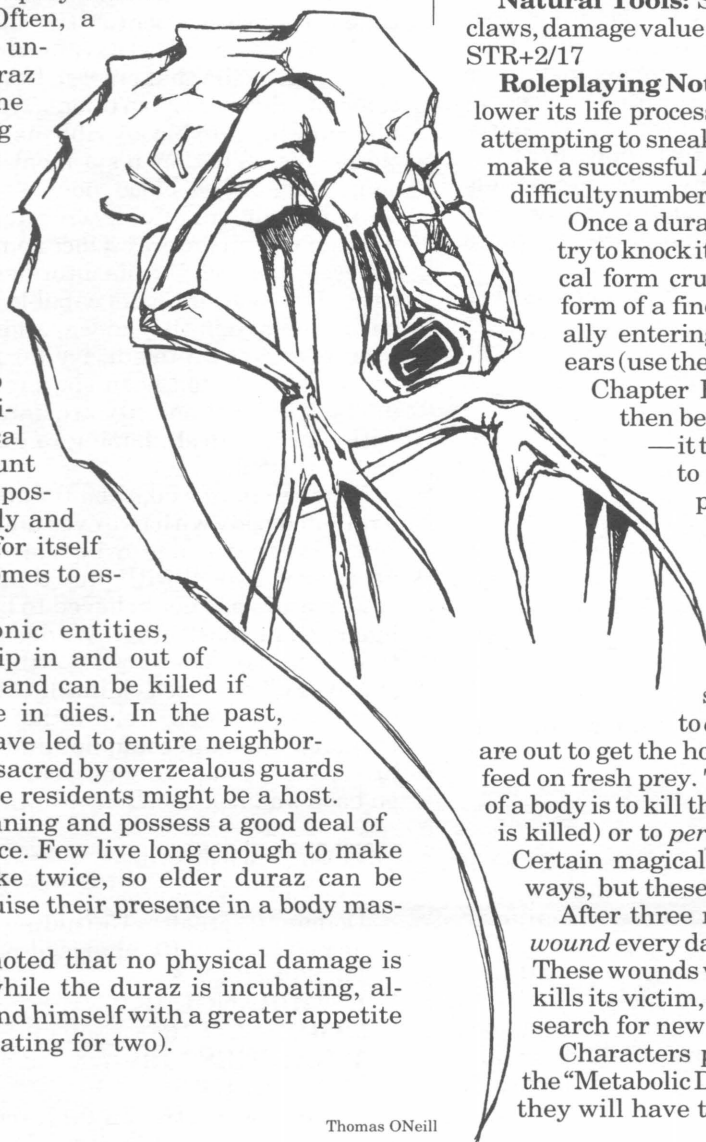
SHADOWERS

There are some who believe that shadowers are not true creatures of the Wilderness, but are rather some kind of breed driven from the cities years ago. Regardless, they are very real and surprisingly dangerous, considering the fact that they seem to disdain combat.

Shadowers prefer small parties, the fewer the number the better, and rough country where vehicles cannot travel. They seem to take great pleasure in stalking prey, rather than actually bringing it down. They will follow stealthily behind a party, using natural cover (and perhaps some ability to camouflage themselves) to keep hidden. After a while. they will make just enough noise to make their targets nervous.

What happens next seems to follow a pattern. The hapless party scouts around, but cannot spot anything (usually). The noises continue, until they are driven to emptying their weapons at bushes and trees. Finally, the shadowers start to close in, apparently coming from all sides. Those party members who survive the assault show up at the walls of the nearest city days or weeks later, minds broken. It's likely they were mad with fear long before the shadowers stepped out of the darkness and claimed their kills.

No coherent description of a shadower has ever been obtained.

STANDARD SHADOWER

AGILITY 12
Dodge 14, long jumping 13, maneuver 13, stealth 23, unarmed combat 15
DEXTERITY 6
ENDURANCE 9
STRENGTH 11
TOUGHNESS 11
INTELLECT 12
Camouflage 17, perception 19, tracking 16, trick 15
MIND 8
CONFIDENCE 9
Intimidation 18 (invoking paranoia 20), survival: Wilderness 11
CHARISMA 12
Taunt 14
Life Points: 3-6
Natural Tools: Claws, damage value STR+3/14; "Invisibility" (as listed under "Special Abilities (CIV): Invisibility" in Chapter Five, "Character Creation")
Roleplaying Notes: Shadowers will "attack" large or small parties, though they love going after individuals or pairs best. Their *intimidation* specialization is used when they are trying to inspire fear and paranoia in those they are tormenting.

This way, a party can't simply say "we're ignoring them" and get away scot free.

It has been hypothesized that shadowers are cowardly. This may or may not be so. Their method of attack may seem "cowardly," but it is very effective — the fact that there are no concrete descriptions of the creatures is proof of *how* effective.

SLASHTORS

Unlike the duraz, which only uses gates, the slashtor actually creates them. A large creature, averaging ten meters in height, the slashtor gives off a sorcerous energy capable of warping space itself. If the slashtor spends more than twelve hours in one spot, a gate will form around it. The creature itself has no control over where the gate might lead. The gate will usually exist for half the time the slashtor spent in the spot.

The slashtor earned its name from the hundreds of whip-like cilia that emerge from its mouth, all of them lined-razor sharp talons. A slashtor can literally cut prey into bloody ribbons with one sweep of these cilia. Whether it's a meat-eater or feeds on something else — blood, bone, etc. — is unknown.

A slashtor will hunt by creating a gate and then waiting within for prey. Once someone ventures in (or even nearby), the slashtor devours him. Interestingly, slashtors seem capable of carrying gates with them when they move, and their gates have even been known to survive for months after the creature itself had been slain (see above). Alchemists in at least one city are known to be working with slashtor flesh, hoping to duplicate the gate-creation effect.

When first viewed, slashtor appear to be simply a rounded body with two eyes and a gaping mouth. But it is capable of growing claws from its sides if necessary, to deal with prey that escapes its cilia.

Slashtors are not believed to be any more intelligent than most other Wilderness creatures — that is to say, not very — although at least one survivor of an attack claims he heard the creature speak. The words were either garbled or in a language the man could not understand, for what he repeated made no sense. No one seems eager to go back and ask the creature what it meant.

STANDARD SLASHTOR

AGILITY 8
Dodge 12, stealth 15 (hiding in gate 17), unarmed combat 19, unarmed parry 16
DEXTERITY 5
ENDURANCE 18
STRENGTH 16
TOUGHNESS 19
INTELLECT 5
Perception 11, tracking 11, trick 11

MIND 4
Conjuration: sorcery 15
CONFIDENCE 6
 Intimidation 17, survival: Wilderness 10, willpower 16
CHARISMA 5
Life Points: 1-6
Arcane Knowledges: Dimension 5
Spells: *Gate*
Natural Tools: Cilia, damage value STR+9/25 — slashtor can make up to four single attacks per round without incurring a multi-action penalty; claws, damage value STR+2/18

Roleplaying Notes:
Slashtor are motivated by hunger rather than evil intent. It is thought that, long ago in Marl's history, the slashtor were small, snake-like creatures that hid in rocks or caves, devouring small creatures (mice, spiders, etc.) that happened by. Then someone or something (perhaps during the last Godwar), gave them the ability to *gate*. This made them slightly more effective small predators, but no threat to people (who they shied away from).

But gate-magic is unpredictable. Something or someone, at some time, increased the size of the creature (as well as its intelligence) incredibly. Now, smaller creatures and other Wilderness beings shy away from gates — with the duraz and the slashtor lurking in them, is it any wonder? The slashtor now preys on Humans and intelligent Unnaturals because they are the only ones foolish enough to wander near an open gate.

Thomas ONeill
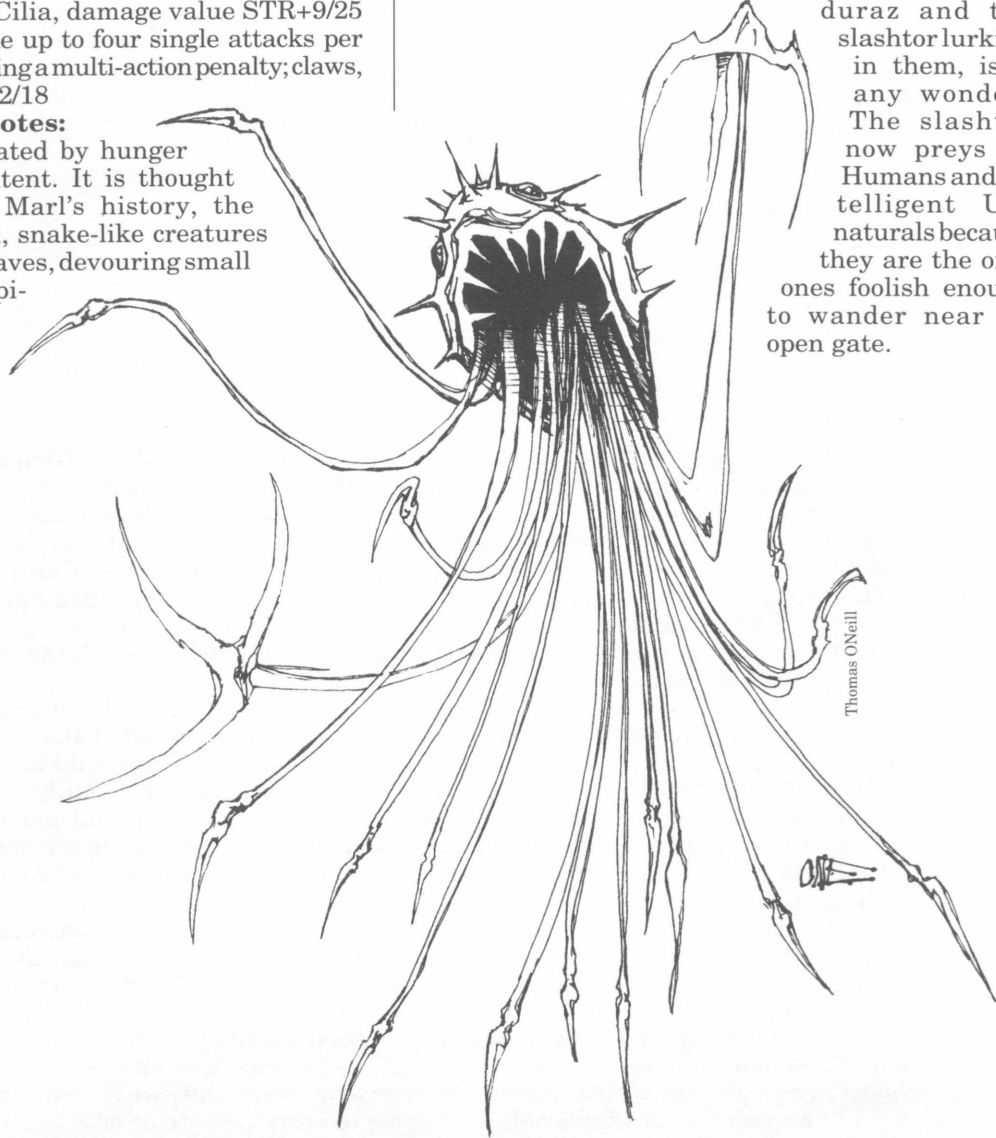
CHAPTER FOUR

SELASTOS

Deacon had only been through one other gate in his life. That was back when he'd been working the docks as a sentinel, and a boat he was searching drifted through one on the river. He wasn't sure where he and the surprised crew wound up — it wasn't anything like anyplace he'd seen before. Fortunately for their wits and lives, they'd sailed right back out again, about three kilometers downriver from Galitia.

If it wasn't a great memory, at least it had prepared him for the sensation. This was all new to Vera, though, so the first thing she did on the other side was pull over, bolt from the car and get sick. When she was done, they started across the sandy stretch that led to Selastos.

It was smaller than Deacon had expected, ringed with walls of sun-baked stone. Glowstones mounted near the gates were muted so the light wouldn't attract anything from outside — *as if the place isn't warded to Akar's eyes*, Deacon said to himself.

Vera's "sick relative" bit wasn't going to work so well here. The guards would want a name and address and neither one of them knew Selastos even well enough to fake one. So Vera smiled prettily while Deacon slapped a few bills in the sentinel's palm. That method got them through the outer gates, but the uniform at the last one decided to be a problem.

He looked at the little pile of cash in his hand like Deacon had dropped a dead Skarth on him. Then he stuffed it in his pocket, but didn't make a move for the gate. Instead, he leaned in close to Vera and said, "What's a honey like you doing with this bum? You know, I know all the hot spots in Selastos. I could take you places."

Deacon frowned. That line was so old it needed a walker to get from his lips to her ear. "Look, pal, she's my long-lost sister and she's always dreamt of seeing a couple of holes in the ground with delusions of grandeur. After this, we're going to see the world's biggest werewolf hairball. You going to open the gate or not?"

The sentinel drew himself up to his full height. "Wise guy, huh? We don't like wise guys in Selastos. Maybe I'll just turn you around and send you back into the sands, what about that?"

Vera looked hopeful — Galitia looked real good to her all of a sudden. Deacon thought briefly of turning the sentinel into a healer's livelihood, but tossed the idea. The guy could end up being more trouble than he was worth. Shrugging, he offered him a few more bills and what sounded like an apology, if you weren't listening too hard. The sentinel flashed one last leer at Vera and waved the gate open.

"The cheaper the burg, the tougher the uniforms," Deacon muttered. "Find an inn and we'll catch some sleep. We can go see your boss in the morning."

Vera nodded, her attention on the multi-colored glowstones that flashed on both sides of the avenue, promising all sorts of delights, no questions asked. Deacon settled into the passenger seat and pulled his hat down low over his eyes.

"And, Vera …?"

"What?"

"Welcome to Selastos."

"A hot wind comes down out of the mountains at night, howling like a banshee, like it's giving warning. Grit gets in your eyes and the back of your throat and you'd sell your soul for a good stiff drink. Selastos has its share of people who have and the devils got no bargain, that's for certain.

"Selastos is a dry city, but not in the way you think. There's plenty of gin, and rum, and Tarrik ale — it's water that's in short supply. People do everything but wash with liquor. Even mother's milk is 100 proof around here.

"It's the gold that drew people here in the first place, and it's the gold that makes them stay, no matter what they might tell you. And nothing glistens quite like blood on gold."

THE CITY OF SELASTOS

The city of Selastos sits in the middle of a desert, separated from its sibling metropolis — Galitia — by five hundred kilometers of Wilderness and a high mountain range. But it is linked to that city by a strand of gold, mined in Selastos and carried via permanent gate to Galitia, where it buys liquor, women and the kind of grimoires you won't find in a conjurer's shop.

Selastos is a fairly young city, not more than a century old, but it has many of the same problems as its elder brethren. The city is divided cleanly between the rich and powerful and those struggling to get by. There's enough money floating around to ensure that the politicians and the sentinels stay in line and the people vote in the candidate of somebody else's choice. Play ball and life can be sweet in Selastos — squawk too loud and you'll get stepped on.

Of course, the big rich haven't won every battle. When they started looking for cheap labor to do the grunt jobs no one else wanted, they settled on Taxim. These undead proved to be good, if uninspired workers, and all they needed was the right spell to hold body and soul together. Eventually, though, they organized and threatened to shut the city down if their "nonliving conditions" weren't improved. After close to a year of strikes, riots and sabotage, they won a few concessions, and their guild remains the most powerful in Selastos.

Today, Selastos is one of the major mining centers on the continent of Eln. But the battle for control of the limited water resources — and watermages — is just beginning to be fought and there are dark days ahead for this city of gold.

GEOGRAPHY

Selastos is situated in the center of a desert the locals call "Dirak," after a demon worshipped by the Taxim. Far to the east lie the Pendar mountains, beyond which is the city of Galitia. To the west, the Ranlus range boasts the rich gold veins that accounts for Selastos' income.

A traveler from Selastos who knows of Galitia — and many outside of positions of power do not — can reach it by going some two kilometers out into Dirak and passing through a permanent gate. The traveler will emerge in a pass in the Pendars that overlooks the larger city and can travel a rocky path down to the road that leads into Galitia.

Selastos itself is completely landlocked, so any luxuries or other provisions brought in from outside must come through the Galitia gate and overland. It is possible that a route could be found to a northern or southern city, but no one is willing to brave the desert and what might lie beyond. They're not even certain that there are cities in either direction.

It's that much more important that Selastos be able to grow its own food. Unfortunately, the soil is relatively poor here, even when enhanced by earthmage spells. Water is brought down from the peaks of the Ralnus and run through irrigation channels, but there isn't enough of it to sustain all the acreage needed for a city of 900,000. A landowner who can get more than his share stands to become very rich, and the key to that is controlling the local watermages, who will divert a channel for a pretty price.

So why build here in the first place? Why not go farther north and simply build an outlying mining village at the foot of the mountains? The answer lies in the fact that transporting gold to the city requires vehicles and guards, and all that movement attracts quesqworms (see Chapter Three, "Denizens of Marl"). A single creature can destroy months' worth of work and ruin fortunes. After a few such disasters, the original settlers abandoned their first site and moved the city as close as possible to the mines. Four rings of walls protect Selastos from the Wilderness and the mines themselves are heavily warded against any uninvited guests.

HISTORY

Selastos was founded 105 years ago by two dozen miners and ex-sentinels. The story goes that they were working their way through the Pendars looking for a potential strike when one of them stumbled through a gate. He found himself in the middle of a wasteland, staring at another mountain range.

Now, if you read the local histories in the Selastos City Hall, you'll hear about how these intrepid explorers knew in their bones that a fortune was waiting for them here. So they packed up their gear, marched through the gate, and founded a city. It's a lot more likely that they'd been run out of Galitia for some reason and would have become a midnight snack for a Wilderness creature if they hadn't found the gate.

At any rate, after a few months of living in caves and scraping gold dust out of the mountains, they returned. This time, they were able to buy their way back in. The dust was enough to attract others to chance life outside the walls, and it *was* a chance — these newly rich men weren't talking about Selastos or the gate, to anybody. In fact, until they realized more hands would mean more money out of the mountain, they shot dead anyone who tried to follow them.

Selastos began to grow and a few experiences with what lived under the sands was enough to get walls built. And with growth came a need for laborers to work the farms and the mines, sweep the streets, and do the rest of the jobs the founders didn't want to be bothered with anymore. Humans were a bad choice — too soft, too pampered, most of them, and too much of a risk that they'd tell friends or relatives about the gate/city.

The answer came when sentinels in Galitia arrested a slaver and discovered a load of Taxim in his hold. Corpses possessed by minor demons, these were ideal for Selastos' purposes. Some gold in the right hands bought the lot and they were put to work. Undead do their jobs slowly but quietly, don't ask for much, and health care isn't a consideration. Perfect.

Things went on this way for a good eighty-five years. The city grew larger, the population grew rapidly, and the gold dust kept flowing out of the mountains. Unfortunately, water wasn't, at least not in the amounts needed. Bringing in watermages from out of town helped some, but not enough, and the farmland outside the city proper began to suffer for it.

If they'd thought of it, the city elders could have put their heads together and figured out a way out of this mess. But what they were thinking about was that all of a sudden water was more precious than gold, and the guy who had the most watermages at the end was going to win. A few big landowners paid off the Watermage Guild and started diverting the water to their farms, leaving the smaller growers dry and desperate. But what a watermage can divert, an earthmage can block completely — sabotage, crop fires and other violence split Selastos apart.

At about the same time, somebody got the Taxim thinking about organizing. They did most of the work in the city and their reward was bars with signs in the windows reading, "No Dead Served Here." Their uprising was perfectly timed, coming on top of the "water war." No one could afford to be bothered putting them down, so they were pledged voting rights, better housing, and protection from people who thought "Taxim burning" was a sport.

Not a whole lot has changed in the last twenty years. The Taxim still live huddled in one district, trying to get some of what City Hall promised them. The rich and the poor still fight over water, among other things. And underneath it all is the glimmer of gold …

ARCHER SAYS: SELASTOS CONFIDENTIAL

Almost a million people in the "City of Gold," according to seers. Most of 'em working to fatten the wallets of five or six guys. They all got sucked in by the runes, the ones that promised a car in every garage and conjurers' brew in every pot. Buildings tickle the sky and there's enough booze flowing to drown an *anthor*.

But that's all on the outside. Selastos, truth to tell, isn't that much different from a succubus with the plague.

On any given day, you can hear the Elders and the top sentinel making speeches about cleaning up this burg. But the politicians don't really run this town, they never have. The big rich run it, the mining tycoons and the vice kings, and they run it to suit themselves. And when they die, somebody will conjure their faces up at City Hall and declare them "civic heroes."

In the meantime, the suckers scrabble in the dark for a *handful of dust and* pray the walls don't cave in and the queskworms don't get them. If they make it through the week, there's a bottle and a broad to help them forget what they came here for. And if there's not enough money for the good stuff and a Human whore … there's always the Taxim Quarter.

SELASTOS TODAY

The city of Selastos grew from a small mining town to a place where wealth is seemingly there for the taking. Money has brought the good life to the Selasts, those who were smart enough to invest their dough early and often. And it acts as a magnet for those who dream of getting rich quick.

But along with the furst, the gems, the fancy elemental cars, the radiant crystals, and the plastic cockatrices on the front lawn came something else. The grifters, whores and cardsharps found their way to Selastos, too, and its red-stone district is a good deal larger than you'd expect from a city of its size. Despite the rings of security spells, there always a few miners who manage to pocket a little dust and are ready to blow it on a hooker or a game. If the dealer isn't smart enough to mark the deck with a little alteration magic first, the poor sap might even walk out with a few bucks.

The only things that keep the city from overflowing with the hopeful and the hopeless are the fact that the gate from Galitia is still a well-kept secret and the vast Wilderness to be crossed is enough to put off most people. The mining concerns can import any "services" their Human workers might need, and the Taxim are left to fend for themselves.

THE GODWAR IN SELASTOS

A very uneasy peace exists in this city for the moment, but there's no telling how long it will last. With the early apparent success of the Chaotics in Galitia (see *Hell's Feast*), followers of Chaos in Selastos tried the same tactics. They targeted a half dozen of Order's top people for death, and succeeded in icing one or two. But news travels fast, even in a fair sized town, and the cult of Ison (see below) took steps to protect its people.
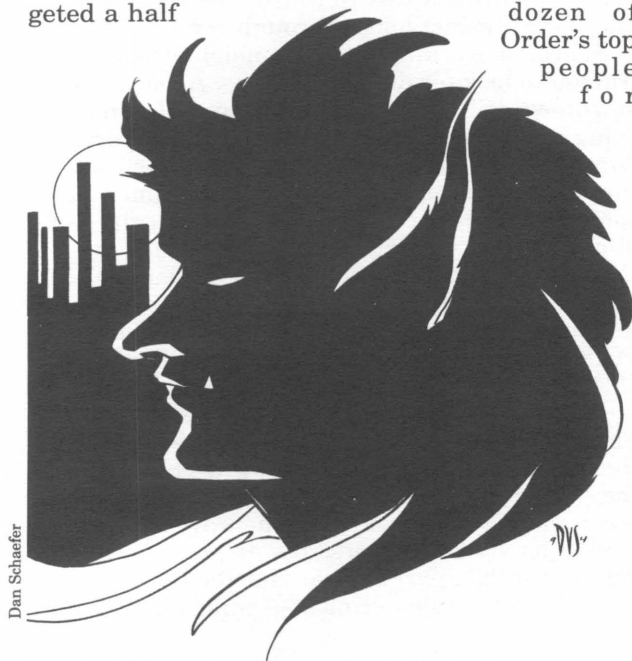
Since that time, there has been some blood spilled on both sides, but nothing significant enough to provoke all-out war in the streets or the shadows. For their part, the Oathbreakers in the city have been unusually quiet — conventional wisdom, particularly in the ranks of Order, is that these deserters are stockpiling and preparing for their opportunity. This could involve manufacturing an incident to put Chaos and Order actively at each other's throats, at which point the Oathbreakers would simply sit back and wait to pick up the pieces.

THE ELDERS

Selastos' city government is an elected Council of Elders, currently chaired by one Adolphus Stabb. The council handles all administrative matters, guild negotiations, and passage and repeal of laws. The body has five members, all but one of whom are parts of the city's most powerful political machine, Quarter-Moon Street (named for the site of its meeting hall).

The council meets daily in private session, and once per month in view of the public. Bills are voted on at the public session, but the real debate and maneuvering takes place behind closed doors. Not that there is a great deal to argue about — with Quarter-Moon controlling four votes, what its bosses say, goes.

Quarter-Moon Street is run by an aging firemage named Theosophus, who made his riches in the arson-for-profit game. Unlike most of his colleagues, he managed to avoid arrest and eventually "went legitimate." This meant his business was only slightly less shady, but his image as a "respectable citizen" shielded him from sentinel pressure. His influence with some of the city's more powerful guilds led him into politics and eventually the top chair in the machine.

There's a joke in Selastos that if Theosophus sleeps with the wrong 'shifter, the Elders get the clap. This tough old firebug is the closest thing to a spine the council has — only when the big mining interests fail to grease his palm sufficiently do the Elders vote against something the rich want. Most of the time, the bribe gets paid and the Elders act as a warlock's familiar, nodding on cue at any idea put before them.

But don't get the idea the Elders completely ignore the needs of the taxpayers. Quarter-Moon Street's best friends are voters who are content enough not to care about what the newscribes write or the streetsingers wail. That means keeping the streets swept and the glowstones lit and making with the dough and the ale just before Election Day.

Dan Schaefer

As of now, Quarter-Moon Street has Selastos locked up tight. One guild organizer put it best, saying, "The only reason Theosophus' enemies don't finish belly-up in the river is that Selastos ain't *got* no river."

THEOSOPHUS

AGILITY 9
Dodge 12, maneuver 10, melee combat 11, unarmed combat 12
DEXTERITY 8
Fire combat 11
ENDURANCE 9
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 10
INTELLECT 10
Forgery 14, perception 17, trick 14
MIND 9
Apportation: elemental 16, business 19
CONFIDENCE 11
Con 20, conjuration: elemental 19, intimidation 16, streetwise 16
CHARISMA 10
Alteration: elemental 15, persuasion 15, taunt 13
Life Points: 8
Arcane Knowledges: Fire 7
Roleplaying Notes: Theosophus is tough and knowledgeable. The most important thing, to him, is his position. He revels in his influence. The worst thing anyone could do to him is not pay attention to anything he says — which would be a very dangerous thing to do indeed.

THE COPS

Selastos is "served and protected" by a force called the sentinels, getting the name from the fact that, past and present, their main duty has been guarding the walls of the city. The sentinels are predominantly Human in this town, though they do number some Hugos and 'shifters among their ranks.

Although the sentinels are descended from the standings armies of the old days, they shouldn't be thought of as a military force. Their role is to keep the peace inside the walls and stop anything outside from getting in. Budget cuts eliminated Selastos' special unit charged with actively hunting down Wilderness creatures. The only outside work done by sentinels is guard duty on gold caravans to Galitia, through an arrangement between the Elders and the mining companies.

Uniformed sentinels patrol in pairs, either on foot or in steam cars. Beat sentinels are usually armed with a .38 revolver (both lead and runeslugs) and a baton with an impressed *pain* spell. Riding sentinels have that as well as a shotgun mounted
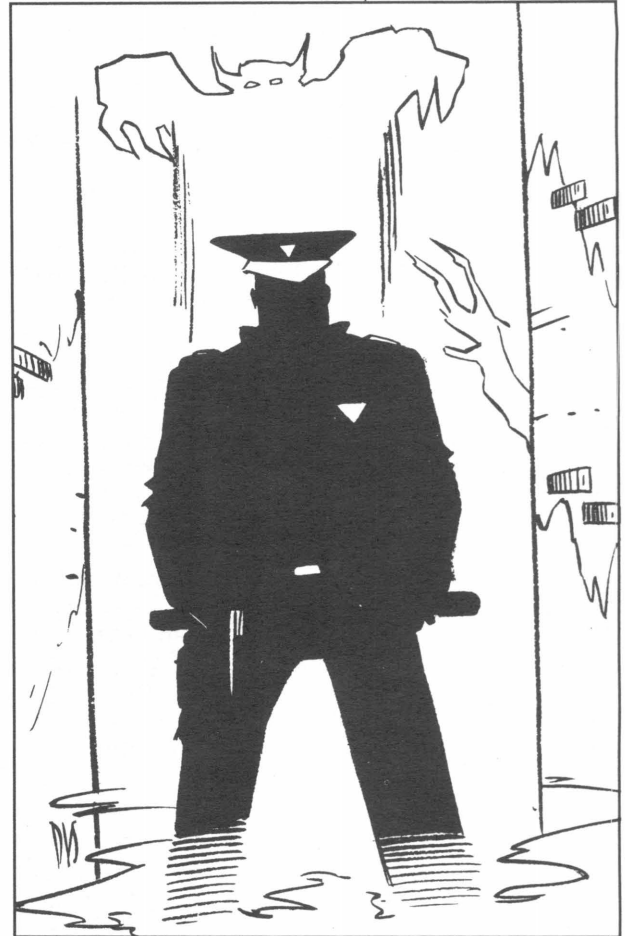
Dan Schaefer

under the dashboard, crowbars, axes and healing kits. All sentinels stay in contact with each other and their precinct house through crystal sets.

Sentinels working different neighborhoods are trained to look for different things. A car cruising downtown will ignore the whoring and gambling going on and focus on thefts, brawls and drunks lying in the road. In the shadier neighborhoods to the east, the sentinels will break up a game if they spot one, since it's competing with the "legit" gambling houses. ("Legit" means the owners have slipped a little under the table to the law, buying protection from raids and upstarts looking to muscle in.) In addition, anyone tagged as an Unnatural can be run in on general principles, especially if one of the periodic sweeps is on.

It's rare to find a sentinel in the Taxim Quarter. They don't regularly patrol there, preferring to let the Undead take care of their own. The last time they entered in force was during the riots that accompanied the strike. (Sentinels are expected to double as strikebreakers. It's an unwritten, but very profitable, part of their charter.)

The most serious crimes — multiple murders

SENTINEL STORY

The call came in over the crystal just before our shift ended. Some firemage'd had a few too many and torched a bar. Funny thing was, the building wasn't touched — people inside were barbecue, though. Guy was still in there, tossing back an ale while his friends did the "ashes to ashes" bit.

Dispatcher figured the spell ought to be running out of steam by the time we got there. It wasn't hard too spot the place, burning corpse on the doorstep and all. We drew our guns — Tighe took the back door, I got the front. We went in at the same time, trying to ignore the stink of roasted flesh, both of us shouting, "On the floor! Get on the floor, now!"

He hesitated for a second. His hand twitched. I cracked him across the face with the side of my gun and he went down. Tighe started putting the bindings on when the perp began to shake like a Vamp with the fever. Next thing we knew, he'd shifted into a snake and was making for the street.

Tighe dove after him, but he was too fast. I fired, missed, fired again. This time, the slug hit, tossed its spell and blew him in half.

That was enough to turn him Human again. I took out my knife and cut the head off — they'd need it to ID him downtown. Tighe tossed the rest on the fire. Then we both grabbed a bottle from behind the bar and went outside to start forgetting this had ever happened.

ARCHER SAYS

Before you cross that line, boy, give it some thought. Picking a career's just as important when you're a crook as when you're looking to apprentice yourself to some ratty old mage. Pick something rough and bloody — enforcer for a loanwyrm, flesh-peddler, smuggler — and you'll be rich when you retire. Either that, or bits and pieces of you will be scattered in the mortar of a new building. Then there's the neat and clean jobs. I did a turn as a box-artist once — that's a vaultcracker, for you rubes. Get past the wards and get out with the goods, that's my motto.

and the like — will bring out both uniformed and plainclothes sentinels, along with bloodmages and other investigators. Crime scenes are closed off with *ward* spells that prevent anyone not wearing a badge getting it. (In addition, spell shields will normally be erected to prevent long-range tampering with evidence. Anything carried away from the scene will be contained in a sphere of arcane force for the same reason.)

Once the *sentinels are* done looking over the body, it gets sent to the morgue. If it's not too badly mangled or been dead for too long, the coroner might be able to prevail on the corpse to say a few words before the autopsy. This doesn't happen often — a smart mug bashes his victim's brain or cuts out his tongue to prevent it — but when it does it's a real help to an investigation.

The average sentinel knows about as much magic as anyone else, although he might be better able to recognize the use of certain types from long experience. Detectives often have some divinatory or sec-

ond sight training and know a fair bit of magic — a big part of getting a promotion to plainclothes is having good powers of observation and a good memory, both qualities found in the better sorcerers.

The sentinels can be brutal on those who get out of line, but for the most part, they're respected by the average man on the street. After all, they're the ones who keep the racketeers, the resurrectionists and the revenants from getting out of hand. It's their checking everyone who comes in the gates of the city that keeps the Wilderness denizens from invading. And if it means being awakened now and then by a couple of them playing "bounce the perp" in the alley outside, well, that's the price of security.

STANDARD SENTINEL

AGILITY 9
Dodge 12, maneuver 10, melee combat 14, stealth 10, unarmed combat 13
DEXTERITY 9
Fire combat 13, vehicle piloting: wheeled 10
ENDURANCE 9
STRENGTH 9
TOUGHNESS 9
INTELLECT 8
Perception 12, tracking 9, trick 9
MIND 8
CONFIDENCE 8
Intimidation 9, streetwise 14, willpower 10
CHARISMA 8
Persuasion 9
Life Points: 4-6
Additional Skills: two at +1 adds
Equipment: .38 revolver, damage value 17, ammo 6; runeslugs, various; hand-held crystal set; baton, damage value STR+3/18, *pain* spell; bullet-proof vest, armor value TOU+6/22
Roleplaying Notes: Most sentinels in Selastos are "on the take" — but they come by it honestly. Most sentinels do not take random bribes from

individuals; they collect from organizations that have been "approved" by their upper echelons. It's kind of like "extra taxes" and "licensing fees."

STANDARD SENTINEL DETECTIVE

AGILITY 8
Dodge 10, melee combat 15, unarmed combat 12
DEXTERITY 8
Fire combat 16
ENDURANCE 8
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 8
INTELLECT 10
Deduction 13, divination: *choose focus* 13, perception 16, tracking 11, trick 14

Jaime Lombardo & Ron Hill

MIND 8
CONFIDENCE 9
Con 10, interrogation 12, intimidation 13, streetwise 14
CHARISMA 9
Persuasion 10, taunt 10
Life Points: 4-7
Additional Skills: two at +1 adds
Equipment: .38 revolver, damage value 17, ammo 6; runeslugs, various; hand-held crystal set; heavy trenchcoat, armor value TOU+2/16
Roleplaying Notes: There are two brands of detectives in Selastos: those who are competent and fairly honest, and those who are dirtier than the underside of a Taxim's feet. The competent ones are genuinely concerned with the more serious crimes of Selastos — homicide, arson, kidnapping, etc. — while the others are simply there to make things "easier" for the organizations they take their payoffs from.

THE CROOKS

Selastos is a little burg that grew up fast and fell in with the wrong crowd along the way. Organized crime's got a grip on all the vice that matters and their claws in the guilds, too. Street types who want to get rich — but don't like the feel of a spade in their hands — make a living by bashing and rolling miners too drunk to fight back. Murder, rape, grave robbing and all the other fringe benefits of life in a civilized city can be found here.

Low-level crooks don't have a lot of rights in this city. It's not unusual for a suspected pickpocket to be beaten on his way to the station, then slapped around some more by the detective who interrogates him. Then he's tossed in a cell with drunks, strongarm boys and maybe a 'Shifter rapist or two. If he can't afford an advocate, he's out of luck — the one he gets will be overworked, underpaid and a few components shy of a spell. If the judge is in a good mood, he'll be out in time to become a different kind of burden on society. And a new generation of cutpurses and thieves in his neighborhood will see one more easy mark ...

Control of gambling and prostitution in Selastos are evenly divided between two major gangs, one led by Norbert Rees and the other by Jervis Belasc. Rees is a Human necromancer and Belasc, his former lieutenant, is now a wealthy recluse and rumored to be an Unnatural. In fact, it was Rees' spell, some ten years ago, that allowed Belasc to live beyond death. The two have been warring since then, and the latest attempt at a peace pact collapsed when Rees insisted on using reanimated relatives of Belasc as his negotiators.

You'd expect that Belasc would favor Unnaturals for his troops and Rees Humans. In fact, Belasc is

violently prejudiced against Undead and the like (some whisper that he's ashamed of his condition, to the point of having numerous incantations done to try and restore healthy skin tone).

Rees, on the other hand, surrounds himself with Unnaturals, many of whom he created himself. He controls the entire west side of the city and is said to be in with at least one of the big industrialists. It was gold from this source that got Rees' mob off the ground, and his gambling houses are still used to launder money. This connection has ensured protection from the sentinels as well.

Belasc, on the other hand, has no such advantages. Rees has forced him on to the east side, where there is less loose cash to be had. Mob hits and sentinel harassment have checked his attempts to expand. But before you start thinking that Belasc is some heroic underdog, remember that his revenue comes from vice rackets that a succubus would turn away from in disgust. He favors Chaotic spellcasters — harder to control, but violent enough for his purposes — and his hits on Rees' whorehouses and gambling dens have been slaughters. If you could get in to ask him, Belasc would say that only this way could he manage to survive. But there are some within his organization who say that his gang's behavior just reflects his own appetites for blood and corruption.

Both organizations have been known to hire outside talent, either for convenience or to keep their hands clean on a particular job. The pay is good, but working too often for one gang could turn the other into an enemy.

JERVIS BELASC

AGILITY 9
Dodge 16, maneuver 12, stealth 14, melee combat 12 (knife 14), unarmed combat 17, unarmed parry 12
DEXTERITY 10
Fire combat 14, lock picking 13, prestidigitation 10 (pick pockets 12)
ENDURANCE 10
Resist shock 13
STRENGTH 10
Lifting 12
TOUGHNESS 10 (13)
INTELLECT 9
Deduction 12, divination: wizardry 12, perception 16, trick 13
MIND 9
Business 14 (criminal 16)
CONFIDENCE 10
Con 14, faith: Saer 12, intimidation 15, streetwise 20, willpower 15
CHARISMA 9
Alteration: vitomancy 12, persuasion 11, taunt 15

Life Points: 6
Alignment: Chaos 5
Arcane Knowledges: Entity 4, Folk 4
Spells: *Glass jaw, invisibility, sense undead*
Equipment: Switchblade, damage value STR+4/19; Gelvash .38, damage value 17, ammo 6, 5000 selasts in cash
Background Notes: Belasc died and was reanimated through arcane means. But the spell went wrong somehow and resulted in an increased Toughness (by+3) and an insatiable appetite for Human flesh, which he tries to keep secret. He is immune to lead slugs, but suffers an additional +1 damage from *fire* spells.
Roleplaying Notes: Belasc never asked to be reanimated and is ashamed of the dark and bloody needs that come with his new unlife. He bears a grudge against Norbert Rees for bringing him back and is determined to kill his former employer, and then bring him back, only to kill him again, over and over.

NORBERT REES

AGILITY 9
Dodge 15, melee combat 19, melee parry 16, unarmed combat 12
DEXTERITY 8
Fire combat 12, vehicle piloting: car 14
ENDURANCE 9
Resist shock 12
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 9
INTELLECT 9
Perception 17, trick 15
MIND 9
Business 12 (criminal 14)
CONFIDENCE 10
Con 14, conjuration: elemental 12, conjuration: necromancy 19, faith: Ison 11, gambling 14, interrogation 13, intimidation 16, streetwise 15, willpower 18
CHARISMA 10
Charm 15, persuasion 16, taunt 11
Life Points: 8
Alignment: Chaos 6
Arcane Knowledges: Death 4, air 2
Spells: *Freeze*
Equipment: Blackjack, damage value STR+3/18; .44 Karr Automatic, damage value 20, ammo 6; runeslugs (12), charged with *fireball* spells; 10,000 selasts in cash
Background Notes: If Rees weren't a mob boss, he'd be a full-time necromancer or maybe a graverobber. Even as a kid, he was fascinated with death — and his mob is known for how much they love inflicting pain. As it is, Rees is a man who enjoys his work.

Roleplaying Notes: Rees honestly doesn't understand what Belasc's problem is. So once in a while he has to snack on one of his pals — it's better than pushing up daisies, isn't it? But if a Belasc wants a war, Rees will give him one, and use anything — and anyone — he can to win.

THE BIG RICH

"Go up against these three and you're messing with the power. One hundred, two hundred, maybe three hundred million in gold. Even on Marl, that kind of scratch gives you a long reach. Oh, you might make it as far as Guildsport, Tarrik, even, but sooner or later you'll walk in the wrong door and they'll finish you. Let the sentinels talk all they want — the big rich are the law."

Three people — two men and a woman — own everything that's worth owning in Selastos. The Elders follow their lead, the guilds fear them, the crime lords respect them, and even the skeletons in their closets know enough to stay put. Like old-time feudal lords, each has a portion of the city's lifeblood they call their own.

They're three very different individuals, it's true, but they all share a few common traits. They're used to getting their way; they don't like being crossed; and they're not above crossing each other if it means gaining an edge.

THEO "ACE" LINK

He owns gold mines, maybe half the ones in Selastos. "Ace" was nothing but the black sheep son of one of the city's founders, until the day his father died in a conjuring accident (at least, that's what they called it. No one ever figured out how a fire started by a toppled brazier could have put that lump on the back of the old man's head).

Suddenly, "Ace" was running the show. He proved he knew all about give and take — giving envelopes stuffed with money to guild leaders, then stripping all the safety measures out of the mines while they looked the other way. Mine accidents went up twenty-one percent in the first year; profits went up thirty percent. And there were always more Taxim to replace the ones extinguished in cave-ins and explosions …

He earned his nickname due to his luck in cards, though a few of his opponents have suggested — quietly — that he's got a little ectoplasmic help peering over their shoulders during the game. And gambling is only one of Link's vices — women, especially 'shifters, cockatrice fights, and blue conjurevids are only a few of the things he's said to be into. Surprisingly, the sentinels have never believed him to be the power behind the Rees mob — Link, they say, just isn't subtle or sneaky enough

Karl Waller

to carry it off.

Link Mines is the biggest employer in Selastos. "Ace" is known for making surprise inspections of the shafts and is always in the market for strike-breakers and enforcers.

THEO "ACE" LINK

AGILITY 8
Dodge 10, melee combat 11, unarmed combat 11
DEXTERITY 8
Fire combat 10, prestidigitation 10 (card "shuf-fling" 12)
ENDURANCE 8
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 8
INTELLECT 10

Perception 14, trick 14
MIND 9
Business 18 (gold futures 20, vice 20)
CONFIDENCE 11
Con 17, intimidation 16, streetwise 14
CHARISMA 10
Charm 12, persuasion 14, summoning: wizardry 14
Life Points: 7
Alignment: Neutral
Arcane Knowledges: Entity 3
Spells: *Summon demon*
Equipment: .22 Delken, damage value 15, ammo 6, Ashes to Ashes knife, damage value STR+4/19; cards; dice; 50,000 selasts in cash

Background Notes: Although Link is not in bed with either mob, he does have extensive contacts in the underworld. Unfortunately, his assorted vices also make him vulnerable to blackmail. Look for him to hire player characters to take care of people who know too much and are trying to profit from that knowledge.

Roleplaying Notes: Link is and always has been a gambler — he lives to take risks. But he believes in always having a contingency plan in the event the game goes against him. Link will never tell player characters the whole truth about anything, and will always have a way out planned if things go wrong (preferably one that eliminates the player characters as threats in the future).

ALINA TERENZIA

Toss her name out in any Selastos bar and they'll tell you she's not Human, no way, no how. Those few floor workers lucky enough to lay eyes on her will tell you she's too beautiful to be real — not that they care, as long as the wages are good. And most are looking forward to the day they'll see her again.

Alina knows, of course, that rumors have her as everything from a succubus to a shapeshifter and seems, if anything, amused by this. "If it keeps my enemies — those few I've allowed to survive — on their toes to think I'm an Unnatural, then I let them think it. It gives the newscribes something to *write about.*"

The truth about Alina Terenzia is less romantic than the fiction. She is, in fact, a sorceress of tremendous talent who has used her abilities to enhance her own natural charm. She worked her way up from a low-paying job as a streetsinger to the presidency of Scorpius Crystals, makers of crystal sets for home and office use. Scorpius' exclusive contract with the city government (secured by Terenzia) was sufficient to crush all serious competition.

The woman herself clings to an air of mystery. It's possible that no one has ever seen her true face,

unchanged by sorcery. If she is not a succubus, she at least knows something of their art, working subtle changes on her features through spells to make herself attractive to whomever she's dealing with.

Terenzia differs from her fellow power brokers in other ways, as well. For one, Scorpius refuses to hire Taxim, saying that they're incapable of the delicate work needed on crystal sets. It remains the only all-Human company in the city, and the label "Made By Human Hands" on its products has been elevated to a status symbol.

And Terenzia has never forgotten her roots — in fact, they account for a good deal of her fortune. It was information she learned while a streetsinger that enabled her to force her way into control of the Rees mob (and hint to Norbert Rees that you think he's really taking orders from a woman and he'll slap you silly before getting around to shooting you). The money she made from the rackets enabled her to go legitimate and take over Scorpius.

Even Belasc doesn't know of Terenzia's connection with Rees — were it to get out, she would have more to fear from him than from the law. There's always the possibility that Rees will get fed up one day and try to get rid of her, but so far he hasn't exhibited the guts. Whatever she has on him, it's got to be good.

ALINA TERENZIA

AGILITY 8
Dodge 18, maneuver 12, melee combat 11, stealth 17, unarmed combat 9
DEXTERITY 10
Fire combat 14, prestidigitation 13
ENDURANCE 8
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 8
INTELLECT 10
Divination: vitomancy 17, forgery 12, perception 15, trick 15
MIND 10
Business 17 (crystal communications 19, criminal 19)
CONFIDENCE 12
Con 16, intimidation 16, streetwise 18, willpower 15
CHARISMA 13
Alteration: vitomancy 19, charm 17, persuasion 15, taunt 15
Life Points: 9
Alignment: Order 2
Arcane Knowledges: Folk 6, Living Forces 6
Spells: *Charm, facade, pain*
Equipment: Dagger, damage value STR+4/19; smoke rings; .22 Delken, damage value 15, ammo 6; 75,000 selasts in cash

Background Notes: Terenzia has, of course, contacts with the Belasc mob and a string of ex-lovers in Selastos she can call upon for favors (many in the city government). She is universally hated by taxim, who see her as bigoted against the dead.

Roleplaying Notes: Terenzia is seductive, dangerous charm personified — she's led more people to destruction with her charms than she has dispatched with her dagger. She will rarely deal directly with the player characters, unless it is a matter of extreme importance, but they will never forget the moment they met her.

JON ABLE

He is undoubtedly the richest man in Selastos, owner of AbleTool, AbleMines, AbleCar & Cart, and dozens of other, smaller firms. Link Mines relies on Able equipment to operate; Scorpius Crystals employs Able drivers to ferry their products to shops. If he wanted to, Able could conceivably crush both his rivals — if he sees them as rivals at all. But he seems to enjoy the fact that they must depend on him and regard them as the only real challenges to his intellect.

On the surface, Able seems distant and well-supplied with the arrogance that inherited wealth brings. But he is sharp and smart and proud of the fact that, though he has lost battles, he has yet to lose a war. He is also the highest-ranking representative of Order in Selastos, overseeing a network of agents planted throughout the city. Even while Galitia was struggling to mobilize against aggressive Chaotics, Able had seen to the rebirth of countless Unnaturals and eliminated a half-dozen agitators among the Taxim.

Of course, this role is not public knowledge — nor is the fact that Able has recently begun to dabble in necromancy and other arts that reek of Chaos. He is also said to be fascinated by the Oathbreaker Chaotics, especially those who have merged with machinery. Whether he sees them as a potential labor force — or a potential army — is unknown.

JON ABLE

AGILITY 8
Beast riding: horse 12, dodge 10, maneuver 10, melee combat 11, unarmed combat 10
DEXTERITY 9
Fire combat 14, thrown weapons 12
ENDURANCE 8
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 8
INTELLECT 10
Divination: vitomancy 15, language: Gris 11, language: Hugor 11, perception 13, trick 14
MIND 11

SELASTOS
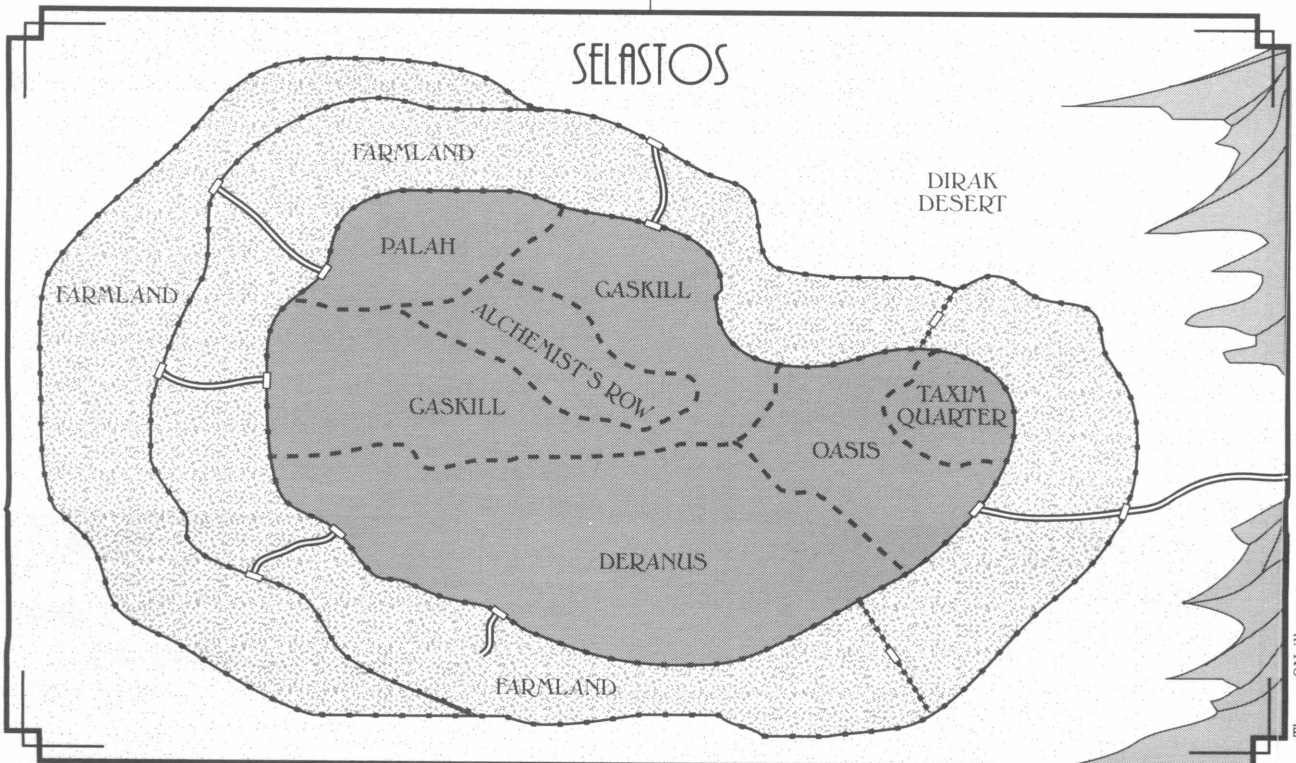
Business 22 (manufacturing 24)
CONFIDENCE 12
Con 16, faith: Ison 17, intimidation 16, willpower 17
CHARISMA 10
Alteration: vitomancy 13, charm 13, persuasion 14
Life Points: 7
Alignment: Order 15
Arcane Knowledges: Folk 5, Life 3, Metal 3
Spells: *Charm, communicate with animal*
Equipment: Able has access to any and all equipment available in Selastos or Galitia, and much that isn't. His net worth cannot be calculated, but he is believed to have at least 500,000 selasts in liquid capital at any given time.

Background Notes: Able has vast amounts of wealth and contacts with everyone of importance in Selastos. He has grown increasingly reclusive since he began taking an interest in Chaotic magics.

Roleplaying Notes: Able has taken his share of chances to get where he is, but they have always been rational ones, well thought out before being attempted. His dabblings with Chaotic and Oathbreaker magic have not been, and could spell danger for Order in Selastos.

THE DISTRICTS

Selastos is divided into five districts, ranging from a haven for the wealthy to a hole for the poor and insane. In between can be found much of what one expects from a thriving city and the unforgettable sight of the Taxim Quarter.

PALAH

Selastos' smallest district, Palah sits on the northwestern end of the city. It's here that Able, Terenzia and Link maintain their palatial homes. If the average guy dreams of one day being able to afford a home in Gaskill, he dreams of getting to drive through Palah sometime. Along with the Big Three, top executives of their companies, a few independently wealthy sorcerers, most of the Council of Elders and Norbert Rees live here.

Palah maintains a well-trained private security force to keep the riff-raff out. While they don't technically have the powers of a sentinel, no one in authority makes much of a fuss if they rough up a trespasser or two. A little beating and a lot of intimidation — or the other way around — is usually enough to discourage anyone who doesn't belong in the neighborhood. (Most sentinels dislike these private agents, calling them "Palah pisspoors" among other, unprintable things.)

Someone entering Palah by invitation will usually be driven in his host's elemental limo. Walking anywhere in this district is asking to get picked up and questioned by for an hour or six.

ALCHEMISTS' ROW

Financial center of Selastos, Alchemists' Row never actually played host to any of that craft. But older cities like Galitia saw their banking areas evolve from alchemists' quarters where gold and silver were produced every week out of raw materials. The name stuck long after those businesses had moved elsewhere and banks, churches and the like had moved in.

During the week, this area is jammed with bankers, guildsmen, streetsingers and others who work with money or for those who have it. At night and on weekends, this section is completely deserted, save for patrolling sentinels and a few street people.

Daily traffic jams between the Row and Gaskill led to a brief experiment with teleportation spells to get workers home. Unfortunately, most of the initial volunteers rematerialized in their living rooms minus arms, legs or other important parts, lost in transit. The Elders have turned to mass transit and other less dangerous means of easing the problem.

GASKILL

Selastos' middle-class residential area and business district. Apartment buildings make up a huge semi-circle facing the eastern section of the city, with rents higher the closer you get to the borders of Palah and Alchemists' Row. Pricier buildings

ARCHER SAYS

Big houses. Big pools. Nice, thick doors and lots of wards to keep the real world out and all the owners' little secrets in. The only difference between a rich guy and a poor one is one sins indoors and gets called "respectable" and one does it outdoors and gets labelled a bum.

Pass through Palah and you'll wind up with more questions than answers. These people don't believe in talking straight, even to themselves. Whatever they hire you for isn't what they really want done, count on it.

Biggest danger to Selastos isn't in some Oasis whorehouse or Taxim Quarter alley — it's right here. Palah is where the boredom of the rich meets enough gold to pay for anything or pay off anyone. And that combination always means trouble.

enjoy relatively good upkeep and expensive wards and doorseals afford some security to the tenants. Some older buildings are beginning to run down and less desirable elements — necromancers, bloodmages, and the like — are beginning to drift in.

At the heart of Gaskill are the marketplaces. Food brought in from the farms beyond the walls, clothing, spell scrolls and components, upscale sorcery schools, and some luxury goods can be found here. Prices for the latter are high in Selastos, since there is no port to ensure consistent delivery of goods. Although the major players in the trading game know of the gate to Galitia, that trip is still a dangerous one and convoys have a habit of getting lost.

While weapons can be bought at the Gaskill markets, most of the smiths are based in Deranus. Guns can be bought at a discount there, if one is willing to risk traveling into that district. There's also a fair amount of high-class vice in Gaskill, with 'shifter "escorts" always in demand

and expensive Tarrik liquors (smuggled in to avoid paying duty) sold in the back rooms of countless shops.

This section is also home to Selastos' only newspaper, the *Conjurer*. In addition to printing a daily, the *Conjurer* employs streetsingers in every neighborhood (even the Taxim Quarter).

Gaskill's markets never close. Few, if any, of the merchants give credit, and never to strangers. Gaskill is also one of the strongholds of support for Order in the city, since those who trade in goods and gold much prefer stability.

OASIS

The red-stone district of Selastos, Oasis is where the Alchemists' Row bankers, Gaskill merchants and Palah rich boys come when they need a little diversion. Every block in the district has a few buildings marked with red glowstones, a sign that sex is for sale inside. Prostitutes — Human, 'shifter and succubus — can be had here for far less than Gaskill call-girls.

Officially, both Elders and sentinels frown on this district, and certainly local law spends more than its share of time down here on business. Oasis, they point out, is a haven for criminals and 'breed pimps, where violence is almost constant. While some of the women — particularly the succubi — are working the streets because they choose to, many of the others are poor, addled by sorceries that went wrong, or kidnapped from Galitia.

Despite all this, Oasis has never been shut down. Both Link and Able have made it clear to the Elders that their miners need someplace to rest and recreate, and Terenzia gets a cut of the money Rees makes off his stables here. So Oasis remains, and newcomers to the city who need information could do worse than visit here. The streetwalkers give out with more information than the average streetsinger, although their services cost a good deal more. But be warned — ask the wrong questions too loudly and a few Gris will likely pay you a visit. Odds are they'll take turns slamming you into a wall to see what breaks first, the brick or your skull.

Oasis also boasts a few streets filled with those whose brains were fried by bad spells. By and large, these people are harmless, being closer to vegetable than animal. But now and then one gets violent and has to be put down. If

Dan Schaefer

GETTING AROUND SELASTOS

Being a relatively young city, Selastos was built to accommodate autos with wide streets (though finding your way around without a working knowledge of the place or a good road map can be a nightmare. Some say the architect was possessed by a particularly spiteful demon when he laid out the avenues, which might explain why he threw himself under the wheels of a railrunner right after he finished the job).

Though animal-drawn carts are allowed in the city limits, they're confined to the east side (most often seen in Deranus) and the parks. Mass transit is provided by railrunners, large, open cars that travel over tracks in the middle of the street. All railrunners in Selastos are powered by elemental magic, and an underground tunnel system for them is still under construction. A railrunner can accommodate up to fifty people safely, but travels at only about ten kilometers per hour. People who need to get around quickly are better off hailing a cab (providing you can find one not being driven by a Taxim. The dead are notoriously bad drivers).

Railrunner cars are notorious for being crowded and uncomfortable, not to mention the problem of passengers being exposed to whatever stench happens to be wafting down the street. But it's cheap and practical and AbleRunner strikes have been rare since that guild leader was pulled apart by two cars a decade or so ago.

Railrunner fares are two gold selasts. A fortune in other cities, the gold selast is equal to the price of a cheap meal, a stiff drink ... or half the fare on a railrunner.

MONEY AND ECONOMY

It's only natural that a city sitting practically on top of several rich gold mines would have an abundance of the stuff. Gold coins, called *selasts*, are used for small purchases (they come in one and five selast denominations). Larger purchases are made with gold certificates, which a bank will provide in exchange for the raw metal (providing, of course, you have an account. If you don't, it may take a little longer to convince them that that honest face of yours isn't the result of an alteration spell).

Gold is the backbone of Selastos' economy as well. While they do export other things, like Scorpius crystal sets, most of the outside capital that comes into the city is from gold purchases by Galitian banks. Other products produced in Selastos (though rarely exported) are automobiles (both steam and elementally powered), hand tools and amulets (most with some sort of ward or basic elemental spell focused in).

Silver, in Selastos, has a value about equal to gold — but it is not accepted as readily. Silver is often seen as a "secondary" or "outside" metal. Certain traders (particularly alchemists) will pay heavily for it, but your average man on the street sees a silver coin as a pain to get exchanged.

Deranus is the site of the city's oldest buildings and has been in decline for two decades or so. Crime is common here; honest sorcerers work side by side with dangerous charlatans; alchemists not good enough to get jobs with Scorpius practice their experiments in dwellings that are little better than tinderboxes; gambling houses take away what money the laborers bring home. Entire blocks are burnt out and home to bums, homeless ex-laborers, and the insane. There's a rumor that one Wilderness creature slipped into the city and has taken up residence among these ruins.

Deranus is also home to Selastos' weaponsmiths and cut-rate mages. This is the place to come for guns, knives, brass knuckles and anything else you might need, ensorcelled or not, as well as runeslugs and other ammo. Around here, they don't care about who you are or what you plan to use it for — only the color of your gold.

THE TAXIM QUARTER

A small district in the extreme eastern part of the city, the Taxim Quarter is at best an embar-

the sentinels are in a forgiving mood, they'll let him live and just kick him out of the city. Most of them die eventually in the Wilderness, some survive to become bandits, others stumble on the gate and try to get into Galitia.

Jervis Belasc makes his home in this neighborhood.

DERANUS

This is the industrial center of Selastos and a residential area for the lower classes. Scorpius Crystals has its plant here, as does Cresken Amulets and other small firms. Ramshackle buildings crammed *together serve as homes* for the city's Human labor force and those Unnaturals who can pass.

STREETSINGERS

Streetsingers are a common sight in more than a few of Marl's cities, though they sometimes go by other names ("sidewalk singers," "newscallers," and "town criers" are some popular ones). They are combination newscaster/entertainers, usually employed by the city or the local press. Their primary job is to belt out enough of the headlines to get you curious about the details. If the city's got a message it needs to get out fast — say, alternate side of the street demon conjuration has been suspended for the day — streetsingers are the means it uses to do that.

Of course, streetsingers don't make much money, so many sing popular tunes, play an instrument, or stage little acts to get some spare change. A few dabble in black market goods or prostitution on the side, and virtually all sell "privy" information. Prostitution is most common in Deranus, since the better neighborhoods won't tolerate it and the flesh peddlers in Oasis will cut independents to teach them a lesson.

Then there are the grifters, experts at faking accidents and then magnanimously taking payoffs to keep quiet from worried drivers. This is the only side activity sure to get a streetsinger fired if he or she's caught.

STANDARD STREETSINGER

AGILITY 8
Dodge 11, maneuver 10, melee combat 9, melee parry 12, stealth 11
DEXTERITY 8
Prestidigitation 9
ENDURANCE 9
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 8
INTELLECT 8
Perception 9
MIND 7
Scholar: Selastos 10
CONFIDENCE 10
Con 11, intimidation 11, streetwise 13, survival: urban 11, willpower 11
CHARISMA 10
Charm 12, persuasion 11, taunt 11
Additional Skills: two at +1 adds, commonly magic, knowledge or entertainment skills
Life Points: 2–5
Equipment: Technically, streetsingers are not supposed to be armed, but most carry a .22 or a blackjack for protection. Some carry "quickshot" impressed spells in rings or palm-gloves, used to blind an attacker long enough to get away. Some have musical instruments and props.

Roleplaying Notes: Streetsingers spend most of their time outdoors, in all kinds of weather. That means they either develop hardy constitutions (like this sample character) or they sicken and die from pneumonia and the like. They range in nature from the naive and innocent to the hardened and cynical and are the best sources of information in any Marl city. They will usually sell information to anyone who wants to buy, though the smart streetsinger develops a reputation for keeping his or her mouth shut when certain parties are involved.

rassment, at worst, a plague spot. In return for their labors, the Taxim were allowed a neighborhood of their own (in part, because no Human wanted to live around them). And a Human who makes a wrong turn and wanders into this section will never forget it, if he survives to walk out.

Go down these mean streets and you're in another world. Every kind of vice den can be found, amidst narrow avenues cluttered with buildings that provide little more than shelter from the elements. The few markets peddle meat that might look uncomfortably familiar to a Human, although the merchants would never admit it. The only sight more common than bars are churches, dedicated to any one a hundred minor Chaotic gods or devils. No one outside of the Quarter knows just what rites go on there — no one's ever had the guts to ask.

Non-Taxim visitors to the Quarter are targets for suspicion, hostility, sometimes violence. Disappear down there and you won't be seen again — and don't hold your breath waiting for sentinels to come looking for you. Free passage through the district can be bought with liquor, guns, or your services. Taxim sometimes want things that can only be found in the more upscale neighborhoods, where they're not welcome, and a living go-between comes in handy.

Think of the Taxim themselves as the result of a deal. Humans want cheap labor that won't start bitching every time a toe gets stubbed, a muscle gets pulled or a limb gets cut off. Low-level demons — or "disincarnate entities," as the politically correct call them — want a stiff drink, a good cigar and a woman. To get what they want, some Humans are willing to let their dead play host to things that never lived, and the demons are willing to confine themselves to corpses and dig in the mines.

Taxim have a number of advantages over stan-

Karl Waller

dard zombies. For one thing, Taxim don't rot. The decomposition of the body stops the minute a spirit takes possession. Should the demon depart, the shell will fall apart.

In addition, the demons have at least some intelligence — they're not overly bright, but then, Zombies have the awareness of your average brick.

This intelligence is also their down side. Some Taxim are accomplished scam artists and will sing you a long, sad song about their dead mother who needs a hundred selasts to be reanimated. Next thing you know, your wallet is empty and the Taxim is heading away from the cemetery to have a time.

Their brains also explain why Taxim unionized in an effort to get better working conditions and some protection from Human discrimination. It's been a mixed success — but while they haven't gotten anywhere near all they wanted, they do know that they have the power to shut the mines down, at least temporarily. Their employers know it, too, which is why some Taxim excesses are ignored by the city.

STANDARD TAXIM MINER

AGILITY 8
Climbing 9, dodge 9, melee combat 10, unarmed combat 9
DEXTERITY 9
Fire combat 10

ARCHER SAYS

Don't get me wrong — I ain't prejudiced against anybody, least of all some dead guy. But if you believe what the streetsingers say, Taxim are about as low as you get. You gotta remember that the things inside of them are *demons* — nasty, lying little creeps who wouldn't know an honest thought if it bit them on the tail.

You want to get robbed? Hit a Taxim card game — when they run out of dough, they start breaking off fingers and toes to use as chips … yours, if you ain't fast enough. You want to get plague? Find yourself a Taxim whorehouse — the women are living, but not by much, and it's enough to turn your stomach.

Their guild leaders make a big stench of the "poor, oppressed undead." Well, I've seen them shambling down the street, bottles of booze in their hands, scaring some Human rube by hugging him like he's a long-lost brother. And you couldn't pay me enough to go back there …

ENDURANCE 11
Resist shock 11
STRENGTH 12
Lifting 15
TOUGHNESS 11 (14)
INTELLECT 7
Perception 9, science: mining 10, trick 9
MIND 7
CONFIDENCE 9
Con 10, intimidation 10, streetwise 10, willpower 10
CHARISMA 5
Taunt 9
Additional Skills: three at +1 adds
Life Points: 4–8
Background Notes: Taxim are allowed 1CI, 2CII, and 2CIII. This particular specimen purchased the Advantage "Special Abilities (CIII): Toughened Skin" to add +3 to his Toughness. Likely Compensations include "Prejudice" (they must take at least "Prejudice (CII)" in addition to any other Compensations) and others relating to his grotesque appearance. Taxim may be player characters.

Roleplaying Notes: The demonic side of the Taxim is not much explored. It seems that when they inhabit a body, they take on many characteristics of the dead person — though not all. This leads many ignorant people to believe that the Taxim are actually the dead person, reanimated with part of his or her "old soul."

THE CULTS

Being a younger city, you wouldn't expect Selastos to have quite as many cults as a larger burg like Galitia. But the lure of gold is enough to draw people from other places, and they bring their religions with them. Add to that the "culture" of Taxim and you've got an often pretty rank spiritual stew.

Below, we'll look at some of the bigger cults in the city. But keep in mind that these are by no means all of them — men of the cloth and men of the flesh are all over Selastos, and if they can get two or more of their friends in a room at the same time, they've got a religion going.

THE CULT OF ISON

The largest and most devout group dedicated to a god of Order in Selastos, the cult of Ison is a transplant from somewhere else — maybe a lot of somewhere elses. It's a great deal older than the city it now thrives in and its membership includes many of the movers and the casters.

Worship of Ison is more … refined than it used to be. Attend one of their services (they're open to

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the public, at least some of the time) and you'll spot a silver cauldron resting in the middle of the room. In the old days, worshipers who offended Ison (or that esteemed deity's priests) were beheaded and tossed into the cauldron to boil. Naturally, this isn't done today, but some of the carvings on the church walls depict the agonies of those who dared sleep in on the sabbath.

Nowadays, the priest doesn't need to get his hands dirty. The congregation is plenty powerful enough to handle any threats, from within or without. Cross enough Ison followers and nasty rumors might start about you. Your boss, your landlord, the sentinel on the beat might hear whispered that your father was a slaver, your mother a 'breed, and your sister sells her wares to the living and the dead. Next, someone — no one will remember who — will casually mention that you've been acting strangely since your last trip out of the city. Of course, you couldn't have a Wilderness creature inside you … could you?

With enough parishioners talking, and a fair amount of gold to help spread the stories along, it won't be long before the city fathers are making noises about moving you out. Refuse to leave and they'll call you a "threat to yourself and others." That means exile for certain, or a bullet (which they'll write off as "shot trying to return").

The Ison cult has a lot to do with the current stalemate in the city between Order and Chaos. It was the big money behind this religion that funded the recruitment of non-aligned, both Human and Unnatural, and checked Chaotic efforts to seize control.

Unlike many Order cults, Ison does not make a big effort to keep a tight rein on its members. Its clerics take the gamble that the faithful will stay that way, and more often than not, it pays off. And when things start to slip, a sermon on the meanings of the cauldron and the carvings is enough to bring people back into line.

Ison clerics are trained in *photomancy* magic, with emphasis on *light* spells.

THE CULT OF SAER

Saer is a Chaotic demon whose legendary powers — most involving the transmutation elements — make him an appealing deity for alchemists to worship. The majority of Selastos' scientist/sorcerers make periodic attempts to conjure up Saer, so far without success, and leave offerings at his churches in the hope of gaining favor.

This marriage of a Chaotic entity and alchemists is an unusual one, since the latter have to depend on the predictability of the properties of certain elements in their work. But Saer's clerics teach that it's the introduction of Chaos — random chance, strange combinations of ingredients — into a potion that makes it work. Alchemy, they

say, with its emphasis on radically altering stable elements, is inherently anti-Order. That tune seems to have taken, and a customer at the Gaskill alchemical markets can expect that a percentage of the gold he shells out will find its way back to the church.

All of this does produce one benefit for the alchemists, in that the church takes steps to ensure that needed ingredients find their way into the city. Cinnabar, magnesium and other hard-to-find elements can be had, albeit expensively, in Selastos because of this. (Of course, Ison and other Order cults would like nothing better than to cut off this flow of supplies, if only to diminish the standing of Saer. But the Chaotics change their suppliers and routes almost daily, using both legitimate sources and talented smugglers, making it difficult to shut them down.)

Unlike Ison and its omnipresent cauldron, Saer followers don't bother to threaten violence. They either do it or they don't, and there's no way of predicting just what will set them off. One second-story man who broke into a Saer church (by mistake) and stole some cash found himself caught, feted, and praised by all for his ability to successfully sneak in. They sent him on his way, both stomach and pockets full, and it was five weeks before the faithful changed their minds and had him skinned.

Saer clerics are usually trained in *elemental* magic or *wizardry*.

THE CULT OF GHAZERETH

Small and secretive, the existence of this cult is known to only a few in Selastos. And even its members are unsure whether Ghazereth, as an actual deity, even exists, or whether he was imagined at some point so that the cult could have something to hang its beliefs on.

Ghazareth worshipers are members of an Oathbreaker sect that drifted from the ranks of Order some years ago. They are almost all technomancers who merge their magic with machinery and dabble in alchemy as something of a sideline. Interestingly, some of their creations — particularly a set of attractive, female golems made entirely of silver — have found their way into the homes and offices of high-ranking Order believers in Selastos and elsewhere.

It's hard to say just how much of a threat to outsiders Ghazareth followers might be. On the one hand, they don't have the history of bloodshed that the Ison cult has, or the sheer love of it that the Saer cult maintains. On the other, they know full well that their exposure would make things hot enough to melt iron and probably force them to flee the city. They rationalize disposing of enemies of the cult by saying it's all in the name of research.

For example, long before they created metallic golems, the Ghazareths experimented with Humans transformed to silver to see if that metal would adapt well to the demands of upright, bipedal living. Naturally, none of the test subjects lived very long … but long enough, as things turned out.

Ghazareth has no church dedicated to him that you can find, but that doesn't mean one doesn't exist. Each basement, rooftop, and back room where these Oathbreakers pursue their craft is, in effect, a little shrine to this deity of metal and flesh.

Ghazareth believers normally have some background in *technomancy* (and possibly alchemy) and the majority have knowledge of the arcane knowledge *metal*.

STANDARD SILVER GOLEM
AGILITY 10
Dodge 11, maneuver 11, melee combat 13, unarmed combat 12
DEXTERITY 10
Missile weapons 11
ENDURANCE 10
STRENGTH 12
TOUGHNESS 15
INTELLECT 5
MIND 5
CONFIDENCE 5
Willpower 10
CHARISMA 5
Life Points: None
Equipment: Silver dagger, damage value STR+3/18; some golems have *dagger* spells focused into them (max. five charges), which allows them to form knives from the palms of their hands. These can be used as throwing daggers.

Description: Silver golems are activated using a version of the *create golem* spell, though their stats are often different. They are artificial beings powered by technomancy and the arcane knowledge *metal* applies to them. They have no will of their own but will carry out orders given by their owner implicitly.

SELASTOS ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following are a pair of adventure hooks you can use your *Bloodshadows* campaign off to a roaring start. Each requires fleshing out, but the basics of the plots are summarized here.

A FLASH OF SILVER

The characters are hired by a local industrialist to find his missing daughter. She's been gone a week, and he'd rather keep the sentinels out of it (the scandal might ruin an impending deal with AbleMines). He gives them a conjure sphere that can produce her image on command and a little advice:

Audreana is wild and unpredictable, and there's no telling what trouble she might have gotten into. The only clue he can provide is an address found partially dissolved in her wastebasket.

The address is for an apartment in Oasis in a building that's seen better days. The alchemist who lived there is dead, the place ransacked, but the searcher wasn't very skilled. He missed a warded box full of sketches and measurements relating to Audreana and the beginnings of an alchemical formula to stick a Human soul in a homunculus. The killer also left a little something behind: a silver dagger in the alchemist's back, with a silver hand still attached to it.

Questioning the locals reveals that Audreana had been in and out of the apartment several times, usually accompanied by a local Gris nicknamed "Mudsack." When the characters find him, he proves less than willing to cooperate. When he does agree to talk (through bribery, intimidation, whatever), he tells them Audreana didn't get snatched — she arranged the whole thing with the old man's driver to get some money out of him (a ransom note would have come eventually). Unfortunately for her, her friend owed a lot more than she did in gambling debts and sold her to a technomancer in the Taxim Quarter. He, in turn, rented her out to interested parties, with the Gris acting as go-between.

As for the alchemist, he never mentioned he was planning on recreating her as a homunculus — that would be extra. He offered the Gris gold to put the snatch on her for some ritual or other, and when her new owner got wind, he had the alchemist iced.

There follows a trip to the Taxim Quarter — give the player characters a chance to take in that stale air and see as many sights as their stomach can stand. After some up-close looks at the world of the Undead, they locate their technomancer, who's a Taxim himself. Audreana is ensorcelled and probably won't be much help, but the metalmage's silver servants (including one missing a hand) should be enough to keep the characters busy …

COLD STEEL

The characters are hired by a woman to locate her missing husband, a metalworker who vanished while doing a job, the nature of which he refused to discuss with her. Now she fears the worst.

The player characters begin to dig and discover that their quarry was much more than just a smith — he was, in fact, an accomplished technomancer, a fact he had hidden from his wife. He was part of a growing Oathbreaker movement in Selastos. But something has badly frightened his comrades, so much so that they refuse to discuss where he might have gone or what he was working on.

As the characters get closer to the truth, they realize what a dangerous truth it is. The missing man had been hired by a front man for a representative of a secretary (etc., etc.) of Jon Able. He was supposed to teach Able some of the principles of technomancy, and may well have done so — but there was no way Able was going to let him walk out afterwards.

And what is the secret of those strange, metallic sculptures that now dot the lawn of Able's estate, anyway?

Dan Schaefer

CHAPTER FIVE

CHARACTER CREATION

Vera's instructions were simple: she was supposed to take Deacon to a motel in the Oasis section and wait for a call. Nice and easy.

As they pulled up in front of the Blue Note Hotel, Deacon slipped her the revolver. "Put this in your little black mesh bag, sister. Your boss might have somebody watching, and I'm supposed to be the prisoner, remember?"

Vera's eyes gleamed like two ice-cold diamonds as she took the gun. "And what's to stop me from shooting you right now? I'll tell 'em you tried to escape, that's what I'll do."

Deacon smiled. "Not unless you're murder with a cantrip, kid. I took the bullets out of it." He opened his fist and showed her the six slugs in his palm. "You really gotta stop being so trusting, Vera. It's gonna land you in trouble one of these days."

They went into the lobby, a dark, smelly hole whose only occupant was a wolf breed. He was sitting behind the desk, watching a soft-core conjurevid. He took a break from his busy schedule to give them a key.

They'd put the bed in first and built the room around it, or at least that's how it looked. The bedspread was stained and one of the glowstones was on the verge of burning out. Not so the neon sign across the street, which splashed red light through the window every ten seconds. The place had all the romance of a a dentist casting *drill*.

"Now what?" Vera asked, sitting on the edge of the bed and looking sullen. Deacon had reclaimed the gun and was putting the ammo back in.

"We wait for the call," he said, nodding toward the phone in the corner. "The furball downstairs dropped a selast on us the minute we were out of the room, you can bet on that. They know we're here."

They didn't have to wait long. There was a harsh sound, part ring, part buzz. Vera reached for the receiver, but Deacon held up a hand. "Remember — I fell for it like an amateur, went for the ride, and everything's jake. We don't want *to get your friend* nervous."

Vera nodded and picked up the phone. She mouthed a curt, "Hello" and listened for a second. Deacon saw her eyes widen and heard a choking sound come from her mouth. A second later, he caught the smell of burning flesh.

Reflex took over where reason failed. He hit the floor as the fireball exploded out of the receiver, the flames consuming Vera completely but leaving the bed untouched. It was over in the longest few seconds he had ever lived, when her charred skeleton crumbled to ash.

In this section, we'll discuss how to create characters for use in *Bloodshadows*, with special emphasis on generating creature player characters. Before reading this chapter, look through the Character Creation and Background Generation chapters of the *MasterBook* rule book, which provides the basics of the character creation system.

The first and most important thing to remember when creating a *Bloodshadows* character is that you will have to roleplay him or her. That means you want to look beyond the skill points and Background Advantages and Compensations and think in terms of what the day to day problems are for that being. If you're playing a bloodsucker or a shapeshifter, think about how he is reacted to by others and what special problems he may face. Remember, just because the people of a city may be aware that such things live in their midst, that doesn't mean they accept it or are uniformly happy about it.

Keep in mind, also, that the gamemaster should be a part of the character creation process. The information she provides about the nature of the game universe can be invaluable to crafting the history of your character. Also, she should be consulted when generating a creature to ensure that your character will not threaten the balance of the game.

THE BASICS

All characters in *Bloodshadows* begin with 68 Attribute points. The number of beginning skill points is found in the same manner as specified in the *MasterBook* rule book (Chapter One, "Character Creation").

Attribute maximums for all characters in *Bloodshadows* is 13. Characters who wish to exceed this maximum must choose specific Background Advantages listed below and in *MasterBook*.

All characters begin with five Life Points.

ALIGNMENT

Players may choose to have their characters aligned to one of the four factions of the Godwar. This is not required — it is purely optional on the part of the player.

Having a particular alignment makes it easier to do certain magic spells, and more difficult to do others. It also can have story effects: a character aligned to Chaos who is operating in a primarily Order city may encounter a certain amount of hostility and even outright violence.

The four possible alignments are: Order, Chaos,

Oathbreaker/Order and Oathbreaker/Chaos. They are explained in detail in Chapter Two, "The Godwar." Alignments' effects on magic are explained in Chapter Seven, "Magic."

When a player chooses an alignment for his character, the character automatically gets one free add in that alignment (you'll notice that some of the templates in the back of this book have "Order 1," "Chaos 1," etc. to indicate their alignments. Note that alignments do not work off of any particular Attribute, but stand alone.)

Additional adds in alignments cannot be purchased — they must be earned. A character earns an add in his alignment by performing a service that benefits the followers of that alignment. In other words, an Order character who is hired to do a job by a leading Order adherent in his city, and performs it successfully, might receive an add in Order — it is completely up to the gamemaster when adds are given out.

If a neutral characters decides, at some point, to take on an alignment, they must perform a service for that alignment to gain that first add. Initial adds can only be gotten for free during the character creation process.

Characters may also choose to change their alignments once play has begun. A character must first "work off" his current alignment adds, by performing services that go against its interests. Each such task performed eliminates one add. Once all have been erased, the character may begin earning adds in his new alignment.

> *Example: Tom's character, Shadow, has two adds in Order, but is increasingly tempted by the philosophy of the Chaotics. He undertakes two jobs successfully for the local Chaotics and so erases both Order adds. The next job he does for the Chaotics will earn him an add in Chaos.*

Characters never have to accept alignment adds if they do not choose to. For example, a mixed party of Order and Chaotics take a job safeguarding a supply caravan for the local Chaotic head. At the end of the mission, Chaotics may choose to accept an extra add in their alignment, but Order characters may refuse to lose an add in theirs. In addition, neutral characters who wish to maintain that neutrality would be unlikely to accept adds in an alignment.

Players should be made aware of the story effects that alignments can inspire. A character known for performing great feats in the service of Chaos, say, is going to find himself a target for Order. They may attempt to recruit him — they may be satisfied with just killing him. There are drawbacks as well as benefits to having an alignment.

BACKGROUND OPTIONS

Before beginning this section, read Chapter Two of *MasterBook*, "Background Generation." It will give you some of the basics of choosing Advantages and Compensations for your character. Advantages and Compensations listed below are *in addition to* those listed in *MasterBook*, unless otherwise noted.

Human characters, and those creatures created that are not listed in the "Denizens of Marl" chapter, usually begin with three Column One, two Column Two, and one Column Three Advantages and a matching number of Compensations. The rules for selecting Advantages and Compensations are listed in Chapter Two of *MasterBook*, "Background Generation."

The "Bloodshadows Advantage List" and the "Bloodshadows Compensation List" show which Advantages and Compensations may be selected by characters created for use in the world of Marl.

BACKGROUND ADVANTAGES

The following are special rules for Advantages used in the world of Marl. They are used in addition to those found in *MasterBook*.

SPECIAL ABILITIES (CIII & CIV)

In *MasterBook*, there is a CIII and a CIV "Special Abilities" option. In *Bloodshadows*, "Special Abilities" are broken down even further. Each level of Advantage has two lists of possible talents or traits from which the player can choose for his character. This allows players and gamemaster to create even more interesting creature characters.

A player who chooses either column of "Special Abilities" may choose **two** talents from List A or **one** from List B.

> *Example: Ron is building an amphibious being as a player character, and he decides to choose "Special Abilities (CIII)" as a Column III Advantage. Under that designation, he can take two talents or traits from List A or one from List B. Ron chooses "water breathing" and "environmental tolerance (of cold)" from List A.*

Below, you'll find a sample list of "Special Abilities." This is by no means an exhaustive list — gamemasters and players should feel free to make up new abilities as they go along, using these as models.

Make sure you consult with your gamemaster and get her approval for the "Special Abilities" you've chosen for your character. And remember that the more strange powers your character evidences, the more he will stand out from Humanity and the more hostility he may encounter.

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For the sake of convenience, those "Special Abilities" listed in *MasterBook* are also reprinted here.

SPECIAL ABILITIES (CIII)

When a character chooses "Special Abilities (CIII)," he may either select **two** Special Abilities from List A or **one** Special Ability from List B.

LIST A

Armor-Defeating Attack: When attacking characters protected by armor with natural weapons (the character's fists, claws, teeth, etc.), this ability negates the adds of that armor, up to +10. The character must specify how the attack negates the armor: an acidic mist might slip through any openings, enchanted claws reach directly to the flesh, etc. There should be at least one type of armor that is unaffected by this (for example, armor made entirely out of bone or silver, or armor that has been blessed by a specific cult of Marl).

Atmospheric Tolerance: The character can breathe one form of atmosphere that would be lethal to most other characters.

Enhanced Senses: One of the character's five senses is heightened *to abnormal levels*. The character receives a maximum of +3 bonus to relevant skill totals.

Environmental Tolerance: The character can survive comfortably at one environmental extreme — heat, cold, etc. — to a much greater extent than a normal person. For example, the person might be able to live in the arctic unprotected or survive in

the desert under the broiling sun.

Multiple Abilities I: A character might have multiple "minor" abilities that are increased by a special ability. For example, a character could have "eyestalks" that give him a +1 bonus to *perception* attempts that would negate surprise, the ability to focus his ears on particular types of noises (+1 bonus when listening for particular sounds), and fingers that are very sensitive to subdermal motion (+1 bonus to lock picking against safes with moving tumblers). All the bonuses should be fairly limited in their applications, pertaining to only specific uses of particular skills (like specializations do), but there can be several of them for each selection.

Long Life Span: The character is "virtually immortal." Often, this Advantage has an Advantage Flaw attached that governs what the character must do to maintain his life. The character should gain peripheral bonuses during game play because of his "longer outlook."

Omnivorousness: The character is capable of gaining nourishment from any organic substance (though he is not immune to poisons).

Silence: The character is able to move in complete silence. He gains +5 to all *stealth* checks.

Speed: The character is extremely fast, adding +1 to one of his movement rates, increasing the MAX value by one as well.

***Up* Condition:** The character operates as if *up* under certain proscribed conditions. The condition should be a common one, but one that is naturally absent at least half the time or one that can be countered. Examples are sunlight, darkness cold and heat. Often, the character will have a vulnerability to the opposite condition from that which causes his *up* (i.e., a character who gets an *up* from darkness might have a vulnerability to sunlight).

Water Breathing: The character can breathe water and is immune to drowning in it. He gains +2 to all *swimming* rolls.

LIST B

Animal Control I: This gives the character the ability to control one particular species of animal, bird or insect. The character has an *animal control* value of Confidence +10. He must generate an *animal control* total versus the Mind of the animal (more than one animal can be targeted, although this is a multi-action). The results are read on the "Charm/Persuasion" Column of the Interaction and Combat Results Table." If the character gets a high enough success (gamemaster's option), the animal is controlled for a time value equal to the *animal control* skill total, as read on the Value Chart. A controlled animal will serve its master faithfully, even sacrificing itself on his behalf. The power has

a range of sight or voice.

Note: A swarm of insects counts as *one* animal, as does a school of small fish. Any creature with a Mind value of less than 5 should be considered an animal, unless the gamemaster says otherwise (for example, a horse would be an animal, but a Zuvembie with a Mind of 1 would not).

Attribute Increase I: There is some strange ability that allows the character to gain +1 to one Attribute of his choice. This +1 also affects the normal maximum (13) for the Attribute value. So, if a character had a 13 Strength (the normal max), this would increase the value to 14 and the maximum value for the character would also be 14.

Note: This Advantage is in addition to the "Additional Attribute Point" advantage covered in *MasterBook*. It is included here because the vast majority of Unnaturals have Attributes higher than normal characters.

Blur: The character is able to appear indistinct to the naked eye or non-enchanted visual aids (binoculars, etc.). Commonly, a character with this Advantage will only be spotted out of the corner of the eye. This adds +3 to the character's *dodge* value, and may add to his *stealth* totals (gamemaster's option).

Combat Sense: The character can sense danger. He is never *completely surprised* (see Chapter Three, "Rules," in MasterBook) and, if *partially surprised*, he is treated as not surprised at all.

Glider Wings: The character can fly by drifting with air currents, provided there is sufficient wind (gamemaster's call). Characters with this Advantage will need the *flight* skill to control their passage.

Hardiness I: The character can take damage better than normal. Even though the character actually suffers the normal wound levels, the character acts as if he had suffered one wound level *less*. For example, a character who is *moderately wounded* suffers +2 to the difficulty number of all physical actions while *moderately wounded*. If that character had "Hardiness I," he would still perform as if only *lightly wounded* (no penalty). This Advantage is also used when the character attempts to heal damage, in relation to his healing time and his healing DNs. However, a character who takes enough wounds to be *dead* is still dead, regardless of how hardy he is.

Infravision/Ultravision: The character gains the ability to see in the dark using either infravision or ultravision. Infravision allows the character to see changes in heat, while ultravision gives the character a straight +2 to all *perception* rolls (offsetting a lot of the "darkness" modifiers) in the dark because he makes the most of available light or sees in another way.

BLOODSHADOWS ADVANTAGE LIST

COLUMN I

Additional Skill Adds (CI)	One add in general skill, two adds in specialization
Contacts (CI)	Character has a friend or friends who provide minor assistance
Cultures (CI)	Character gains knowledge of a foreign culture
Equipment (CI)	Character gains unusual equipment
Fame (CI)	Character has minor notoriety
Skill Bonus (CI)	+1 to a group of three related skills (modifier to bonus number only)
Wealth (CI)	Character is upper middle class

COLUMN II

Additional Skill Adds (CII)	Increase one general skill by two adds, or one specialization by three adds
Contacts (CII)	As Contacts I, but the "friend" is more influential
Cultures (CII)	The knowledge is more extensive than Cultures I or more in-depth
Equipment (CII)	The item is more valuable than Equipment I
Fame (CII)	The character is better known than "I"
Luck (CII)	The character can use certain card deck enhancements once per adventure
Skill Bonus (CII)	Gain +1 to the bonus number of five related skills
Trademark Specialization (CII)	The character gains +3 to the bonus number of any specialization, plus he is moderately "famous" for it (as "Fame I")
Wealth (CII)	The character is from the upper class

COLUMN III

Additional Skill Adds (CIII)	Increase one general skill by three adds, or one specialization by four adds
Additional Attribute Point (CIII)	Increase one Attribute by one point
Contacts (CIII)	The "friends" are extremely unusual and effective

COLUMN III CONTINUED

Cultures (CIII)	The character has "native knowledge" and interactive abilities in the culture
Equipment (CIII)	The equipment is artifactual in nature
Fame (CIII)	The character is almost always recognized as famous
Learning Curve (Positive)(CIII)	The character can improve skills at a cost of one skill point less after adventuring
Luck (CIII)	The character can choose from other card deck options to use during an adventure
Skill Bonus (CIII)	Gain +2 to the bonus number of three related skills or gain macroskill bonus (see text)
Special Abilities (CIII)*	Gain strange or unusual talent or ability (see text)
Special Effects (CIII)†	Gain the ability to use the special effects skill (or one such skill) as per the game setting
SupraNormal Knowledge (CIII)	The character can do something no one else can do (see text; +3 bonus is common)
Wealth (CIII)	The character is incredibly rich

COLUMN IV

Contacts (CIV)	The contacts are godlike
Cultures (CIV)	The character understands a completely alien culture
Equipment (CIV)	The character gains an artifact
Luck (CIV)	The character gains more use of his card deck enhancements (see text)
Skill Minimum (CIV)	Character always gains a +0 bonus number or better on three related skills
Special Abilities (CIV)*	More powerful than "I" (see text)

COLUMN V

See text in *MasterBook* rule book

*The Special Abilities (CIII) & (CIV) Advantages are handled differently in *Bloodshadows* than in *MasterBook*. See the text descriptions.

†All *Bloodshadows* characters may learn the magic skills as defined in Chapters Six and Eight without purchasing this Advantage.

BACKGROUND COMPENSATION LIST

COLUMN I

Advantage Flaw (CI)	There is a limitation or drawback to one of the character's Advantages (see text)
Age (CI)	The character is older or younger than his prime
Bad Luck (CI)	The character is unlucky; usually when the character rolls a die total of "2," he is affected (see text)
Bigotry (CI)	The character is a minor bigot in some way
Cultural Unfamiliarity (CI)	Character is "out of his element"
Debt (CI)	Character owes a small debt to someone
Employed (CI)	Character has a job that takes away some of his freedom of choice
Enemy (CI)	The character has a minor enemy
Handicap (CI)	The character has a minor physical or mental handicap that adds +2 to the DN of five or more related skills
Infamy (CI)	The character is a minor "villain"
Prejudice (CI)	The character suffers as an object of minor prejudice
Poverty (CI)	The character begins the game as poor, with substandard and limited equipment
Price (CI)	There is a "price" to a character's Advantage
Quirk (CI)	The character suffers from a personality or physical quirk that makes his life a little more difficult

COLUMN II

Advantage Flaw (CII)	There is a significant limitation to one of the character's Advantages (see text)
Age (CII)	The character is very old or very young (see text)
Bad Luck (CII)	The character is even more unlucky than "I" (see text)
Bigotry (CII)	The character is a serious bigot
Cultural Unfamiliarity (CII)	The character is from an alien culture and is significantly limited in cultural knowledge
Debt (CII)	The character owes a large debt to someone under dangerous circumstances
Employed (CII)	The character's "freedom" is virtually nonexistent because of his job
Enemy (CII)	The enemy is very powerful or always around
Handicap (CII)	Choose one physical or two mental Attributes and add +3 to the DN of all skill checks, except in very special circumstances

COLUMN II CONTINUED

Infamy (CII)	The character is, most likely, a criminal or thought of as an enemy of society
Language (CII)	The character does not understand the language of the area he is in
Learning Curve (Negative) (CII)	The costs for learning skills are doubled
Prejudice (CII)*	The character is the subject of fairly serious prejudice
Price (CII)	There is a much higher price to be paid (physical damage as an example) for using an Advantage
Quirk (CII)	The character has a much more often occuring or serious "personality flaw"

COLUMN III

Achilles' Heel (CIII)	The character has a vulnerability (see text)
Advantage Flaw (CIII)†	The flaw interferes with the use of the Advantage *and* provides an additional disadvantage
Burn-out (CIII)	Under certain circumstances, a particular Advantage goes away permanently
Bad Luck (CIII)	The character will suffer from *at least* a setback periodically (see text)
Cultural Unfamiliarity (CIII)	The character is a complete alien
Debt (CIII)	The character can gain no material goods — all must be turned over to a "lender" at the end of an adventure
Employed (CIII)	Character is, essentially, a slave
Enemy (CIII)	The enemy wants to kill the character and is very powerful
Handicap (CIII)	The character cannot perform many normal activities
Infamy (CIII)	The character will almost always be attacked or pursued
Quirk (CIII)	The character has a severe personality disorder

COLUMN IV

Advantage Flaw (CIV)†	The flaw interferes with or completely interrupts the use of an Advantage, in addition to having several negative effects.

*All non-Human characters gain this Compensation *in addition to* the Compensations they normally must take to balance their Advantages.

†These Compensations have been expanded or modified from the *MasterBook* versions.

Toughened Skin: The character has some natural armor. His own skin adds +3 to his Toughness. There should, however, be at least one type of relatively common damage (bullets, fire, etc.) that ignores this bonus.

Uncanny Aptitude I: This "Special Ability" is very similar to the "Skill Bonus" Advantage in that some sort of bizarre ability gives the character added bonuses to certain actions. However, instead of selecting a group of skills that the character gains a +1,+2 or +3 bonus to, the player and the gamemaster should work out *circumstances* where those abilities comes into play. An example might be a character who gains a +1 bonus to all Agility-related skills when in sunlight.

SPECIAL EFFECTS (CIII)

All characters in the world of Marl have the ability to learn magic. No character must, or may, take this Advantage — since it would do no good. Instead, the character can learn magical skills like any other skills. See Chapter Six and Chapter Seven for more information.

SPECIAL ABILITIES (CIV)

Bloodshadows characters who choose the "Special Abilities (CIV)" Advantage automatically receive the Compensation "Prejudice II" in addition to those they must choose for themselves, owing to the effect this display of their power will have on others. If the character is a creature, then he already receives this extra Compensation anyway, but a Human character with "Special Abilities (CIV)" would be treated as a non-Human in this respect.

LIST A

Accelerated Healing: The character heals faster than normal (see the rules for healing damage in Chapter Three of *MasterBook*, "Rules"). The character heals as if afflicted by one wound level *less* than he actually is. (A *mortally wounded* character would heal as if *incapacitated*.) In addition, shock damage and all other physical wound effects last *half* the normal time (minimum of 10 seconds, or one round).

Animal Control II: The same rules apply as for "Animal Control I," save that the character can control up to three species of animal, bird or insect.

Attack Form Resistance (Environmental): The character is highly resistant (TOU+10) to attacks involving extremes of heat or cold.

Attack Form Resistance (Interaction): The character is highly resistant to one specific type of non-physical attack, such as *trick, test, intimidation*, etc. (relevant Attribute +10 to resist attack).

Attack Form Resistance (Magical Attack): The character is highly resistant to one type of damage — either physical or mental — from sorcerous attack (relevant Attribute +10). Characters who wish to be immune to both physical and mental damage must purchase this Advantage twice.

Attack Form Resistance (Non-Enchanted Weapons): The character is highly resistant (TOU+10) to physical damage from non-enchanted weapons.

Attribute Increase II: The same as "Attribute Increase I," save that the character may add +2 to one Attribute or +1 to two Attributes of his choice. The normal maximum for that Attribute is increased as well.

Confusion: The character is able to scramble the thoughts of those it comes into physical contact with at will. *Willpower* total of 11 to resist. Charac-

SPECIAL ABILITIES AND THEIR VALUES

You want to build your own "Special Abilities," but aren't sure just what column or list they fall under. Here are some guidelines to help you along:

"Special Abilities I, List A": Abilities that are of only limited usefulness to the character. Examples of this might include a very long lifespan, resistance to one environmental extreme or the ability to breathe underwater.

"Special Abilities I, List B": An ability that gives the character a distinct advantage in certain limited situations. Examples of this might include wings that allow the character to glide; night vision; or the ability to go without eating or sleeping for a relatively short period of time.

"Special Abilities II, List A": The character has a very useful advantage. Examples of this might include the ability to regenerate shock damage at a rate of one point per round; wings; or an extra wound level before death; the ability to shapeshift into one specific form.

"Special Abilities II, List B": The character has an advantage *that is almost always* a factor or a "special effects" sort of ability. Examples of this might include natural armor; immunity to a specific form of damage; immunity to one sort of non-physical specific form of attack; the ability to teleport short distances; the ability to shapeshift into more than one form.

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ters so affected are considered to be *confused* — no card play — for two rounds. Gamemaster characters who are *confused* must perform nothing but the most obvious actions (attack, defend, etc.) and should not be allowed to formulate or execute plans.

Darkness: The character is capable of projecting a field of darkness in a three-meter radius around himself, adding +10 to the difficulty of any sight-based skill checks. The field can be maintained for a maximum of one minute before dispersing.

Fast Reactions: The character gains a +3 to his Agility or Confidence when determining initiative or, if the card deck is being used, he can choose to have a *haste* up to three times during the course of an adventure.

Fear: The character is capable of automatically (no skill roll required) provoking fear in those within a one meter radius around him (*willpower* total of 12 to resist). He gains +5 to all *intimidation* and *interrogation* checks against those so affected.

Flight: The character is able to fly, either by nature or by virtue of having wings. The character's movement rate is equal to his MRG (movement rate, ground) +1, to a maximum of 11.

Hardiness II: The rules for this are the same as for "Hardiness I," except the character gains an

"extra" wound level. If the character would normally have just sustained a wound pushing him into the *dead* condition (but not further), the character slips into a coma. The character will not die unless he takes another wound, but he will not wake up without medical assistance or over time (he should be treated as if *mortally wounded* for the purposes of healing, etc. — but he does not die from accumulated shock damage, unlike other characters).

Hypnotism: This ability gives the character the hypnosis skill at a value of MIN+15. Hypnosis rules work the same as outlined under the skill description in Chapter Four, "Skills and Skill Use," of *MasterBook*.

Multiple Abilities II: Similar to "Multiple Abilities I," save that the modifiers can now be in the +2 to +3 range (gamemaster's discretion).

Natural Armor: The character's skin is very tough or he has some sort of shell for protection. Add up to +6 (gamemaster's discretion) to Toughness when attacked.

Natural Sorcery I: The character is able to use one spell as a natural ability. An example of this would be a character who can sense the presence of undead by his nature, rather than through the use of *sense undead* spell.

The character should treat the use of the spell as

if it were a standard skill use at a value of the relevant magic skill's Attribute +3. For example, a character who wishes to have a *divination* spell as a natural ability using this Advantage would gain it at an effect value of his Intellect +3. This value cannot be increased unless his Intellect Attribute is increased at some point.

The player and the gamemaster will have to sit down and discuss what spell the character will have, and what the range, duration, etc. will be. It's suggested that some limitations be placed on the use of this ability to maintain game balance — for example, a character who can toss fireballs as a natural ability might have to recharge for a certain number of rounds between doing so (a small price to pay, considering that he doesn't have to worry about feedback).

Natural Weaponry (Hand-to-Hand): The character has some sort of natural weapon — claws, pincers, etc. — that adds up to +3 to his Strength when determining his damage (if he attacks using the weapon). This +3 is added in before the maximum damage for the character to is determined. "Natural Weaponry (HTH)" can be chosen more than once. (For an example of a creative use of this Special Ability, see the "Werewolf" in Chapter Three. His claws do STR+2, while his teeth do STR+4 — he took this Advantage twice, and the gamemaster allowed him to weaken one attack and increase the other.)

Natural Weaponry (Ranged): The character has some sort of natural ranged weapon — using Dexterity and, perhaps, a new skill to "fire." The range should be a measurement equal to the value of the character's Endurance, and the damage value should be no higher than 15.

Possession I: The character can possess the body of a living creature or a corpse. As yet, there are no known entities who can do both.

Possessing a corpse is a simple action. Possessing a living being involves make a Confidence or *willpower* or Confidence check versus a difficulty number of the target's Confidence or *willpower*. Success means the target has been possessed. The target can *actively defend*.

To gather knowledge about its host body's life, the possessing character must generate a successful *perception* total against the target's *Mind*. Information gained is dependent upon success level achieved.

With Possession I, the character does not gain control of the new form. Instead, he must use *persuasion*, *intimidation* and other interaction skills to convince his host to do what he wishes.

Exiting a host body is commonly a simple action. A possessing character can be killed if the host body dies while he is within it, but if he exits before death comes, he can simply move on to another form. Killing a possessing entity usually involves taking it completely by surprise with a killing blow to the host form or else using *binding* spells to force it to remain in the body until it can be slain.

Shapeshifting I: The character can alter his form and appearance. "Shapeshifting I" allows characters to change into one other form, gaining certain abilities of that new incarnation (gamemaster's option), or shift into multiple forms without gaining any new abilities. Characters who take this Advantage automatically get the Charisma-based *shapeshifting* skill at one add. Shapeshifting may be triggered by environmental factors, stress or done at will. Only in the latter case is a skill check necessary. If shifting voluntarily, the character must generate a *shapeshifting* total of 9 to bring about the change, and a second total to turn back again. Failure at the check means the transformation does not occur, and the character cannot try again for at least an hour.

When a character wants to play a shapeshifter — especially one that gains certain abilities upon changing his shape — the player should adjust the character's Attributes for the new form. The character still has the same number of Attribute Points, but they may be adjusted up or down within two

POSSESSION KNOWLEDGE CHART

Success Level	Knowledge Attained
Minimal	Basic information: target's name, age, address
Solid	More personal information: target's job, financial status, any current schedule
Good	More in-depth personal information: identities and backgrounds of friends, family, lovers
Superior	Very personal information: secrets, private likes and dislikes, etc.
Spectacular	Everything there is to know

points of their original values (without going above or below the maximum or minimum values allowed). But the character must end up with the same number of Attribute Points before and after each change.

Example: Mark is playing a Wereleopard. He chooses Shapeshifting I, specifying that he will only change from Human to Leopard and back again. The gamemaster decides he'll gain +1 to his movement rate, ground, automatically, as well as +1 to all perception totals that require smell.

Mark's character has 68 Attribute Points arranged thusly:

AGILITY 8	DEXTERITY 9
ENDURANCE 9	STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 10	
INTELLECT 8	MIND 8
CONFIDENCE 10	CHARISMA 8

When he changes into Wereleopard form, Mark's character will have the following Attribute Values, however:

AGILITY 10	DEXTERITY 9
ENDURANCE 11	STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 11	
INTELLECT 6	MIND 6
CONFIDENCE 10	CHARISMA 6

Note that Mark's Wereleopard still has the

same number of Attribute Points — they are just arranged differently. Also, his Toughness went up because his Endurance and Strength were also adjusted.

This Advantage may be chosen more than once, allowing the character to shapeshift into multiple forms and gain a few extra abilities. Note, however, that if the character wants to gain extra abilities (like "Claws" — Natural Weaponry (HTH)), they must be chosen separately.

Uncanny Aptitude II: The mechanics are the same as "Uncanny Aptitude I," but the pluses can go as high as +3 or even +4.

LIST B

Attribute Adjustment: The character can adjust an opponent's (or a friend's) attributes temporarily. He gains the scramble skill at one add (it is a Confidence skill, described only here) that he can increase as normal. When he hits a target with an unarmed combat roll, he may choose (as a multi-action) to also perform a scramble attack versus his target's willpower or Confidence. If his total is higher, he may shift his target's attribute points around, within certain limits.

The scrambler must pick as his focus either physical or mental abilities. He can never do both. He may then rearrange his victim's attribute points by increasing one or more physical or mental at-

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tributes by a number equal to the amount he takes away from other physical or mental attributes — but he may not decrease or increase any one attribute by more than four points.

Example: Justin is a Karkas with the Attribute Adjustment special ability. He has a scramble: physical *skill value of 9. He attacks Maxine, a Human character, declaring a multi-action — he's going to try to scramble her physical attributes. She has the following physical attributes:*

AGILITY 10	**DEXTERITY 9**
STRENGTH 10	**ENDURANCE 10**
TOUGHNESS 11	

He hits her and his multi-action overcomes her willpower. *He tells the gamemaster he will subtract 4 points from her Agility and add it to her Strength, and take two points from her Toughness and add it to her Dexterity. Temporarily, she has the following Attribute values:*

AGILITY 6	**DEXTERITY 11**
STRENGTH 14	**ENDURANCE 10**
TOUGHNESS 9	

The change lasts for a value of time equal to the result points of the *scramble* attack versus the target's *willpower* or Confidence, as read on the Value Chart in the *MasterBook* rule book. So, if a character achieves ten result points on a *scramble* attack, the adjustment lasts 100 seconds (ten combat rounds). A character who has been adjusted cannot be scrambled again until the original adjustment wears off.

Elasticity: The character can stretch, elongate, and compress his body, allowing him to double his height or become so narrow he can pass through keyholes, cracks or any other opening he could normally see through. The character gains +3 to *maneuver* or *prestidigitation* attempts.

Immortality: The character is immortal. If he takes six wounds, he doesn't die — he just *continues*. He will not go unconscious or bleed to death (as *mortally wounded* characters do), but he will not heal at this point — his arms could be blown off, his abdomen eviscerated, or whatever. He just *won't die*. The gamemaster should think of ways to handle this, since, unless he has "Regeneration," he'll never heal.

However, there should be one particular set of circumstances whereby the character will die forever. These sets of circumstances should not be too unusual — killed directly by magic, drowned, decapitated, et. are all good examples.

Intangibility: The character is able to reduce his physical density to virtually zero for up to one minute. During that time, his Toughness is effectively +20, but his movement rate is halved. An intangible character can pass through solid objects, providing they do not contain wards or other spells of protection designed to repel passage of this nature. The character must spend at least one minute solid before attempting intangibility again. While intangible, the character cannot carry any object along (including clothing), nor can they attempt any physical attack. It takes a full round for a character to become intangible or solid, during which he can do nothing else.

Invisibility: The character is transparent. This adds +10 to any *stealth* totals the character may generate, with the additional bonus that no character should be allowed to generate a *perception* or Intellect total to "spot" the character unless the gamemaster feels there is sufficient provocation.

Example: Bill's character, Martin, has the "Special Abilities (CIV): Invisibility" Advantage, and he has a normal stealth *value of 11. This means his* stealth *value, while he is invisible, is 21. When Martin is invisible and, say, walking down a normal, uncrowded street, the gamemaster will not let anyone try to generate a* perception *or Intellect total to see him, since they have no reason to be able to do so. However, if someone has a natural* perception *or Intellect of 21 or over, they will see him unless Martin generates a* stealth *total of his own.*

However, if Martin decides he wants to walk in a shop and steal an apple, those around will get a chance to spot him. Martin can generate a bonus number and add it to his invisibility-modified stealth, *but others can try to see him as well.*

It is up to the gamemaster whether the invisibility Special Ability extends to a character's clothing. If it does, it should cover his basic clothes *only* — not any gear he's carrying, or anything he picks up. Also, remember that the character is *transparent* when invisible — he can't "hide" things behind his back. In fact, if the character picks anything up, watchers should gain significant bonuses to "spot" him.

Life Drain: This ability allows the character to drain off Attribute points from his target.

Characters by their nature will commonly target one particular set of Attributes, either physical (AGI, DEX, STR, END, TOU) or mental (INT, MIN, CON, CHA). For example, most Vampires drink blood, and thus weaken the physical Attributes — succubi target the soul and so weaken mental Attributes. The player must specify in what manner the character drains these Attributes (biting the neck, hypnosis, etc.). It should involve some sort of successful attack result (either physical or mental).

When the character wishes to employ Life Drain, he makes an attack on his target using the relevant skill. The result points of the attack are read normally on whatever table or column they would be read on (i.e., a physical attack would be read on the Damage column of the Success Chart) *and* on the General Success column.

For every success level obtained, the character drains one point off each of the target's relevant Attributes. If any of target's Attributes ever go to zero, the target dies. If the target survives, he will regain one Attribute point (to each Attribute affected) every hour after the attack.

The character performing the Life Drain will not gain any Attribute points if the target survives. However, if the target dies before the Attribute points were returned to him (from any cause), the character performing the Life Drain gains *one* Attribute point per successful Life Drain that he can apply to any of his relevant Attributes (physical or mental).

> *Example: Joe is a night watchman at a blood bank. One night, he is attacked by a Vampire in search of food. The Vampire has the life drain (physical) Special Ability (CIV), and successfully drains Joe three times (Joe loses one point off all his physical Attributes three times) before throwing Joe out a fifth story window and killing him.*
>
> *The instant Joe dies, the Vampire gains three Attribute points (since he drained Joe three times) that he can apply to either his Strength, Endurance, Agility, Toughness, or Dexterity — either all three points to one Attribute, or spread out among two or three. The Vampire does not gain one point for each Attribute point he*

drained from Joe.

Life Drained Attributes go away at a rate of one per hour.

Natural Sorcery II: This works the same as "Natural Sorcery I," save that the character gains two spells as natural abilities. Value is equal to the relevant magic skill +3.

Paralyzing Touch: Characters who choose this ability receive it at a value of their Confidence +15. The character must touch his target's flesh for the power to work — their target must then generate a Confidence or *willpower* total equal to the attacker's power value (which is modified by any result points of the attack). If he fails, he's paralyzed, and will remain that way until he makes a successful Confidence or *willpower* total. He may attempt to do so once per round. Note: Characters who are heavily armored or covered will be harder to hit.

In general, a normal *unarmed combat* attack is used to hit an average character's skin (the difficulty of hitting bare skin is balanced out by the fact that no damage needs to be caused). A character wearing clothing or armor over most of his body would gain +2, +3, or more to his relevant defensive skill.

Possession II: The character can possess the body of a living creature or a corpse. This works in the same manner as Possession I, save that the possessing character gains his new form's physical Attributes (Agility, Dexterity, Endurance, Strength, Toughness), but retains his own mental Attributes, and does gain control over the new form.

Regeneration: The character heals all shock and KO after one minute of rest. The character also heals wounds as if two levels less wounded. If the character is killed, he stays dead, however (unless he has "Immortality," in which case he will heal as if *incapacitated*).
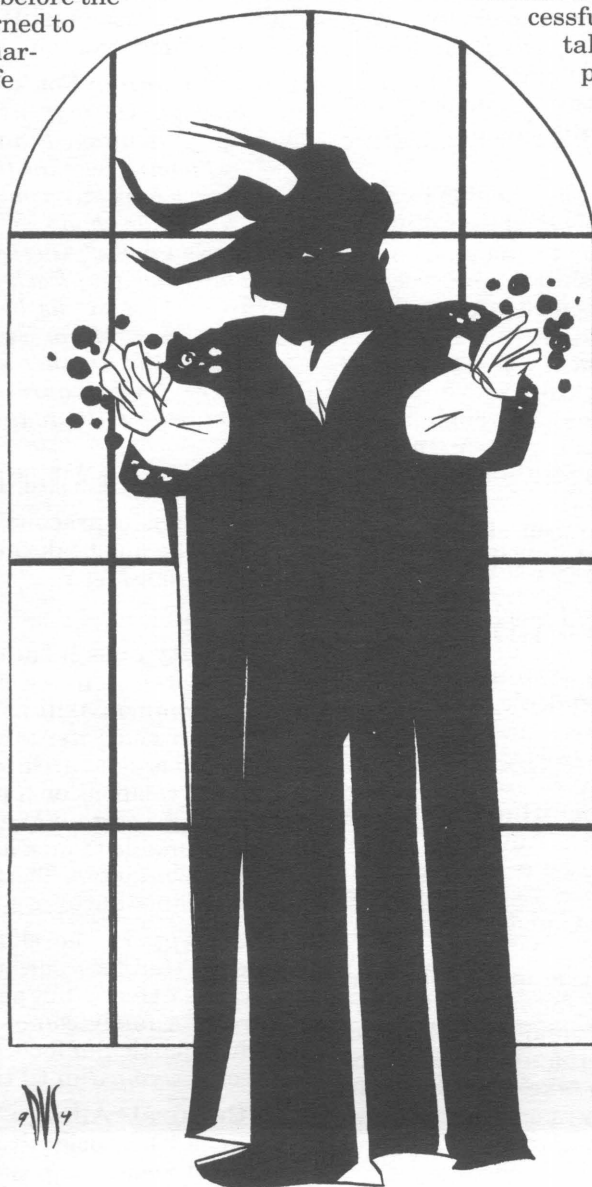
Shapeshifting II: The character can alter his form and appearance. "Shapeshifting II" works in the same manner as "Shapeshifting I," save that the character may shapeshift into multiple forms and gain the abilities of all in the process. The gamemaster and the player should define the limits of this. Generally, the character's mass must remain roughly the same, and, often, there are still only a set number of beings or things the character can shapeshift into.

Choosing the "Shapeshifting II" Advantage automatically confers the *shapeshifting* skill at one add upon the character.

Teleportation: The character can teleport up to 10 meters (value 5) at any time. By Pushing, using his Endurance, he can teleport farther. The character must be able to see his destination clearly. In combat, this action takes an entire round. The character may take up to his body weight along, but not any other character or living thing more than one-tenth his body weight.

Transmutation: The character is able to alter his substance to something else, while retaining his form (i.e., a man who turns to stone). Characters with this ability may only shift into one specific substance, which must be specified when the Advantage is purchased. Generally, this substance gives them distinct advantages. For example, a man of stone could still magically move (unless otherwise specified), but would be tougher and perhaps stronger than in his human form. In addition, the character wouldn't have to breathe, eat, or perform other natural functions.

The gamemaster and the player should define the limits of this Special Ability carefully.

BACKGROUND COMPENSATIONS

When choosing Compensations for your *Bloodshadows* character, first look at the ones listed in *MasterBook*. All of those can be applied to your Human or Unnatural character.

Human characters do not have any mandatory Compensations. Unnatural (non-Human) characters must not only balance out the Advantages they chose, but they must also take the Column Two "Prejudice (CII)" Compensation — Humans are usually strongly prejudiced against anyone non-Human or Unnatural.

All characters must select Compensations that correspond in number and in column level to their advantages. For example, a Human character has the option of taking 3CI, 2CII, and 1CIII Advantages. If he does so, he has to take 3CI, 2CII, and 1CI Compensations. If he only takes, say, 2CI and 1CIII Advantages, he only has to take 2CI and 1CIII Compensations.

This is all covered in the *MasterBook* chapter on "Background Generation."

ADVANTAGE FLAW (CIII & CIV)

These listings are a modification to the "Advantage Flaw" Compensation listed in *MasterBook*. The Column One and Column Two "Advantage Flaws" remain unchanged, but the CIII Compensation has been expanded, and a CIV version of "Advantage Flaw" has been introduced.

As with "Special Abilities," when a character picks "Advantage Flaw" at the CIII or CIV level, he must further choose to pick from List A or List B. A character who chooses List A must take **two** Compensations from the following lists, while a character who chooses List B must take **one**, more powerful, Compensation.

Example: Ron's amphibious being has to take a CIII Compensation. He chooses to pick the "Advantage Flaw (CIII)" Compensation.

Looking over the two lists, Ron decides he'd rather have two comparatively minor handicaps — he chooses CIII, List A.

Ron picks "Allergy I" (to salt water). Ron's character is a fresh-water amphibian; when in salt water, he becomes stymied. *He also chooses a "Minor Stigma." When Ron's character kills another character, he must make every effort to "bury" the character in water — "returning him to the water."*

ADVANTAGE FLAW (CIII)

When a character chooses "Advantage Flaw (CIII)," he must take either **two** picks from List A or one from List B.

LIST A

Ability Loss I: The character temporarily loses one or more of his special abilities or the ability to use a common skill at a regular interval (for example, a character who cannot shapeshift when the sun is out; a character who cannot use his natural weapons on a particular day of the month or during a certain phase of the moon; a character who is unable to pick locks while other characters are present; etc.). The character is aware of what the circumstances are that will cause this.

Allergy I: The character has a fairly minor allergy (far less serious than that found under "Achilles' Heel"), but perhaps more common. Exposure to a fairly common substance (smoke, sunlight, a particular food, etc.) causes the character to become *stymied* until the condition is removed.

Cultural "Allergy" I: The same as above, but there is some social situation that will provoke the *stymied* result (exposure to nudity, the sight of

Metabolic Difference: The character needs more life support (normally food) than "normal" and will begin to take shock, and then wounds, after hours of malnutrition (example: the character must eat a meal every four hours or, every hour after the four are up, the character takes one shock point that cannot be recovered except by eating. After the character takes shock equal to his Endurance, he goes unconscious and begins taking one wound per hour until death.

Minor Stigma: There is something that the character cannot do without performing the "proper rituals" before or after (a creature who must sketch an image of his intended victim before hunting him down; a shapeshifter who must be "purified" by his cult after killing someone).

Reduced Attribute I: One of the character's Attribute values is permanently reduced by one point. The character may reduce the Attribute value below 5, but the Attribute value may never be increased normally (i.e., by spending Skill Points). The Attribute loss should be somehow linked to the character's nature or other abilities.

Rot I: The character's body is rotting. He periodically loses pieces of himself (fingers, toes, etc.) and must pause to fuse them back on (this is a simple action but takes a round to perform). The character suffers no damage from this, but he should be inconvenienced (for example, in combat, the character's fingers might fall off, causing him to drop his weapon — this would be a good *setback*).

Stench: The character smells terrible due to one of his Advantages or just because he exists. Add +5 to the DN of all *stealth* attempts, as everyone can smell him coming. This may also affect interaction attempts.

LIST B

Ability Loss II: Similar to "Ability Loss I," but when something causes the character to temporarily lose the use of an ability or skill, the removal of that condition will not return the ability or skill to the character. Instead, the character must undergo some sort of (fairly simple) procedure to regain his ability or skill use. For example, a Vampire who can become intangible might lose this ability when confronted with a holy symbol of one of Marl's major cults. He may have to return to his resting place and "sleep" for eight hours before regaining the use of his ability.

Atmospheric Incompatibility: The character is sensitive to something in the normal atmosphere and must shield himself from it. Failure to do so causes him to take one shock point every minute until unconsciousness, and then one wound every 10 minutes until death (these wounds can be cancelled by spending Life Points). For example, a plant creature might be poisoned by the high quantity of carbon monoxide produced by some combustion engines. When in the presence of these engines (i.e., when in a big city where these sorts of engines are used), the character must have an "air filter" on at all times.

Environmental Incompatibility: The character is sensitive to something in the environment — it may be an extreme of temperature, the chemical content of the rain water, etc. Exposure to this without the proper protection causes the character to suffer one shock point per minute until unconsciousness, and then one wound every 10 minutes until death. For example, a particular type of city-based rat breed character might have a real problem out in the wilderness because everything is "too clean." He might have to carry some soot or filth with him that he can occasionally breath through or ingest.

Infection I: Under certain circumstances, the character passes along certain abilities and characteristics to another character. The character has an *infection* value of Endurance +5.

The gamemaster and the player should determine how the character spreads the infection. It may be as the side-effect of an attack, through physical contact, or through some other means. When the character performs the requisite action, he must generate an *infection* total. The target generates an Endurance total as well. If the character's *infection* total exceeds the target's Endurance total, the target is infected.

An infection passes certain Advantages and Compensations to the target (to be specified by the

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player and the gamemaster). It is possible for the infection to pass more Compensations on than Advantages, but is not possible for it to pass more Advantages than Compensations.

Keep in mind that the infected character may well hate the character responsible for his new state, so the infecting character may have gained an "Enemy." In fact, there should be some overwhelming reasons why this is actually *bad* for the infecting character — it is a Compensation, after all.

> *Example: Brian's character, a Zombie named Karl, has an Endurance of 10 and an* infection *value of 15. He passes his infection by doing a wound or better with an unarmed combat attack.*
>
> *Angered, Karl attacks a streetsinger and does a wound. He then generates an* infection total *against the streetsinger, who generates an Endurance total of her own. Karl's infec-*tion *total beats her Endurance total, so she is infected.*
>
> *The infection passes along Karl's Advantages of "Toughened Skin," "Long Life Span" and "Attack Form Resistance — Interaction." It also passes along the Compensations "Stench," "Rot I," "Prejudice I" and "Infection." In addition, the streetsinger now hates Karl with a passion, so he gains the "Enemy" Compensation.*

Gamemasters who do not feel that the "Enemy" Compensation is enough of a negative could also work in other sorts of Advantage Flaws as side-effects of spreading the infection. For example Karl, in the example above, might be weakened by passing on his infection, losing one point from all his physical attributes for a day or so. This way, the characters with "Infection I" will try to avoid passing on their abilities and Compensations.

Nutritional Requirements: The character must ingest an element not commonly consumed by Humans (blood, dead Human flesh, etc.) to survive. Often, the character will encounter prejudice because of this, and he will certainly develop physical problems if he fails to consume this substance in a reasonable amount of time.

Reduced Attribute II: One of the character's Attribute values is permanently reduced by two points, or two Attributes are reduced by one point each. The character may reduce the Attribute value(s) below 5, but the Attribute value(s) may never be increased normally (i.e., by spending Skill Points). The Attribute loss should be somehow linked to the character's nature or other abilities.

ADVANTAGE FLAWS (CIV)

LIST A

Ability Loss III: This is similar to "Ability Loss

ADVANTAGE FLAWS AND THEIR VALUE

Here are some guidelines to help you construct your own "Advantage Flaws":

"Advantage Flaws (CIII), List A": The character has a fairly serious handicap that does not come into play very often — or a minor one that inconveniences him constantly. Examples include the character has to consume twice as much food as "normal" to continue functioning; the character requires special medical treatments; there is a social or cultural stigma attached to the character's behavior that handicaps him at certain times.

"Advantage Flaws (CIII), List B": The flaw has fairly serious consequences, but only comes into play rarely, or is in effect quite often and has moderately serious effects. Examples include the character cannot breathe normal atmosphere; has special nutritional requirements; cannot perform a certain type of action.

"Advantage Flaws (CIV), List A": There are severe consequences to this flaw, and the character must take steps to avoid its activation. Examples include: the character has a symbiotic relationship with another being and weakens if separated from him; exposure to certain substances or conditions robs the character of certain abilities; the character can infect others and invariably creates enemies this way.

"Advantage Flaws (CIV), List B": The flaw is so lethal and dangerous that, should the character violate the circumstances of it, he or she would be, effectively, removed from the adventuring environment. Examples include: the character self-destructs under certain circumstances; the character's "culture" prevents the character from defending himself under certain circumstances.

Allergy II: The same rules apply as for "Allergy I," save that the character is *setback* if exposed to the allergen.

Cultural "Allergy" II: The same rules apply as for Cultural "Allergy" I, save that the character is *setback* if exposed to the specified social situation.

Reduced Attribute III: Take three points away from the character's current Attribute points, reducing three Attributes by one point each, one by two and another by three, or one Attribute value by three points. The character may reduce the Attribute value(s) below 5, but the Attribute value(s) may never be increased normally (i.e., by spending Skill Points). The Attribute loss should be somehow linked to the character's nature or other abilities.

Rot II: The character loses major parts of his body periodically due to rotting (limbs, etc.) and must pause to replace them. Doing so requires no skill total but does take three rounds to perform. The trigger that causes this to take effect should be no less frequent than a *setback* during combat or interaction rounds.

Symbiosis I: The character is bound symbiotically to another, drawing strength or energy from him. Symbiosis can be either physical or mental. For every 100 meters by which one character is separated from the other, both lose -1 to either their physical Attributes (save Toughness) or their mental Attributes. If the character's symbiote is killed, the character loses four points from the Attributes affected until he can convince another character to willingly bond with him (the bonding process should be simple — like sharing blood — but it must be done with willing participants).

LIST B

Ability Loss IV: This is similar to "Ability Loss II" in that something causes the character to temporarily lose the use of multiple abilities or skills and the condition does *not* go away when the condition is removed. It may be a physical object, such as the relic of a certain cult, it may be a particular kind of ritual chant, the sight or smell of an herb, etc, or it may be that the use of one ability (such as possession) makes it impossible to use others. The character must go through a serious procedure to get his abilities back.

Example: Ron's character, Amphibious, ends up contracting this Compensation in an encounter with an Unnatural (through "Infection I"). The Compensation becomes linked to all Amphibious' amphibian abilities. When Amphibious is exposed to extreme heat, he loses all his amphibious abilities — the ability to breathe underwater and his environmental tolerance of cold — and he also loses access to

I," but the character temporarily loses *at least two* (and probably more) of his special abilities or the ability to use multiple skills at a regular interval until whatever condition caused this is removed. The character is aware of what the circumstances are that will cause this. For example, a Chaos-aligned character who has this Compensation may lose the ability to perform any type of interaction skill while in the presence of a character he knows to be aligned with Order. When the condition is removed, the character returns to normal.

DEPENDENCY TABLE

Die Roll (2d10)	Time Until Next Feeding
2–5	One Day*
6–8	Three Days
9–11	Five Days
12–15	One Week
16–18	One Month
19–20	Three Months

*The character immediately begins blood starvation again, even though he has just fed

If the character has the "Quirks: Dependency (Major)" Compensation, he will suffer withdrawal symptoms if he does not get the substance within the proscribed period of time (Vampires refer to this as "blood starvation").

Withdrawal symptoms may vary depending on the kind of substance involved. However, gamemaster may use the description of blood starvation below as a guideline for setting up other sorts of withdrawal.

Blood Starvation

A Vampire who suffers from blood starvation will suffer physical damage and deterioration, madness and, eventually, death as a result. As more and more time passes without blood, the Vampire grows much more likely to attack those he once called friend in his lust for the precious fluid.

The rules for blood starvation work in this manner. On the final day of the period in which the Vampire must obtain blood or suffer blood starvation, he loses one point from all his Attributes except Strength and cannot heal any damage he takes from then on from combat or mishap. At this time, obtaining one pint of blood will restore the lost points and the character can begin healing damage normally again. (If the Vampire is getting the blood by force, he must do one wound in an *unarmed combat* attack using his fangs).

Example: *Bill's character, a Vampire named Alexander, must consume blood every three days. On the third day of this period, if he has not yet drunk blood, he loses on point off all of his Attributes save Strength.*

After the mandated period has expired without blood being obtained, the effects are as follows:

Day One: Vampire suffers one wound and loses one point from all Attributes save Strength. Obtaining one pint of blood (see above) allows him to begin healing normally.

Day Two: Vampire loses one point off all Attributes save Strength. Vampire must obtain two pints of blood (two wounds in an *unarmed combat* attack) to regain lost points and heal damage.

Day Three: Vampire loses one point off all Attributes save Strength. Vampire gains +3 to Strength. Vampire suffers a wound. Vampire must obtain three pints of blood (three wounds in an *unarmed combat* attack) to erase damage caused by blood starvation and to regain lost points (and, now, to begin healing other damage normally). Enhanced Strength remains until the Vampire drinks blood, at which point Strength returns to its normal level.

From this point onward, the Vampire loses one Attribute point off all Attributes save Strength each day; suffers a wound every other day; and an additional pint of blood is required each day to erase damage and regain all lost points.

Note that getting blood is the only way the character can heal damage suffered from blood starvation or regain Attribute points lost to it and, once the character begins suffering blood starvation, he cannot heal other damage normally.

Should the Vampire suffer six wounds or have one of his Attributes reduced to zero as a result of blood starvation, he dies.

all his swimming skill *adds. In order to regain his abilities, he must gradually cool his body — first in cool air, then cool water — until the effect goes away. The cooling process takes a day or more.*

Infection II: Same as "Infection I," except that the character has an infection value of Endurance +10. Also, the penalties for infecting another character should be more severe — maybe the character infected then knows things about the infecting character that will give him an advantage over his enemy, or perhaps the infecting character temporarily loses more abilities or *Attribute* points.

Reduced Attribute IV: Take four points away from the character's current Attribute points, reducing four Attributes by one point each, one by two and another by two, or any other combination that subtracts four Attribute points from the character's combined total. The character may reduce the Attribute value(s) below 5, but the At-

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tribute value(s) may never be increased normally (i.e., by spending Skill Points). The Attribute loss should be somehow linked to the character's nature or other abilities.

Symbiosis II: Rules are the same as "Symbiosis I," save that the character is bound *both* mentally and physically to another, and will lose from both sets of Attributes if separated.

CREATING YOUR OWN OPTIONS

The comparative brevity of this section should encourage you to create your own Advantages and Compensations. The following guidelines should be helpful.

CREATING ADVANTAGES

In the world of Marl, many characters should have "Special Abilities" of CIII or CIV strength. You can build on the ones we have listed here simply by looking through books on mythology or horror. The biggest guideline you have to remember is not to make any Advantage too powerful or

NUTRITIONAL REQUIREMENTS EXAMPLE: A DIET OF BLOOD

Vampiric characters who must drink blood (either Human, animal or both) are required to have the "Nutritional Requirements" Compensation, as are Ghouls and Succubi. Some may also be required to choose "Quirks III: Dependency (Major)," to simulate their addiction to a substance, if one exists.

When creating a character with either or both of these Compensations, you must determine how often the character must consume this substance to survive/prevent withdrawal. To do so, first check and see if the character has an alignment of any kind. If he is of Order, Oathbreaker/Order or Neutral alignment, he need only roll on the "Dependency Table" once, when he is first creating the character (or first gains these Compensations). If he is of Chaotic or Oathbreaker/Chaotic alignment, he must roll on this table every time he consumes the substance to see how long he can go without it.

too much a focus of a character. If the character would be nothing without a particular Advantage, then either the Advantage is too powerful or the character is pretty lame.

CREATING COMPENSATIONS

The same rules go for creating Compensations. Use other sources and ideas that spring from your experience or from the ideas presented in this volume. Don't make up Compensations that are going to cripple the character you want to play — they don't have to completely "balance" their opposite-column Advantages.

Gamemasters: Even though the basic idea of Compensations *is* to "balance" Advantages, that's not the real point. Compensations should make the character more interesting for the player to play, not just harder. Certainly, you don't want characters with overpowering Advantages and weak Compensations, but you should, when creating Compensation, err on the side of caution. Remember, if characters get "too tough," you can always create more powerful foes for them to fight.

CHAPTER SIX

NEW SKILLS

The door splintered, the breeze from the blow kicking up a cloud of Vera. Two breeds, one a Hugor and the other with maybe some serpent blood in him, stepped into the room, revolvers raised. They surveyed the pile of ash, the melted phone, and the rest of the room and looked at each other, puzzled. Wasn't there supposed to be somebody else here?

Deacon popped up from behind the bed and squeezed off a shot. The bullet was just lead, but the Hugor was just flesh and Human/Ogre blood. The slug tore through his right arm and started spilling some of that blood.

Scales took a few steps back into the hallway and started returning fire, using the ruined doorframe for cover. Bullets poked holes in the plaster wall above Deacon's head.

The Hugor was crawling for the doorway, leaving a greasy trail of blood behind him. Deacon put another slug in him and he obligingly stopped moving.

Scales was reloading. Deacon yelled, "Your buddy's dead. So's Vera. Doesn't sound like your boss takes good care of his people, does it?"

Scales hissed something obscene and started shooting again. He wasn't a good shot — but he didn't have to be to keep his target pinned down. Deacon was down to one runeslug and had been saving it for the guy behind all this. But it was beginning to look like that was a luxury he couldn't afford.

That was when he heard the sound. Soft, at first, but rapidly growing louder. They were a different tone and pitch than in Galitia, but they had to be sentinel sirens. Somebody must have tipped them off when the shots started.

Scales heard the wails too, tossed a few shots for cover and beat it down the hall. Deacon took a second to let his heart start beating again and followed.

It was a beautiful sight. Scales had walked right into the hands of the sentinels, who were bundling him into a car. Two uniforms were waiting for Deacon at the bottom of the stairs.

"Got a call about a disturbance," one of them said. "What do you know about it?"

"There's two of them upstairs. One shot, the other torched. It was somebody's idea of a party invitation."

One of the sentinels extended a hand. Deacon hesitated a second, then turned over his gun. The men escorted him to the car and put him in the back seat for the ride down to the station.

He turned around to look at the other car, the one carrying Scales. That was when he noticed the sentinel driver, the one missing part of his face, lost not to a bullet or a blade but to rot.

Deacon turned around to find himself staring down the barrel of a .38. The sentinel's smile was pure malice and the detective suddenly remembered all the stories he'd heard about Selastos' cheap labor.

"Somebody wants to see you real bad, Mr. Deacon," the "sentinel" — or, rather, the thing renting the body — said. "But don't worry — the Taxim Quarter's lovely this time of year."

This chapter details new skills for use in *Bloodshadows*, in addition to those listed in the *MasterBook* rule book. The chart below lists *all* skills available to *Bloodshadows* characters — those marked with a "†" symbol are explained in this chapter. All others are explained in detail in Chapter Four of *MasterBook*, "Skills and Skill Use."

INTELLECT SKILLS

CANTRIPS

Use: Cannot be used *untrained*
Sample Specializations: None

Cantrips are small magic spells — rites simple enough that they are in common use. They are practical and functional and do not produce grand effects or do lots of damage. But they're the kinds of things you'll see being done on the streets of Marl's cities everyday.

For rules purposes, a cantrip is defined as any spell whose base SFX Value (Effect Value + Range + Speed + Duration) is less than or equal to 20. Also, the Optional Modifiers and Elements cannot add up to more than 0 (i.e., the subtractions from the SFX Running Total caused by Optional Modifiers must equal or exceed the total value of any Optional Elements included, plus the Cast Time of the spell). For a more detailed explanation of the SFX Value and what goes into a special effect, see Chapter Six of *MasterBook*, "Creating and Using Special Effects." The box entitled "Candle" contains a sample cantrip. The base SFX Value for the spell in the box is 18 (0+0+0+18). The "Area of Effect" Optional Element is cancelled out by the value of the Cast Time.

Before we go on, glance at the next chapter, "Magic." Look at any one of the spells and see how it's written up, then come back here.

BLOODSHADOWS SKILL LIST

AGILITY
Acrobatics
Beast Riding*
Climbing
Dodge
Flight*
Long Jumping
Maneuver
Martial Arts*
Melee Combat
Melee Parry
Running
Stealth
Swimming
Unarmed Combat
Unarmed Parry

DEXTERITY
Fire Combat
Gunnery*
Heavy Weapons*
Lock Picking
Missile Weapons*
Prestidigitation
Thrown Weapons
Vehicle Piloting*

ENDURANCE
Resist Shock

STRENGTH
Lifting

INTELLECT
Apportation*
Camouflage
Cantrips†
Deduction
Demolitions
Divination*
Forgery
First Aid
Linguistics
Navigation*
Perception
Safe Cracking†
Science*
Smuggling†
Teaching*
Tracking
Trick
Vehicle Mechanic†

MIND
Artist*
Business
Cartography†
Conjuration*
Hypnotism

Language*
Medicine
Research†
Scholar*

CONFIDENCE
Alteration*
Bribery†
Con
Faith*
Gambling†
Interrogation
Intimidation
Streetwise
Survival*
Willpower

CHARISMA
Charm
Disguise
Persuasion
Shapeshifting†
Summoning*
Taunt

*Macroskill; must select a focus
Boldface: Skill cannot be used *untrained*.

NEW SKILLS VERSUS OLD FOCUSES

Some of you who are familiar with the *MasterBook* system might wonder why some of the "new skills" listed here aren't just focuses for *science* or *scholar* or some other macroskill. *Research* and *cartography* could easily be considered *scholar* focuses, while either *safe cracking* or *vehicle mechanic* might be a *science* focus.

That's true. But in the world of *Bloodshadows*, these skills are so likely to be important, they've been made into their own skill descriptions — rather than being lumped into one of the "catch-all" macroskills. Remember, each macroskill focus is really its own general skill — we just usually don't explain each macroskill focus in depth.

Notice anything different? *Candle* does not specify a skill and focus needed, applicable arcane knowledge, or Difficulty Number and Feedback Value. This is because a character with the *cantrips* skill can cast these spells as simple actions — no skill roll is needed.

"If I don't need to make skill rolls, then what does the *cantrips* skill do for me?" Good question, with a simple answer. Your *cantrips* skill value (Intellect attribute plus skill adds) determines how many of these little spells you can know and can use. To determine how may cantrips you can know, simply read your *cantrips* skill value on the "Push" column of the Success Table in the *MasterBook* rule book. The "+" number is the number of cantrips you can know.

> *Example: Desken has the* cantrips *skill at a value of 12 (Intellect of 10 plus two skill adds). On the "Push" column, 12 is a +5, so Desken can know five cantrips. He can cast these at any time as a simple action.*

Remember, you don't need to possess any other magic skills to use cantrips. And if you pick up another *cantrips* add later on, the number of these spells you can use may increase as well.

When a character purchases this skill before he begins adventuring, he can create or choose up to his maximum number of cantrips — but he can never "forget" a cantrip, so he has to choose carefully. When a character wants to learn a new cantrip (or learns the *cantrips* skill after adventuring for a while), the cost to learn a cantrip is one skill point per cantrip.

For some sample cantrips, see "Cantrips" in Chapter Seven, "Magic."

CANDLE

Effect Value: 0
Range: 0 (Touch)
Speed: 0
Duration: 18 (One hour)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Modifiers:
    Area of Effect: 2 meters in diameter

This spell causes a small flame to appear on the caster's fingertip. The flame will provide light just as a candle would, and the caster will suffer no damage from it. It cannot be used to burn anything.

SAFE CRACKING

Use: This skill cannot be used *untrained*
Specializations: Lock Picking, Tumblers, Acids, Explosives, Wards

Virtually anyone can get into a locked safe if they have enough black powder, *thunder* potions, and the like. But getting into a safe and coming out with the contents intact is another story altogether — that takes talent, and that talent is the *safe cracking* skill.

The various specializations cover some basic means of breaking into safes. *Tumblers* is used to feel the click of a dial safe. *Acids* or *explosives* can be used to eat through or blow the door of a safe, using anything from a few drops of corrosive liquid to an alchemical bomb. *Wards* allows a safe cracker to gauge what kind of magical wards might be protecting a safe and what the appropriate counterspells might be. Naturally, since those are all specializations, not focuses (since *safe cracking* is not a macroskill), any character with the *safe cracking* skill can attempt to use any means necessary.

Note that *safe cracking* cannot be used in place of *lock picking* or *demolitions* in other situations.

The base DN of cracking an "average" safe is 15. For every success level over *minimal*, the safe cracker does less damage to the contents, causes less attention (if applicable), or gets the job done faster. Tougher safes should add up to +10 to the DN, while "tin boxes," or weak safes would subtract up to five points. Use the guidelines presented in the *MasterBook* chapter, "The Rules," for determining more exact DNs and Modifiers.

SMUGGLING

Use: This skill can be used *untrained*
Specializations: Drugs, Liquor, Beings, Weapons, Minerals, Chemicals

In the world of *Bloodshadows*, smuggling is an extremely dangerous occupation. Not only do you have to worry about the law at your destination, but you have to worry about the creatures that haunt the Wilderness between where you are and where you're going. But it's the risk that makes it profitable ...

Smuggling can be used in place of *scholar* to determine the best routes to take from one city to another and what cargos might be in demand there. Keep in mind that how difficult it is to smuggle something into the city depends largely on what you're carrying and how badly the city wants it kept out. Smuggler characters would be wise to invest some skill adds in interaction skills like *charm* and *persuasion* as well as *bribery*.

The base DN for *smuggling* is 12. Modifiers as high as +10 or as low as -2 should be applied, depending on how little (or how much) the smuggler knows about his destination. The smuggler can then generate a total to find out what he thinks would be good to smuggle in. *Smuggling* can also be used in place of *streetwise* to make "contacts" (using the "Streetwise" DNs presented in *MasterBook*), and it can even be used to gauge the amount of resistance a smuggle might expect in a particular city.

VEHICLE MECHANIC

Use: This skill cannot be used *untrained*
Specializations: By specific type of vehicle

Vehicle mechanic involves diagnosing and repairing problems in modes of transport. This covers everything from minor fixes (inflating a tire or replacing a wheel) to more serious problems (determining that the elemental spell in the engine has just about run out). Modifiers include the complexity of the task, the tools available, and the amount of time available.

Possible specializations in *Bloodshadows* include combustion automobiles, steam automobiles, elemental automobiles, railrunners, wagons, mine cars, and ships.

The *vehicle mechanic* skill can also be used to sabotage vehicles.

The Difficulty Numbers and Modifiers should be taken from the *MasterBook* "General Success Chart."
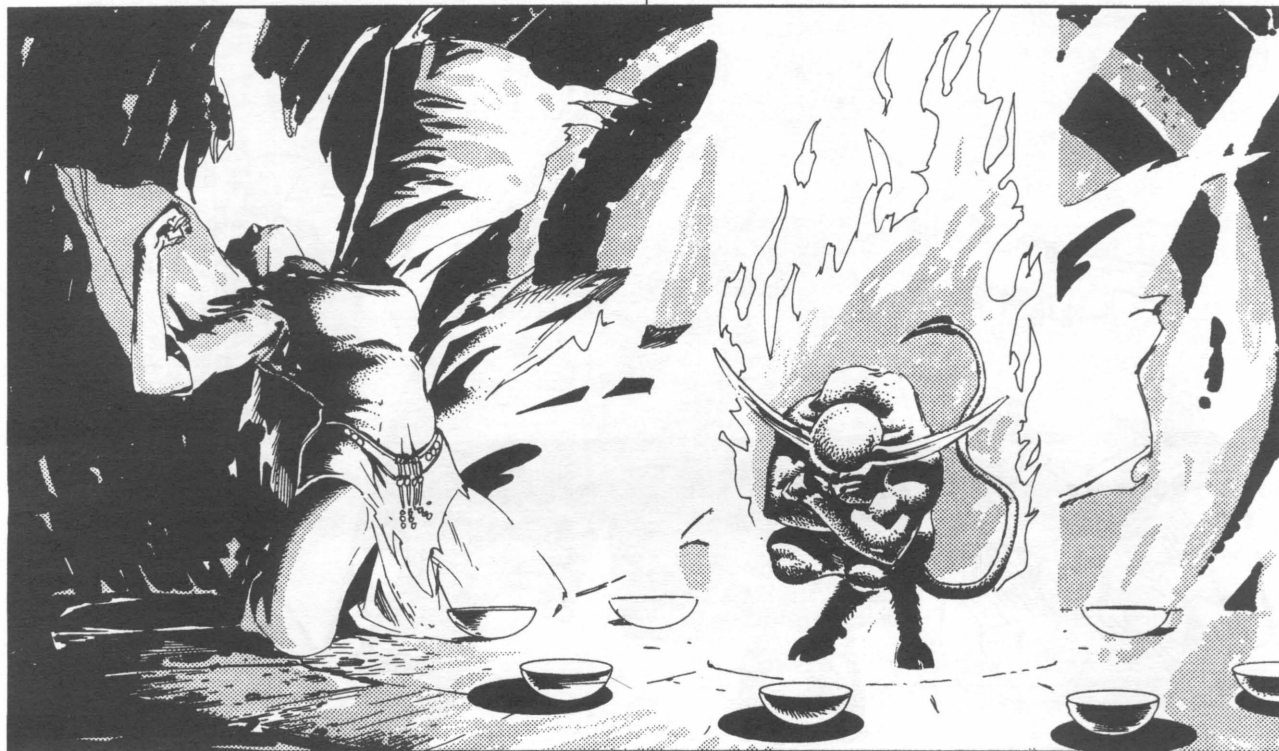
MIND SKILLS

CARTOGRAPHY

Use: This skill cannot be used *untrained*
Specializations: Trail maps, topographical maps, ocean maps

As was pointed out in Chapter One, the ability to draw an accurate map can mean good money for a character. Charts you can rely on are a rarity in most places. At the same time, the ability to read a

Karl Waller

Jaime Lombardo & Ron Hill

map accurately can be the difference between life and death if you're in the Wilderness.

Cartography is the skill of map reading and map making. It's the ability to translate real world landmarks, trail markers, measurements and orientation into a pictorial and/or textual representation. Drawing a basic map has a difficulty of 15 — every result point above 10 achieved becomes the map's "understandability rating." Make a note of this at the time of the map's creation.

Reading a basic map also has a difficulty of 15. Add the map's "understandability rating" to the skill total — in this way, well-drawn maps make life easier for the characters.

Modifiers can be added to the DN or, occasionally, to the character's skill total based on how unusual an area is, how well or how little the character has explored the terrain, or any other of a number of circumstances.

Failing a *cartography* total by one to two points mean the characters make a misstep or draw an inaccuracy. Failing by five or more points can mean the characters get completely turned around or absolutely destroy the map's usefulness.

Keep in mind, also, that the age of the map may have a lot to do with its accuracy on Marl, and some maps are just plain frauds. Maps that show gates are notoriously unreliable, as gates have been known to move.

RESEARCH

Use: This still cannot be used *untrained*.

Research is the ability to cull information from various sources, including newspapers, public records, bestiaries, spell scrolls and other printed matter. It is often used to get a broad overview of a subject, although it can be used for more specific information, if the character is willing to invest the time.

For guidelines on *research* difficulties, see the chart below.

CONFIDENCE SKILLS

BRIBERY

Use: This skill may be used *untrained*

Sample Specializations: Using favors, goods or money

Bribery measures the character's ability to convince a guard, sentinel, bouncer or other authority figure to look the other way and ignore his actions. *Bribery* totals are modified by the amount offered (if money is used), the extent of favors to be received or the item offered. The Difficulty Number of a *bribery* attempt is the target's modified Confidence or *willpower*.

The Bribe: To determine how sweet a bribe is, find the value of the amount of money offered on the *MasterBook* Value Chart and divide it by two. Add this to the character's *bribery* skill total.

> ***Example:*** *Desken offers a Selastos sentinel the equivalent of 10,000 selasts to let him into town, despite the fact that he's carrying black market "Hands of Glory." The value of 10,000 is 20 — Desken adds +10 to his bribery total.*

The Target: To determine the difficulty of a bribe, take the target's Confidence or *willpower* value. Then determine the target's attitude toward the bribe. On the chart below, you'll see the level of success necessary to bribe the target (as read on the "General Success Chart" in Chapter Three of *MasterBook*).

Note that characters may attempt to use *persuasion* or *charm* to gain the target's trust or willingness, and characters who just up and offer a bribe may be automatically repulsed (i.e., the success level necessary is raised even higher) because the target becomes more suspicious than ever.

RESEARCH DIFFICULTY CHART

Situation	Difficulty
Common knowledge (information on basic cantrip spells)	7
Information that requires searching through various sources (the history of a local house or family)	10
Information from sources of varying reliability (local legends)	15
Hard to find information (detailed descriptions of Galitia in a Guildsportian's personal library)	20
Information is closely guarded	+1 to +5
Character is in a hurry	+2
Character isn't certain what he's looking for	+1 to +5
Character knows exactly what he's looking for	-1 to -3

BRIBERY CHART

Target's Attitude	Success Level Necessary
Agreeable	*Minimal*
Neutral	*Solid*
Suspicious/Unfriendly	*Good*
Wary/Hostile	*Superior*
Unwilling/Very Hostile	*Spectacular*
Absolutely Adverse	*Spectacular+*

Example: *Sentinel Arlys Garr has a will-power skill value of 10 and he is generally a "straight-arrow" guard. He does not take bribes normally. But the gamemaster determines he will not automatically reject Desken's offer — "Hands of Glory" could be made inside the city, after all. The gamemaster decides Garr is hostile to the idea of being bribed — Desken needs a Superior success over Garr's willpower of 10.*

Desken generates a skill total of 12. Adding on his +10 for the amount of money offered, he gets a 22. That's well over the minimum he needed for a Superior success against Garr's willpower, so the guard accedes.

It is possible to actively defend against a bribe.

Also, note that a target that is wealthy, or fears reprisals, will be less likely to take a bribe. The gamemaster may wish to increase the level of success needed, or, perhaps, decrease the bonus obtained from the bribe value offered.

Other Pay-Offs: Money is not the only thing with which someone can be bribed. Drugs, liquor, sex, information — virtually anything can be material for a bribe, providing the target character wants it enough. And that is where you come in as the gamemaster — if the character is offering an intangible item whose value to the target has nothing to do with its monetary value, it will be up to you to determine what modifier the *bribery* attempt gets. Offering liquor to an abstinent man would be a +0 modifier, as he has no interest in it; offering it to a guard who's thirsty could be +1 to +5, while giving it to an alcoholic suffering a "dry spell" could be +10 or higher. Use the "Modifier Chart" in Chapter Three of the *MasterBook* rule book to determine intangible modifiers.

GAMBLING

Use: This skill can be used *untrained*.
Specializations: Specific games

Gambling is the ability to win money at games of chance. There are two different types of games, *direct* and *indirect*.

A direct game is one in which the gambler

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GAMBLING DIFFICULTY TABLE

Chance of Winning	Odds	Difficulty
50%	2-1	9
33%	3-1	10
17%	5-1	13
10%	9-1	15
1%	99-1	18

actually participates, like poker, and the winner is the person who generates the highest skill total.

Indirect games are those in which the gambler tries to predict the outcome (roulette, racing, etc.) In these sorts of games, the odds of the outcome occurring determine the difficulty. But, because the results of the "gambling event" are out of the skill user's control, a character performing an indirect *gambling* attempt cannot spend Life Points or cards to affect the skill attempt.

CHARISMA SKILLS

SHAPESHIFTING

Use: Cannot be used *untrained*
Specializations: None

Shapeshifting allows a character to change his form. There are two types of shapeshifters: those who can change into multiple forms, and those who can change into only one. The latter often fall into the werecreature category, while the former may not gain the powers of their new shapes, only the appearance.

All shapeshifters have a minimum of two sets of statistics, one for their "natural" form and one for what they shift into. If a shifter is able to transform into multiple things, he may have multiple sets of statistics. Total numbers of attribute and skill points must be equal between the two, although distribution can vary. Only the character's *shapeshifting* skill value must always remain the same (it does so automatically, even if the character changes his Charisma attribute).

All shapeshifters must have the Advantage "Special Abilities (CIII or CIV): Shapeshifting I or II."

The character must also have one add in the skill *shapeshifting*.

When a player purchases additional Attribute or skill points for his 'shifter character, he pays once and can add a point to all sets of statistics. If possible, the point should be added to the same skill or Attribute for both. However, should one of the sets be unable to have the skill involved, the point can be added to another skill based off the same Attribute (with gamemaster approval).

Example: *Ted's character is a werepanther. His Human attributes look like this:*

AGILITY 8
DEXTERITY 9
ENDURANCE 8
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 9
INTELLECT 10
MIND 9
CONFIDENCE 9
CHARISMA 7

The Human has a total of 68 attribute points (excluding Toughness), which means the panther form must have 68 as well. However, Ted decides on a different point breakdown for the animal side:

AGILITY 11
DEXTERITY 8
ENDURANCE 10
STRENGTH 11
TOUGHNESS 11
INTELLECT 7
MIND 6
CONFIDENCE 9
CHARISMA 6

In some cases (as detailed in Chapter Three, "Denizens of Marl") there are limits to how far a character may change his Attribute values.

The character should also select two sets of skill adds, based on his Mind and Intellect totals. For example, one of the skills the Human Ted might select could be fire combat. *But, as a Leopard, Ted probably wouldn't have that skill since it would be impossible for him to use it. In this case, since Ted's Intellect and Mind Attributes go down, he'd have fewer Skill Points to spend. Remember, though, that his* shapeshifting *skill must remain the same in both forms.*

For further *shapeshifting* rules, see "Shape–shifting I" in Chapter Five, "Character Creation" under "Special Abilities (CIII)."

CHAPTER SEVEN

MAGIC

The two sentinel cars — stolen, Deacon guessed — wound their way through the dark streets of the Taxim Quarter. Those reanimated corpses out at this hour shot baleful looks at the vehicles — evidently, sentinels weren't welcome in this section of town.

Deacon's hosts had clammed up. They seemed nervous, like they weren't really all that anxious to get where they were going. *Well, if Vera was an example of how their boss treats his employees, I can see why they'd feel that way.*

But the silence was getting on his nerves. "Law in this town renting their cars now, are they? Or do you guys just have pals on the force?"

"Shuddup, shamus," one of them growled. "Or we might have to rough you up a little."

Deacon chuckled. "I don't think so. I think your boss wants me in one piece. Hell, he could have iced me in Galitia, if that was all he wanted. Who is he, boys? What's his beef?"

The driver laughed. It sounded more like a croak. "You're gonna find out, buddy. And you'll be sorry you asked."

Deacon sat back and looked around him. No handles on the doors; locks glowed like something was charged in them. Nothing to do but wait, and wonder if anybody in Galitia had noticed he was gone. *Good thing I owe so many people dough. Nobody looks after your health better than a creditor.*

The driver made a sharp right and pulled into an alley, with warehouses on either side. Then he drew his gun and aimed it at the detective.

"End of the line, Deacon. This is where you get off."

For a second, Deacon wondered if a dead man's eyes would be the last thing he'd ever see.

Magic is an important part of daily life on Marl. In fact, most beings view it in much the same way you view electricity — something they depend on, something they take for granted, something they're not certain they could do without. Were magic as a force of nature to vanish tomorrow, Marl's cities would grind to a halt.
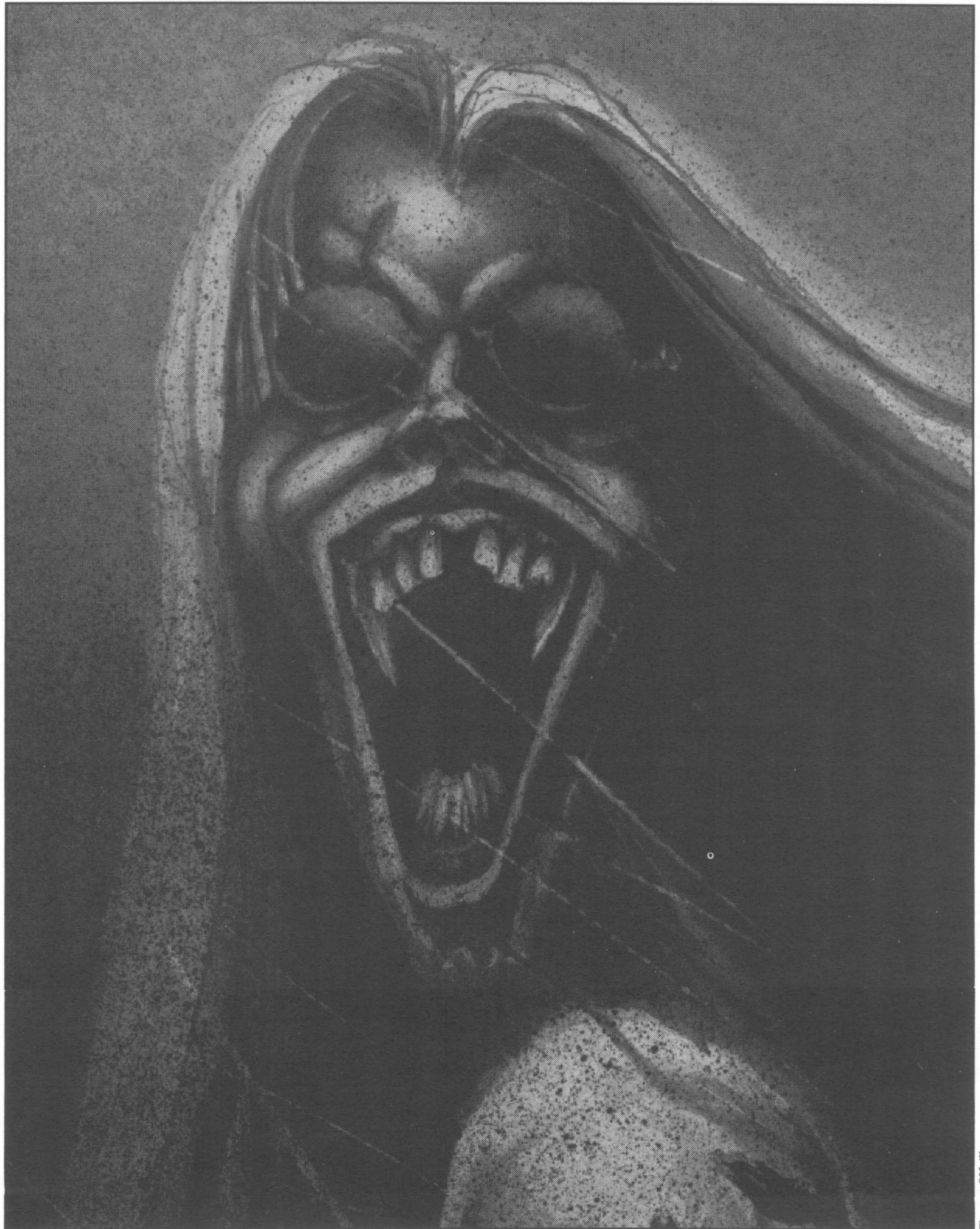
Thomas ONeill

Virtually everyone knows some magic, even if it's just basic cantrips, the equivalent of knowing how to ride a bike or tie your shoelaces. Above them, there are people who know a little about a lot of different types of magic. They are more versatile — like a bike repairman or an average shoemaker — but not as effective as someone who has specialized in a particular type of magic and become proficient in it.

Think of it this way: you might know how to change the tire on your car, unstop your sink, and plaster over a hole in your wall. But that doesn't make you a mechanic, a plumber or a carpenter. If a more complex problem arises, you're probably going to call in a specialist.

It's the same on Marl. If a glowstone burns out, a person would know how to remove it from the wall and where to go to get it recharged (or buy a new one). But if it starts going dim, then burning bright, then fading again, then they'd call in a lightmage, somebody whose profession is dealing with those kinds of problems.

Not every kind of mage can be found in every city, and there are some types who are so few and far between that you might never encounter them. Easily the rarest are temporal mages and dimensional sorcerers — and when one is found, her price is so high that the average guy can't afford to hire her.

There's also a small percentage of Marl's population who know no magic at all. Some are simply magically uncoordinated and have never mastered the skills; others are incapable of learning the skills by nature, but may have a heightened resistance to magic to compensate for this.

This chapter will detail how magic works in Bloodshadows, and present you with some sample spells. Before reading any further, make sure you read Chapter Six of *MasterBook*, "Creating and Using Special Effects." That will give you the basic rules and background you need to understand some of the terms used in this chapter.

THE MAGIC SKILLS

There are five basic magic skills in *Bloodshadows*: *alteration*, *apportation*, *conjuration*, *divination*, and *summoning*, all of which require training before they can be used. These are explained in detail in Chapter Four of *MasterBook*, "Skills and Skill Use," but for the sake of convenience, we'll give you a thumbnail sketch here as well.

ALTERATION (CONFIDENCE)

Spells that cause things to change are *alteration* spells. This means the rite takes something and modifies or mutates it into something else. *Alteration* spells are commonly used to increase skills or attributes. *Alteration* should not be used to create anything — for example, a spell that increases an attribute value from 0 to one or more would start with nothing, so *conjuration* (see below) would be used instead of *alteration*.

APPORTATION (INTELLECT)

This magic skill governs the controlled movement of targets from one place to another through intervening space. Spells that restrict movement might also be *apportation* spells. Generally, a character uses *apportation* is substituting his spell for some sort of effect that could (theoretically) be produced by "normal" means. For example, a spell that lifts a rock or causes a person to fly would be an *apportation* spell. Teleportation (the movement of an object instantaneously from one place to another, without moving through the intervening space) would be a product of a *summoning* spell (see below).

CONJURATION (MIND)

This magic skill is used to produce something from nothing. A spell that causes something to materialize from thin air or imbues life into an inanimate object would be considered a *conjuration* rite. Also, a spell that imbues characteristics to a thing that

IDENTIFYING SPELL-SKILLS

When you are creating your spells using the *MasterBook* Special Effects system, you will occasionally have problems deciding what spell skill you're going to have to use when casting the spell. That's understandable — the lines are a little blurry, here and there. Hopefully, the guidelines in this section will help.

Take a look at your *effect value*. That's the meat of most spells — it is what determines how strongly the spell will affect the "target." What is your effect value going to do? What attribute(s)/value(s) is the effect value going to be measured against.

If you think of the spell in these terms, you should be able *to guess at those* "marginal" spells. And, if you find out later you weren't correct, there shouldn't be a real problem — magic is an *art*, not a science. If you accidentally create an *alteration* spell that should have been *conjuration*, then it is an "aberration in the art," not a precedent. Just make the rest of the spells you create work correctly.

would not normally have those characteristics (or anything to start with) would be a *conjuration* skill. For example, animating a corpse and giving it attribute values (corpses have all normal attributes at a value of 0, though they should have a Toughness based on their composition), would be a *conjuration* skill, since you are producing something from nothing. A spell that increases a character's attributes from a value other than zero would be an *alteration* spell (see above).

DIVINATION (INTELLECT)

Use of this skill allows the character to magically obtain knowledge or expand his senses in some way or another past the norm. All spells that a character uses to gain knowledge (such as scrying, "far-sight" spells, etc.) fall under *divination*. For example, a spell that allows a character to see behind walls or over obstructed distances (like on the other side of a mountain) would be a *divination* spell, as would a spell that allowed a character to look into the past or future. But a spell that increased a character's *perception* spell or just his range of sight (or another sense) would be *alteration*.

SUMMONING (CHARISMA)

This skill governs the magical process of "called movement." This means bringing something from one place to another either by having it move under its own power or through magical means. Calling a dagger from its box in your home to your hand is *summoning*, as is luring a demon forth from the netherworld. Calling a dagger or a creature out of nothingness is *conjuration*.

OBTAINING MAGIC SKILLS

Unless a character has a Background Advantage or Compensation that precludes his having one or all of these skills, he may purchase them at the normal cost for skills (detailed in Chapter Four of *MasterBook*). The character does *not* need to purchase the Advantage "Special Effects (CIII)" listed in *MasterBook*.

However, in *Bloodshadows* it's not enough to just purchase a magic skill. You must also purchase a focus for it. The focus is purchased at the same time you purchase the skill and does not cost any additional skill points. You may purchase a magic skill more than once with different foci.

Example: *Desken wishes to be able to perform* fire *spells and* death *spells, particularly ones that involve* divination. *He therefore purchases one add in* divination: elemental *and one add in* divination: necromancy.

The *first* time a character purchases a particular focus, he receives one free add in the arcane knowledge of his choice, providing that knowledge is one of those normally associated with that focus. Subsequent purchases of skill adds in that focus do not result in additional free arcane knowledge adds.

Example: *Desken purchases one add in* divination: elemental. *He has a choice of one free add in* air, fire, water *or* earth, *as these are the arcane knowledges most often associated with the* elemental *focus.*

For more information on arcane knowledges, see below.

THE FOCI

There are **nine** schools of magic included in this WorldBook. These are by no means the only types of magic that can be learned in *Bloodshadows*, but they're a good start. Other types of magic will be detailed in later supplements.

Each of these schools of magic can be used as a focus for a magical skill. The schools are:

ALCHEMY

A combination of science and sorcery, alchemy is primarily concerned with the transformation of base metals into gold or silver, the creation of life (particularly homunculi) and the quest for immortality via an elixir of life.

Alchemists believe that everything in the universe is composed of variations of one basic material, *prima materia*. This is an essence of mercury, created by removing the principles of water, earth and air from ordinary mercury. Once the *prima materia* is obtained, it is treated with a philosopher's stone (which is itself created by refining sulphur down to its basic principle). There are two types of philosopher's stones in existence: white, which transforms *prima materia* into silver, and yellow which transforms it into gold.

Alchemical processes require a large number of specific components and a great deal of heat. Since many of the chemicals involved in alchemical experiments and spells are volatile, alchemists often perish in fires or explosions. It's not unusual for an alchemist to walk around with singed hair and scorched clothing.

In the old days, alchemists made money by converting base metals to gold. Since that's now frowned upon by most city banks, these wizards of science finance their work by selling potions and performing rites. Alchemists can be found in most cities on Marl.

Most alchemical spells in *Bloodshadows* are charged into potions. For more information on alchemical potions and spells, see Chapter Eight, "Equipment."

NECROMANCY

Sorcery dealing with the dead, either spells to communicate with them or to raise them from their graves is necromancy. Although the average necromancer will tell you that his school of magic is no worse than any other, incidents like the Ashter "corpse crisis" have given it a very bad reputation.

(It's said that in the small city of Ashter, some 70 years ago, the half dozen local necromancers discovered that people simply weren't dying quickly enough to keep up with their demand. So they started killing a few here and a few there, then raising them again, until the whole city was made up of walking dead. A courier visiting the town noticed something was wrong when the caretaker of the only park accidentally sheared his hand off with an elemental saw and seemed not to notice. It's rumored that the necromancers eventually started in on each other, and Ashter is now truly a city of the dead. How much of this is truth, and how much legend, no one knows — but few of the living visit Ashter and return.)

At any rate, necromancers will often keep their hobby to themselves, since few landlords want reanimated corpses traipsing up and down the stairs. The most common cover story is being an earthmage, which explains the clumps of fresh dirt all over the lobby.

VITOMANCY

If necromancy is the magic of death, vitomancy is the magic of life. Virtually anything that lives can be affected by vitomantic spells, but casters should be aware that things like walking dead (Zombies, etc.), Undead (Vampires and the like) and things that have never lived (such as Demons) are immune to vitomancy and are covered by wizardry (see below).

Vitomancy spells include healing rites, spells that increase attributes or skills, spells that aid in interaction, and those that deal with the plant and animal kingdoms. Vitomancy also has its darker side, though — the creation of half-breeds and genetic horrors must have been done by means of vitomancy. Many Wilderness creatures would not exist without this school of magic.

Oathbreakers who have drifted from Order often use vitomancy spells, as the school is bound to nature.

TECHNOMANCY

Magic having to do with machinery, favored particularly by Oathbreakers who have drifted from Chaos. Mechanics, weaponsmiths, and metalworkers of all sorts also make use of technomancy on a daily basis.

Technomancy is also a valuable skill for those who wish to make their living by mining or tracing down stolen precious metals.

PHOTOMANCY

This school covers all light and darkness spells, and its use is evenly divided between Order and Chaos. A city resident is more likely to run into a lightmage than a darkmage, as the former has more practical use than the latter.

Many photomancers find employment in the entertainment industry, constructing light and darkness shows.

WIZARDRY

This is the magic *of* magic — wizardry governs not only simple spells, but demons and other Unnaturals who are sorcerous by nature. It is one of the more powerful commonly available schools of magic, and its practitioners work as detectives, teachers, guides, exorcists and in a host of other occupations. A word of warning, though: this versatile school of magic and its practitioners are very often the prey of powerful Unnaturals who fear the power wizards may hold on Marl.

ELEMENTAL

As the magic that governs fire, earth, air and water, elemental spells are very common in most cities, large or small. Earth and watermages are essential to a city's agriculture, and the latter also are valuable on sailing vessels. (Those vessels powered by wind will covet airmages as well.)

Every city also has its share of firemages, many of whom are attached to the local law and charged with dousing blazes, whether natural or supernatural in origin. Rogue firemages who use their spells for arson and spontaneous combustion are hunted down and killed without remorse.

SORCERY

A powerful and relatively rare type of magic, sorcery governs the opening of dimensional gates, travel of the astral form, and teleportation. Purchasing the services of a sorcerer is always a worthwhile investment, especially if a party is planning on going *through a gate* or attempting teleportation. The dimensions through which characters might pass (or where they might wind up) make Selastos' Taxim Quarter look like a cult social in the Town Hall. Having someone who knows their way around a bizarre environment can come in pretty handy.

Note: the term "sorcery" means, essentially, "power from a source." It would be well for would-

be sorcerers to reflect on where their power might be coming from.

CHRONOMANCY

The rarest and arguably the most powerful form of magic, chronomancy spells deal with time itself. There are no known schools of chronomancy extant in Marl's cities, although there are rumors of a hidden city somewhere where it is taught. Some say sorcery was originally taught there exclusively as well, but some of the students eventually left and began imparting those secrets in larger cities for gold.

It's recommended that player characters not start out as chronomancers. If they really want to learn the skill, you can build a campaign out of their search for the hidden city (or cities) where the skill is taught, and the tests they will have to pass to earn the right to learn it.

THE ARCANE KNOWLEDGES

Every focus has certain arcane knowledges associated with it. Note, however, that characters are not restricted to only those spells associated with their focus or foci. But the foci they possess knowledge of may affect how they go about casting spells.

What does all this mean? Basically, it means that certain spells, like *fireball*, are very basic in nature. Every school of magic has its own version of the spell, which may differ in terms of components used or other optional modifiers. For example, the *fireball* spell listed below is designed for use by an elemental firemage, and its component is an open flame. But a necromancer who wished to cast a *fireball* spell would use very different components, one of them possibly being a "corpse candle" — a ball of fire seen hovering over graves late in the night. The overall effect of the spell remains the same, but how different mages get there changes.

For more on how different schools cast the same spells see the sidebar, "Focus on Fireballs."

Arcane knowledges are specific bits of information regarding specific types of spells. They are not required for the successful casting of a spell, and there is no penalty for casting an elemental fire spell, for example, without knowing the *fire* arcane knowledge. But they do perform some useful functions:

† A character may add his relevant arcane knowledge adds to his spell skill total to improve his chances of succeeding at a cast.

Example: *Chase wishes to cast the* awaken *spell on a party member. He has an* alteration: vitomancy *skill value of 9 and one add in the arcane knowledge* living forces.

He rolls a 15, for a +3, which brings his total to 12. But by adding the +1 of his arcane knowledge, he ends with a 13 for a successful cast.

† Arcane knowledges cost the same to purchase as do skills, but they do not work off any attribute. Thus, adds in an arcane knowledge can be added to totals of any of the five magic skills.

Buying arcane knowledges can be a very good investment. For instance, your character is an elemental mage who particularly likes fire spells. He already has five adds in *conjuration: elemental* and purchasing a sixth add would be expensive. However, it would be much cheaper to buy one add in the arcane knowledge *fire* and would give him the same benefit as a sixth add in *conjuration: elemental* would when casting fire spells.

If a character has relevant arcane knowledge adds, he must add them to his spell skill total when casting.

† Arcane knowledges can also be used for other things. When attempting an Intellect, *perception* or *deduction* roll to determine if a spell was used, the gamemaster might allow the character to add his arcane knowledge adds to his skill total.

Example: *McCree is investigating an arson, but isn't certain whether it was set with a match and accelerants or fire-based spells He generates a* perception *total and factors in his two adds in the arcane knowledge* fire. *If his skill total plus his* fire *adds is high enough, he will learn whether or not a* fire *spell was used in the arson.*

† Arcane knowledges may be used to enhance other skill values as well. Gamemasters are encouraged, but not required, to allow characters to add all, or part, of their arcane knowledge adds to other skill totals as the occasion permits. For example, if a character with *living forces* adds were trying to figure out whether a certain creature was alive or Undead, the gamemaster might allow him to make a *perception* or Intellect total and add in all, or part, of his *living forces* adds. These "benefits" should be only added in occasionally, to encourage roleplaying particular kinds of mages.

SPELLS AND ARCANE KNOWLEDGES

All spells listed below include the "Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge." If you, as gamemaster, feel that the arcane knowledge possessed by a character is close enough to the intent and nature of the spell, you may allow him to use those adds to up his casting total at your discretion.

There is no restriction on what arcane knowledges a character might buy. For example, your character might have adds in *divination:*

technomancy, conjuration: photomancy, and *alteration: necromancy*, but choose to purchase adds in the *fire* and *air* arcane knowledges. This is perfectly all right — characters need not restrict themselves only to arcane knowledges that are commonly associated with the schools of magic in which they're skilled.

THE ARCANE KNOWLEDGE LIST

There are twenty-one arcane knowledges listed here for use in the *Bloodshadows* universe. Though they encompass virtually any type of spell or knowledge, they may be expanded on by the gamemaster or by future supplements. Brief descriptions of each follow:

Death: The essence of non-existence, death is not regarded as evil by most mages, simply as another step in nature's path. But all too often, death magic is used to pervert nature, particularly when reanimating the dead.

Life: Most powerful of the knowledges associated with vitomancy, this actually allows for the creation and preservation of life. For that reason, there are relatively few known *life* spells, but those that do exist are very powerful. *Life* is a favored arcane knowledge of alchemists.

Living Forces: This arcane knowledge deals with all things living and is used in spells designed to detect the presence of others or heighten attributes and skills. This arcane knowledge differs from *life* in that it does not deal with the creation of life but, rather, the forces that surround the living of life.

Aquatic: This knowledge covers all marine life as well as amphibians. Note that *aquatic* spells will not be effective on sea creatures with Mind values of 5 or more, as these are considered to be folk (below).

Animal: All creatures who live on or in the ground are considered to be animals. Note that this knowledge does not apply to such creatures with Mind values of 5 or more, as these are considered to be folk (below).

Plant: Any growing things rooted to the soil — flowers, hedges, trees — fall under this classification. *Plant* also includes vegetation that grows in river or seabeds. Plant species with Mind values of 5 or better are considered to be folk (see below).

Avian: This knowledge encompasses all flying creatures, including insects and bats. Creatures capable of flight only because of magical natures are considered to be enchanted (see below), rather than *avian*. Flying creatures with Mind values of 5 or better are considered to be folk (see below).

Folk: All intelligent beings whose defining relationship is with their own kind and who are a part of the natural world (Marl) are folk. The demarcation line is the Mind attribute, which must be at 5 or higher for the being to be considered folk. Also, creatures that have close origins outside of Marl (such as Demons, Shadows, etc.) are not considered to be folk. The once-living (the Undead and walking dead) are also no longer folk.

Metal: Substances of the earth which are pliable when flame is applied. The *metal* arcane knowledge also governs metallic elements, such as arsenic or cinnabar.

Light: Radiant energy which acts upon the eye, making sight possible. *Light* also governs other forms of energy, such as ultraviolet and infrared.

Darkness: The absence of light. As the presence of darkness acts to make the known the unknown, it has long been identified with Chaotic magic. It is the antithesis of light.

Magic: A natural energy that is able to produce supernatural effects, when tapped into and used properly. Magic can be manipulated through gestures, incantations, and the like, and is not inherently good or evil. Generally, only spells that do not conform to other arcane knowledges should be considered *magic* spells.

Inanimate Forces: The forces which affect non-*elemental* and non-*living forces* conditions, such as magnetism, electricity, heat and cold are governed by *inanimate forces*. Note that this knowledge does not produce fireballs or ice daggers, which are more closely identified with the elements themselves.

Enchanted: Beings whose essential natures are magic, such as elementals, fall under the heading of *enchanted*. This knowledge also governs shapeshifters and those zombies not possessed by demons. Note that it does not apply to most breeds, as in general they mix the blood of two folk species, or one folk and one animal, whereby the stronger of the two wins (as determined by the Mind attribute).

Entity: This knowledge covers beings who have never truly lived, such as demons and golems, those who have died and have no physical existence now, such as ghosts, and those whose *existence* runs contrary to nature, such as Undead.

Earth: This knowledge includes soil, rock, glass, ceramics and anything else made from earthen components. Note that metals do not come under this heading, as they have their own arcane knowledge.

Air: This encompasses all substances which are gases at room temperature (save water vapor).

SCHOOLS OF MAGIC AND ARCANE KNOWLEDGES

Listed below are the schools of magic and the arcane knowledges most often associated with them. Note that when a character purchases his first skill add in a particular focus, he receives a free arcane knowledge add in *one* of the knowledges associated with that focus.

Alchemy: All arcane knowledges
Necromancy: Death
Vitomancy: Life, living forces, aquatic, animal, plant, avian, folk
Technomancy: Metal
Photomancy: Light, darkness
Wizardry: Magic, inanimate forces, enchanted, entity
Elemental: Earth, air, fire, water
Sorcery: Dimension
Chronomancy: Time

Fire: Any form of combustion is governed by the *fire* arcane knowledge. Note that heat without flame is governed by *inanimate forces*.

Water: Virtually every liquid is governed by the *water* knowledge, provided it has water as a component. Ice is also included under this knowledge, but the act of cooling or freezing something comes under the heading of *inanimate forces*.

Time: This governs the force that mandates a progression of events, and both random change and radical change are capable using this knowledge. That is why *time* is considered both an Order and a Chaos knowledge.

Dimension: Spells that involve the fabric of one's space in some way — breaching it, sealing it, or traveling through it — are governed by *dimension*. Adds in *dimension* can also be added to Intellect skills in an effort to find one's way through a strange dimension after gating or teleporting.

ALIGNMENT

As was mentioned in Chapter Two, not every character is involved in the Godwar, and not every character needs to have an alignment. Having one can, however, be either a help or a hindrance in casting spells.

For details on choosing an alignment and gaining adds in it, see Chapter Five, "Character Creation."

There are four different possible alignments:

ARCANE KNOWLEDGES AND ALIGNMENTS

ORDER
Light
Living Forces
Enchanted
Aquatic
Avian
Animal
Air
Time
CHAOS
Darkness
Inanimate Forces
Entity
Fire
Water
Dimension
OATHBREAKER/ORDER
Light
Living Forces
Enchanted
Aquatic
Avian
Animal
Air
Earth
OATHBREAKER/CHAOS
Darkness
Inanimate Forces
Entity
Fire
Water
Metal

Order, Chaos, Oathbreaker/Order and Oathbreaker/Chaos. Listed in the "Arcane Knowledges and Alignments" box you will find the arcane knowledges most often associated with these different alignments. Note that some arcane knowledges (*life*, *death*, *magic* and *folk*) are not included under any alignment, being a part of all of them.

Spells listed below will include a parenthetical symbol to indicate which alignment the rite is associated with, based upon the applicable arcane knowledge. (Note, however, that not all spells are associated with an alignment.) If your spellcaster has no alignment, disregard this symbol, as it won't have any effect, positive or negative, upon his casting.

ALIGNMENT KEY

O: Order
C: Chaos
OB-O: Oathbreaker (Order)
OB-C: Oathbreaker (Chaos)

If your spellcaster does have an alignment, though, this symbol is important. When he casts a spell which is associated with his alignment, he may subtract his alignment adds from the feedback value of the spell.

Example: Desken has one add in Order and is casting an awaken spell. He generates a spell skill total of 10, for 0 result points, meaning he would take a feedback of 12. However, since the spell is associated with Order, he may subtract his Order add from the feedback, making it an 11.

If the caster is attempting to cast a spell which is associated with an alignment other than his own, he must add his alignment adds to the feedback, increasing the damage he will take.

Example: Desken decides to cast rain of razors, a spell associated with Oathbreaker/Chaos. He must add his one Order add to the Feedback Value to determine the amount of damage he takes when casting the spell.

Again, characters who have no alignment are not affected by any of this. They gain no bonuses and suffer no penalties as a result of having no alignment.

CREATING YOUR OWN SPELLS

Of course, you are expected to use the special effects creation system in the *MasterBook* rule book to create your own spells. When you do, you will want to specify not only what *magic skill: focus* is necessary to cast the spell, but what, if any arcane knowledges might be helpful. It is from the arcane knowledges that you can determine what spells are close to which alignments.

This is another of the give-and-take factors of arcane knowledges. While a character with a lot of arcane knowledge adds can build spells that will use the knowledges he has the most adds in, he will also attract alignment considerations. If he remains non-aligned, or chooses to act in a manner consistent with the alignment favored by his arcane knowledges, then he'll be fine. Otherwise, he'll be working at cross-purposes, gaining benefits from his arcane knowledges and losing them from his alignment.

FEEDBACK

The idea of feedback — damage taken by a caster as a result of casting a spell — works a little differently in the world of *Bloodshadows* than originally presented in the *MasterBook* rule book. Entire neighborhoods of some of the larger cities of Marl are filled with people who tried to do too much with too little magic, or vice versa, and blew their brains out the back of their heads. Madness, mutation and malevolent miseries wait for sorcerers who just weren't *quite* good enough to get off that last spell ...

That's why we have introduced the optional "Feedback Results Chart," and the rules for how it works. When your character takes a *wound* or better on the "Damage" column of the Success Chart (in *MasterBook*) from feedback, he rolls two dice on the Feedback Results Chart *instead*. He should choose one die to the be the "tens" and one to be the "ones" (double zeros equalling 100). For every *additional wound* he would normally suffer, he must add +10 to the Feedback roll.

Example: Brian's character, Hogshead, a Gris who dabbles in the magic arts, suffers 10 points of Feedback damage from his last fire-ball, which translates into "2Wnd Knockdown K3" on the Success Chart. Brian rolls two dice, getting a "5" on his "tens" die and a "9" on his "ones" die — a 59. Since Hogshead has two "Wnd" (wound) results, the first earns him a roll on the Feedback Results Chart (the 49), and the second gives him a +10 — he has a Feedback Results roll of 69. The gamemaster looks on the Feedback Results Chart and discovers that Hogshead is suffering from "temporary dementia" as a result of damage taken from the spell. Hogshead also takes the Knockdown, the K, and three shock points.

Note that Feedback Results Chart effects take the place of serious physical damage, and are not in addition to it. In the example above, Hogshead suffers only the "temporary dementia," not the wounds. He *does*, however, take the shock damage and any "K," "O," or "Knockdown" results.

Life Points and cards may be spent to reduce damage *prior* to rolling on the Feedback Results Chart. Thus, if Hogshead had a Life Point to spend, he could have cancelled the two *wounds* and either the K, the Knockdown, or the three shock points — and he wouldn't have had to roll on the Feedback Results Chart.

Note also that not everything on the chart is bad — it's possible to have positive effects from a magical backlash, though that's a rare development. In addition, characters who end up with totals between 01 and 50 suffer no effects at all

OPTIONAL RULE: NOT USING THE CHART

The Feedback Results Chart has been introduced in this WorldBook as an alternative to damage because the world of Marl is a world of magic. Spellcasters who use the chart are less likely to kill themselves over a bad die roll or miscast spell — rather, they will suffer other consequences that will involve roleplaying to get out of (or just to suffer through).

If the gamemaster wishes, he can make this rule optional. The best way to do this is, before a character casts a spell, he can declare whether or not he will absorb the damage or roll on the Feedback Results Chart if it becomes necessary. The gamemaster and the players should agree on which is the "default" — that is, if the player does not declare whether his character will take damage or roll on the chart, which happens — before play begins.

While this does not fit as well into the themes behind roleplaying in the world of Marl, it can make things a little more interesting — strategically — for magic-using characters.

from feedback, making this method of determining "magical consequences" a fairly attractive one.

EXPANDING THE FEEDBACK RESULTS CHART

Ambitious gamemasters may choose to shrink some of the "point spreads" listed on the Feedback Results Chart and add in their own effects. Do this if you are interested. Generally, effects should not completely cripple or kill a character (there are those that do, but they are fairly few and far-between), but they should be pretty negative. The occasional "good" result can be added in, just to give some sort of balance. Basically, about one in five results should be reasonably good.

INTERPRETING VAGUE RESULTS

Many of the results on the chart were left intentionally vague — no game mechanics; that sort of thing. This was intentional. Only the gamemaster knows how severe or how light an effect should be. Most of the effects are permanent, so the character and the gamemaster will have to live with them for a while. The gamemaster can choose to vary the

same effect occasionally as well. For example, a character who obtains a Feedback Result roll of 136–140 attracts a bodiless spirit that will try to influence him. One character's bodiless spirit might be relatively benign, willing to check behind doors or offer helpful advice on occasion. Another one might be vicious and terrible, with high interaction skills it uses to try to kill or at least injure the character.

CASTING A SPELL

As you can see, the *Bloodshadows* universe adds a few steps to the *MasterBook* system of casting spells. So for ease of use, here's a step-by-step breakdown:

1. Generate the appropriate spell skill total;

2. Add any applicable arcane knowledge adds to the spell skill total to determine the final skill total;

3. If the final skill total is lower than the Difficulty Number of the spell, go to Step Four, otherwise skip to Step Five;

4. Subtract the final skill total from the Difficulty Number of the spell, then add this number to the Feedback Value;

5. Subtract the number of result points by which you exceeded the Difficulty Number of the spell by (if any) from the Feedback Value of the spell;

6. Subtract or add your alignment adds (if any and as appropriate) from/to the spell's current Feedback Value

7. If the Feedback Value is positive, read it as result points on the "Damage" column of the Success Chart;

8. Interpret the Feedback Damage as either damage to the character or use the Feedback Results Chart to determine what happens to the character who cast the spell;

9. Assign the effects of the spell, as listed in the spell's description.

Example: *Michael "Downtown" Riley is a small-time thug and part-time magician. Recently, he obtained one add in Oathbreaker/ Chaos. He also has a skill value of* alteration: elemental *13, and two adds in the arcane knowledge* water. *He wants to cast the spell* acid bath *(listed below).*

(Step One) The spell has a DN of 19 and an FV of 20. Michael gets lucky, generating a skill total of 20. (Step Two) He adds in his two water *adds (since the* water *arcane knowledge is listed as "Most Applicable" under the spell description), for a skill total of 22.*

(Step Three) The skill total is higher than the DN of the spell, (Skip to Step Five) so "Downtown" subtracts the number of result

FEEDBACK RESULTS CHART

01–50 No effect

51–60 Allotrophiaghy: The character vomits foreign objects for three rounds and may perform no other actions during that time — roll one die on the "Allotrophiaghy Table"

Allotrophiaghy Table

1 Feathers — no damage*

2 Blood (not the character's) — no damage

3 Insects — damage value 9 per round

4 Live creatures (toads, mice, etc.) — damage value 12 per round

5 Coins — damage value 15 per round

6 Pins — damage value 17 per round

7 Nails — damage value 18 per round

8 Acid — damage value 20 per round

9 Roll again twice, ignoring this result

10 Roll again twice, ignoring this result

*Any damage suffered is to the character's Toughness without armor (since it is internal)

61–70 Temporary Dementia: Roll one die. This is the number of hours the character suffers from hallucinations, paranoia, loss of mental capacity, and general madness (the character should be "less than effective" or helpful to his party during this time)

71–75 The character gains the Background Advantage "Special Abilities (CIII): Shapeshifting I" to a gamemaster-decided form. However, the character has no adds in the *shapeshifting* skill in regards to this form — he transforms randomly until he can spend skill points to buy the skill. This condition is permanent.

76–85 The character's skin grows brittle and dry. Every time the character suffers *any* damage in combat, he suffers a "Bleeding" result (see the optional rules for "Bleeding" in the *MasterBook* combat section) in addition to any other damage he takes, because of the damage to his capillaries. This condition is permanent.

86–90 The character feels terribly drained. If the character has any Life Points, one is immediately lost, spent unconsciously. In addition, the character takes two shock points of damage (which he cannot cancel). These shock will not heal until the character has taken at least a week of rest.

91–100 Amnesia: The gamemaster should determine, either randomly or by choice, five skills that the character "forgets" how to use (he becomes *untrained* in their use). The character may "remember" the skills at any time by spending one Life Point per skill.

101–105 Surge of energy: The character suddenly feels powerful. For the rest of the adventure, the character cannot generate a bonus number lower than -3 (all bonus numbers generated under -3 are considered to be -3). Modifiers may reduce the character's skill totals by more than -3, however.

106–110 Cosmetic change: Roll a d10 on the following table:

1 Character becomes tremendously hirsute, growing hair all over his body.

2 Character loses all his hair.

3 Character's skin changes color radically (and to a tint not normal for his species).

4 Character glows in the dark (faintly).

5 Character begins to attract dirt and filth, regardless of how often he washes.

6 Character takes on the outward characteristics of the opposite sex of his species.

7 Character's eyes change color (to an unnatural hue for his species).

8 Character's ears double in length.

9 Character's tongue elongates to the point it will no longer stay in his mouth.

10 Roll twice on this table, ignoring this result hereafter.

These effects are permanent, but they are *cosmetic*. The gamemaster should determine game effects as appropriate (the character might lose a point or two

of Charisma, or gain a "Prejudice" Compensation). Note that some creature-characters may actually be unaffected by this — they luck out.

111–120 Physical Change: Roll a d10 on the following table:

1 Character grows a foot in height, losing one point of Agility and gaining one in Strength

2 Character loses a foot in height, losing one point of Strength and gaining on in Agility

3 Character's hands enlarge by 50%; he loses a point of Dexterity

4 Character's fingers become thin and supple; he gains a point of Dexterity

5 Character grows an extra head somewhere on his body, possibly gaining up to +3 on *perception* totals (and almost definitely gaining "Prejudice (CII)" or higher)

6 Character loses an arm or leg without suffering damage. The gamemaster should determine the game effects as appropriate.

7 Character's head explodes, doing damage value 20 to all those within a three-meter radius. Character is dead, unless he is of a species that can survive this.

8 Time seems to slow for the character. His Agility and Dexterity attributes are effectively increased by +1, but his life span is halved.

9 Nothing happens immediately, but the next time the character takes a *wound* or greater in combat, swarms of insects burst out of his body, killing him and attacking those around him (Gamemasters: Keep this one a secret).

10 Nothing happens.

121–130 Spiritual shift. The character's spirit leaps out of his body and immediately tries to take over the body of the character or creature nearest him (gamemaster's call). The bodiless spirit attacks using his Confidence or *willpower* plus five on the "Intimidation" column of the Success Chart. If the bodiless character achieves a *player's call* within a number of rounds equal to his body's Endurance attribute, then he "moves in," casting out the victim (who then automatically takes over the uninhabited body). If he fails, then his body dies and he becomes a bodiless spirit.

131–135 The character absorbs one Life Point from every character that has one in a thirty-meter radius. Every Life Point over ten the character receives turns into one *wound* — and these wounds cannot be cancelled.

136–140 A bodiless spirit is attracted to the character. It becomes a gamemaster character with no ability to affect the world except by trying to *persuade* or otherwise interact with the player character it is attracted to. The gamemaster should determine its interaction abilities.

141–145 The character suffers from terrible luck. Every time the character generates a die total of 2 (before spending cards or Life Points), he experiences a *setback*.

146–149 The character combusts. If he generates, immediately, a Confidence or *willpower* skill total of 30 *and* spends one Life Point, he survives, becoming a creature of fire. His physical and mental attributes remain the same, except that he can add one-third of his Toughness (rounded up) to any attacks he makes with his bare hands (he can, however, choose not to burn things he touches).

150 The character becomes a God. Unfortunately, with the Godwar heating up again, other Gods who have had more practice at the job notice and capture the character, hauling him away for torture and experimentation (and out of the campaign forever).

151+ The magical energy surrounding the character at the time the spell was cast goes wild. The gamemaster should determine what it does, depending on the intent and nature of the spell — and nothing good should come of it.

points he obtained over the DN (22-19 = 3) from the Feedback Value of the spell (20-3 = 17).

(Step Six) But, because "Downtown" is of Oathbreaker/Chaotic alignment, he has to add his alignment add to the Feedback Value of the spell (it is Oathbreaker/Order), giving him a Feedback Total of 17+1 = 18.

(Step Seven) On the "Damage" column of the Success Chart, 18 result points reads as "5Wnd KO7." Ouch! Fortunately, the gamemaster is using the Feedback Results Chart instead of applying the damage normally, or "Downtown" would be in real trouble.

Even so, "Downtown" elects to spend a Life Point to cancel some of the "damage." He cancels two of the "wounds" and the K, meaning he'll take an O and seven shock points — not to mention the three "wounds."

(Step Eight) The first wound means that "Downtown" has to roll on the Feedback Results Chart. The second and third mean he'll be doing it at +20. The gamemaster rolls the dice, getting a 46 — +20, that's a 66 Feedback Result. On the Chart, that means "Downtown" suffers from "temporary dementia" for 1d10 hours. The gamemaster rolls, getting a 7. So, for seven hours, "Downtown" will be acting even stranger than usual.

(Step Nine) Since acid bath *is a damage spell, the gamemaster uses "Downtown's" casting total of 22 (the* apportation: elemental *skill total he generated, plus his* water *adds) to determine whether he hit or not. If he did, the damage value of the attack is equal to the effect value of the spell.*

INTERPRETING EFFECT VALUES

In the *MasterBook* rule book, and in the spell descriptions below, there are guidelines for determining the effect values of special effects and spells. But a little clarification won't hurt.

First of all, when an effect value is used as a damage value, it is *never* modified by result points. It doesn't matter how well a spell hits a person — just that it does. At least in most cases. Some gamemasters may want to experiment with allowing result points to modify spell damage values, but it is not usually recommended — magic is pretty powerful as it is.

Secondly, certain effect values will have some unusual rules. That's fine for spells listed in this book, but how do you interpret spells you create? How do you know when you should read the effect value on what table or against which attribute?

Well, due to the wide range of spells that can be created, you'll have to use your best judgement. In most cases, you can compare what the spell does to some other, similar, game mechanic. For example,

a spell that is designed to control a character's mind might be said to intimidate him or charm him into submission — so you can either use the rules for *intimidation* or *charm*, substituting the effect value of the spell for the skill value you would normally use.

You should also consider the Value Chart as a helpful tool. For instance, if you want to create a spell that grabs a character and lifts him into the air, you'll need the Value Chart. The caster's appropriate spell skill (almost definitely *apportation: something*) can be used as the "attacking" skill value (versus the target's *dodge* or Agility), but the effect value governs how much the spell can lift and how fast the spell can move the target. The effect value of the spell has to be at least as high as the target's mass value to lift him or her, and, if you subtract the target's mass value from the effect value of the spell, you can determine, by reading the result on the Value Chart as meters, how fast the caster can move the target every round, for as long as the spell lasts (a character with a mass value of 10 who is picked up by a telekinesis spell with an effect value of 15 would move at a value of 5, or ten meters a turn, while under the effect of the spell).

As always, the gamemaster's interpretation is the most important one. Take your "best guess" at what attributes and what values you'll need to know. Try to keep things fairly simple, and you'll be right most of the time.

CARDS, MODIFIERS, AND EFFECT VALUES

Note that cards and other modifiers *can* increase (or decrease) the effect value of a spell. For example, a character who chooses to throw a spell at a particular part of a target's anatomy (if the spell is capable of being that precise) or perform a *trick shot*, can take on the modifiers. Likewise, an *effect* card can be thrown to increase the effect value of a spell.

On the other hand, if a character who is being attacked by a damage spell hides behind cover (that is applicable), the effect value of the spell might be decreased. Other modifiers may adjust the effect value up or down.

THE SPELLS

From the *"Two-Finger" Thompson Book of Spellslinging*:

Now maybe you thought this was going to be one of those fancy grimoires full of useless stuff like *stir oatmeal* spells and *divine fashion trends* rites and such. Well, I don't teach that kind of thing. If you're going to survive in a big city, you need down-and-

dirty spells, the sort that'll get you out of a tight spot. And that's the only kind you'll find here.

By the way, if you're wondering where I got the moniker "Two-Finger," it's cause I tried an *acid bath* spell at real close range once. First rule: you don't need to be close enough to smell a guy's breath to nail him. You want to be a tough guy, fine, but don't come bawling to me when that *fireball* torches your beard, too.

ORGANIZATION

Every spell listed is organized in a particular way. First comes the popular name of the spell. Certainly, you'll find spells with virtually the same effects under different names. But these names are the ones you're most likely to see or hear. If the spell has an *Alignment*, it is listed in parentheses after the spell name.

Second, every spell has a certain number of characteristics. The *Skill* listed is the one necessary to cast the spell. If you don't have that skill and its focus, forget it. Next comes the *Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge*. You don't have to know this knowledge, but it helps.

The *Difficulty Number* and the *Feedback Value* are listed next, followed by the *Effect Value*. Then comes the *Range* value, with the meter conversion (the value read on the Value Chart) in parentheses. Spells with a "0" range value are also usually listed as "touch."

The *Speed* value of the spell is also listed — though most of *my* spells have speeds equal to their ranges — this way, the spell goes from the caster to the target immediately. If the speed is less, then subtract it from the range. The difference can be read on the Value Chart as how many seconds it takes the spell to travel from the caster to the target.

The *Duration* of the spell is also a value, with the actual time the effect of the spell lasts listed in parentheses. Note that some spells are cast and stored in objects or people — the duration of the spell doesn't actually begin until the spell is released.

The *Cast Time* of the spell is how long it takes to throw the spell, in a value and in a measurement. Cast time is the last of the Mandatory Elements.

The *Modifiers* are all optional. They are listed here and described in the *Description*, along with the actual effect of the spell. You need to know the modifiers used when casting the spell, so you can figure on what you need to do each time around.

ACID BATH (OB-O)

Skill: *Alteration: elemental*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Water*
Difficulty Number: 19
Feedback: 20
Effect Value: 20
Range: 10 (100 meters)
Speed: 10
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Modifiers:
  Gesture: Throwing motion
  Component: water

We're starting out with one of the harder spells, just because it and I have some history and I want to get it out of the way. All you need for this rite is some water and a streak of sadism. Put the water in a bucket, a bottle, or even the palm of your hand and toss it at the target as you call on the spell. The water changes into a corrosive that could burn ugly off a Gris.

(The caster's skill total is used as the "to hit" roll and the effect value of the spell is measured against the Toughness with armor of the target on the "Damage" column of the Success Chart.)

ALARM

Skill: *Conjuration: wizardry*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Magic*
Difficulty Number: 11
Feedback: 12
Effect Value: 0
Range: 10 (100 meters)
Speed: 10
Duration: 18 (One hour)
Cast Time: 9 (One minute)
Modifiers:
  Gestures: Pantomime
  Charges: 1 (Ward)
  Incantation: Scream
  Variable Duration: Off only

This is your standard alarm system, usually charged into a door or a window (sometimes more than one) on the ground floor. If you're expecting 'shifters, better do the top floors, too.

The caster makes pretend he's breaking into the place and then screams himself hoarse for a minute. Once the ward's in place, it'll respond to anybody coming in with a shriek that could wake the dead (the ones who aren't awake already, natch). That's why the variable duration bit's so important — somebody's got to shut the damn thing off after the burglar's lit out.

(The ward's *perception* is equal to the skill total of the caster minus the DN of the spell. If someone comes within range of the ward (and doesn't generate a *stealth* total equal to or higher than the *perception* total), the spell is triggered and the screaming won't stop for one hour or until the caster shuts it off.)

ANIMATE GOLEM (C/OB-C)

Skill: *Conjuration: wizardry*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Entity*
Difficulty Number: 22
Feedback: 16
Effect Value: 25
Range: 0 (Touch)
Speed: 0
Duration: 32 (One month)
Cast Time: 29 (One week)
Modifiers:
  Components: Golem, blood
  Focused: On target
  Concentration: 15 hours (DN 14)
  Gestures: Rub blood (DN 8)
  Incantation: Complex (loud) (DN 16)

You've all seen golems, if only in mail-order catalogs ("Scare the Neighbors! Amuse Your Friends! Some Assembly Required"). They're usually big hulks made all out of wood, or stone, or a block of whatever was handy. This spell lets you get one up and moving.

First thing you need is a golem, meaning you have to build one or buy one ready-made. Most golems look Human, though they don't have to — it's just craftsmen playing to their best market. Anyway, shave off a little of whatever he's made out of and mix it up with some blood in a cup (Human blood works best, but you didn't hear that from me). Then pour it over the golem and rub in the blood *carefully* (a Dexterity total of 8 is needed). And set the answering spirit — you have to concentrate for fifteen hours of the cast time (*willpower* or Confidence DN of 14). For the rest of the cast time you'll be yelling out a complex litany, trying to "wake" the life in the golem.

(When you've finished the spell, you get a golem with the following Attribute Values:

  Agility: 8
  Dexterity: 7
  Endurance: 6
  Strength: 8
  Intellect: 6
  Mind: 5
  Confidence: 3
  Charisma: 4

The Toughness of the golem depends on what you made it out of (the average golem is made out of wood, with a Toughness around 16). The spell is focused on the golem, so it can obey simple orders and leave the caster's presence during the duration. **Note:** Since the spell is not permanent, the golem is not, and never will be "alive" — it cannot gain Life Points, though the gamemaster may allow its maker to teach it skills. The gamemaster will have to decide how the golem can learn, however.)

Spellcaster's Note: The effect value of the spell, minus two, was measured versus the golem's primary affected attribute — its Strength of 0 — first. The result was read on the Push column of the Success Chart and added to its Strength. This was done for every Attribute Value — and every Attribute Value of the golem started at 0 — subtracting two each time from the effect value, as per the "Multi-Attribute" rules in the *MasterBook* Special Effects rules system.

AWAKEN (O/OB-O)

Skill: *Alteration: vitomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Living forces*
Difficulty Number: 11
Feedback: 12
Effect Value: 15
Range: 0 (Touch)
Speed: 0
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Cast Time: 3 (Four seconds)
Modifiers:
  Components: Feather
  Gestures: Brushing

Every group's got one: some loser who drops off at the worst possible time. This spell wakes 'em up

SPELL CREATION

All of these spells were created using the "Special Effects" rules presented in the *MasterBook* rule book. However, if you try to recreate them, not all will "add up" using the system. In fact, most of these are easier or less deadly to cast than they should be.

The reason for this is *tone*. In the world of Marl, spells are common. Spells that have been practiced and refined over time gain modifiers that reduce their Difficulty Numbers and Feedback Values. There is no set game mechanic for this — it just *is*.

This is what makes old spell books and magic tomes valuable. Why buy a spell book when you can just make up your own versions of a spell? The answer: because some spells have been practiced so much that their DNs and FVs are nearly *half* what a new spell would be.

Most of these spells are right around the "real" values they should have. In later *Bloodshadows* supplements, spells will be introduced that have been around for a *long* time. They will be much easier to use, but many of them have "side effects" as well.

again. Just brush a feather across the closed eyes of the joker and the magic does the rest. There are other versions of this spell that work on more than one person at a time, but this is the easier one.

(The effect value of the spell is used as a *first aid* total but, since the duration is so short, only K's, O's, shock damage, and bleeders are affected.)

BIND DEMON (C/OB-C)

Skill: *Alteration: wizardry*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Entity*
Difficulty Number: 14
Feedback: 22
Effect Value: 35
Range: 3 (Four meters)
Speed: 3
Duration: 27 (48 hours)
Cast Time: 18 (One hour)
Modifiers:
  Components: Blood, the demon's name
  Gestures: Draw a pentagram
  Charges: 1
  Focused: On target
  Unreal Effects: Illusory (DN 10)

This spell is almost always charged into a wand or some other item — once you've successfully summoned a demon, you might not have an hour to get it under control.

Best advice I can give you is don't call up a demon in the first place. They smell bad, they lie like rugs, and they're hell on property values. But if you insist on doing it, learn this spell. All you have to do is draw a pentagram in blood (preferably your own) on the floor. Then write the demon's name inside it.

(Compare the effect value of the spell to the demon's Confidence or *willpower*. Read the result points on the "Intimidation" column of the Success Chart. The caster can then attempt to order the demon around. The gamemaster should treat a *break* or a *player's call* as the only result where the demon will obey without resistance — but, because most demons are impressed by powerful magic — and this is a powerful spell — even a *stymied* result is likely to make them think about not killing the character immediately. The spell is focused on the demon, and the results of the initial *intimidation* last until the end of the duration. Of course, if the demon thinks that the power of the caster is an illusion — which it is — he only needs to beat a DN of 10 with his Intellect attribute to free himself of the effects.)

BLIND (O/OB-O)

Skill: *Conjuration: photomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Light*
Difficulty Number: 16
Feedback: 14
Effect Value: 20
Range: 7 (20 meters)
Speed: 7
Duration: 7 (20 seconds)
Cast Time: 4 (six seconds)
Modifiers:
  Gestures: Cover eyes, then point
  Components: Small, silver mirror (destroyed)

The best spells in my book are the ones that buy you enough time to take it on the lam without doing so much damage that the sentinels can hang a murder charge on you. This is one of them: place your hands over your eyes for a second and then point the small, silver mirror at your target. As the mirror destroys itself, a beam of light shoots out of your finger and blinds your target for twenty seconds or so.

(The spellcaster's *conjuration: photomancy* skill total is his "to hit" roll. If it is equal to or higher than the target's *dodge* or Agility total, then read the effect value of the spell versus the target's *perception* or Intellect on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. The push value is then subtracted from the target's skill value for the duration of the spell — or until the caster leaves the range of the spell, since it is not a focused effect. The gamemaster may also wish to read the result points on the "Taunt/Trick" column to simulate the blindness of the character.)

BULLET (OB-C)

Skill: *Apportation: technomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Metal*
Difficulty Number: 15
Feedback: 16
Effect Value: 17
Range: 8 (40 meters)
Speed: 8
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Cast Time: 4 (Five seconds)
Modifiers:
  Components: Small, metal object
  Gestures: Pantomime
  Incantations: "Crack" sound

Some guys need shooting. But not every place will let you walk in packing a rod. That's why the *bullet* spell was created.

It's pretty simple, really. Take a piece of metal — a coin, a slug, something — and palm it. Then pantomime shooting somebody with that hand and make a "crack" noise with your mouth. The metal will fly across the room and put a hole in the target.

(The casting total is used as the "to hit" versus the target's *dodge* or Agility. The effect value is the damage value of the attack.)

CHARM

Skill: *Alteration: vitomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Folk*
Difficulty Number: 15
Feedback: 15
Effect Value: 18
Range: 5 (10 meters)
Speed: 5
Duration: 9 (One minute)
Cast Time: 4 (Five seconds)
Modifiers:
  Gesture: Friendly

This is a pretty low-powered version of this spell and it only works on folk, and then only on those who read body language the same way you do. Try it on a mug who thinks a big smile is a signal to attack and all you'll get out of this is a fist sandwich.

Cast this one by making some kind of friendly gesture: a smile, a hand out, a pat on the back. Make it look good and maybe you'll get to talk instead of fight. It works a lot quicker than trying to talk things out.

(If successfully cast, substitute the effect value of the spell for the caster's *charm* skill, or use it as the *charm* skill, if the caster does not possess it. Use the rules for the skill "Charm" as listed in the *MasterBook* rule book.)

COMMUNICATE WITH ANIMAL (O/OB-O)

Skill: *Divination: vitomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Earth*
Difficulty Number: 14
Feedback: 15
Effect Value: 10
Range: 10 (100 meters)
Speed: 10
Duration: 18 (One hour)
Cast Time: 9 (One minute)
Modifiers:
  Concentration: 1 hour (DN 12)
  Component: A piece of the animal
  Gesture: Pet animal

This spell maybe explains why they made a rule that you can't go back and look at the horses before the races. Guys who couldn't get anywhere bribing the jockeys started trying to bribe the nags ...

The spell lets you speak and understand some pretty wordy phrases for one species of animal. You have to have something of that animal — fur, a claw, something you can cut off or buy off the shelf — and act like you're having a conversation with it. You gotta have your mind just on this spell for at least half the cast time, and that still don't guarantee the animal's going to want to talk to you when it's over.

PERMANENT SPELLS

The world of Marl is a world of magic — there's no denying it. And, in a world of magic, there has to be some sort of possibility for permanence. Can you create a spell with a permanent effect?

Yes.

If a spell is created with a duration value of 38 (one year) or higher — though why you'd want to go higher is seldom a consideration — the spell is considered *permanent*. It may be destroyed, or the gamemaster may set up certain circumstances where the effect will "go away," but, for all intents and purposes, the spell's effect *is* permanent.

One word of warning: Permanent spells will be hard to cast — mainly because of the duration value. And remember, if you are creating a permanent spell that is not affecting you — i.e., it is a ranged spell — you'll have to focus it (see the *MasterBook* rules for spell creation). And *that* gets expensive as well.

(Compare the effect value of the spell to the animal's Mind on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. The push value is then added to the animal's Mind, giving it the ability to "speak" with the caster — but only if its Mind becomes 5 or higher. Only the caster can understand the animal, and the animal can only understand the caster.)

CONTROL GOLEM (C/OB-C)

Skill: *Alteration: wizardry*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Entity*
Difficulty Number: 12
Feedback: 15
Effect Value: 16
Range: 0
Speed: 0
Duration: 32 (One month)
Cast Time: 18 (One hour)
Modifiers:
  Unreal Effects: Illusory (DN 6)
  Gestures: Hold its head
  Focus: On target
  Incantations: Voice command

Okay, you've brought your golem to life. Now what? Without this spell, he's just going to stand there. Or worse, he's going to walk out and make a living as a doorstop someplace. Sure, he's smart enough to take orders — if you used *my* spell, anyway — but why should he obey you?

Look at your golem and say, "I bind you, I beseech you, I command you to my service" as you

cast the spell — and hold its head steady so it's looking at you. (But don't do it when your buddies are around or they'll crack wise about how you're talking.) Of course, you may have to strap the sucker down to keep him from wandering off during the cast time.

(Compare the spell's effect value to the golem's Confidence or *willpower*. Read the result points on the "Intimidation" column of the Success Chart. In general, the golem will obey the caster unquestioningly for the duration of the spell if the caster achieves a *setback* or greater result. The spell is focused on the golem.)

CREATE HOMUNCULUS (C)

Skill: *Conjuration: alchemy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Life*
Difficulty Number: 22
Feedback: 21
Effect Value: 17
Range: 0
Speed: 0
Duration: Permanent
Cast Time: 32 (One month)
Modifiers:
  Components: Blood, water, lead, cinnabar, warlock's brew, small crafted doll (destroyed)
  Focus: On target
  Concentration: One hour (DN 12)
  Gestures: Assembled parts

This is the only alchemy spell in this section — the rest are all in "Equipment." But since its effect is so downright weird, and difficult to do, we put it here.

This version lets you build a mock Human with no special talents to speak of. They say that if you add the right kind of feathers to the mixture, the homunculus will come out flying, etc. Could be. He might also nest in your roof and lay eggs, and either way, I don't want to chance it …

All you need to do is mix the ingredients together in a pot and set it over a slow flame for a month. You have to really concentrate while you do this, or you'll get it wrong. At the end of the concentration time, you throw a *small* doll into the mix. Everything sort of congeals and you wind up with a naked Joe (or Jane) who can pass for Human — except they're less than a meter high. They are, for all intents and purposes, alive at this point, but they don't have much in the way of abilities.

(An homunculus is as tough as the substance of the doll it was made from — usually a 4 or 5, since harder dolls will interfere with the building process. The rest of the creature's attributes come *from the effect* value of the spell, using the "Multi-Attribute" rules from *MasterBook*:

Agility: 6
Dexterity: 5
Endurance: 4
Strength: 4
Intellect: 3
Mind: 2
Confidence: 2
Charisma: 1

The homunculus is then like a child. Since the spell is permanent and focused on it, it is *alive*. The caster can employ coercion or spells to motivate it, and it can gain Life Points and it can learn and improve its attributes — it is now an *enchanted* creature.)

DAGGER

Skill: *Conjuration: technomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Metal*
Difficulty Number: 13
Feedback: 14
Effect Value: 13
Range: 0
Speed: 0
Duration: 18 (One hour)
Cast Time: 4 (Five seconds)
Modifiers:
  Gesture: Wave hand
  Concentration: 4 seconds (DN 8)
  Focus: On target
  Incantation: "Create dagger!" (loud)

This spell is usually found charged into silver golems. Casting it causes a throwing dagger to be created in your hand. Just wave your hand and say the magic words — and concentrate. But remember that this beauty doesn't throw it for you — you'd better know how to use it.

(The effect value is used to create the dagger and to create the damage value. First, the effect value, minus two, is read on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. The result is the damage value of the dagger. Then, the effect value, minus four, is read on the same column. This is the maximum mass value of the dagger — though, chances are, the caster will be satisfied with a mass value of zero. This spell creates a very sharp dagger with a damage value of +5/13 — the damage MAX coming from the original effect value. The spell is focused on the dagger.)

DARK CLOUD (C/OB-C)

Skill: *Conjuration: photomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Darkness*
Difficulty Number: 15
Feedback: 17
Effect Value: 20

Range: 7 (25 meters)
Speed: 7
Duration: 9 (1 minute)
Cast Time: 15 (15 minutes)
Modifiers:
  Components: Match (destroyed), wall
  Gestures: Snatch and throw
  Concentration: 15 minutes (DN 11)
  Area of Effect: One meter diameter sphere
  Focus: On target
  Charges: 3 (in mind)

This spell lets you take a powder when somebody's got your number. Take a match and strike it, then "grab" a shadow it causes on a wall and "throw" it out in front of you. Concentrate hard, 'cause you don't want to lose the impression it is making in your mind. When you want to use the spell to create a one meter in diameter sphere of black smoke somewhere within range, just pantomime the motion again. You've got three charges.

(The spell is "charged" into the caster's mind. Any time after casting the spell, he can make the throwing motion — and a *thrown weapons* or Dexterity roll — and hurl a black cloud at a target within the range. Because of the area of effect, the roll is at +1 to hit versus the target's Agility or *dodge*. If the target is hit, the spell will be focused on him until the duration ends. His *perception* and other sight-based skills will be reduced by the push value of the spell's effect value.)

> ***Example:*** *Roy has a* perception *of 10. He's hit by the* dark cloud *spell, which is now focused on him. Until the duration lapses, his sight-based* perception *activities will be reduced by a modifier of 4 (the effect value of 20 is measured versus Roy's perception of 10 on the "Push" column of the Success chart, resulting in a push value of 4). If Roy does anything else that requires sight during this time — like shooting his gun — the appropriate skill value will be reduced accordingly (i.e., the effect value of the spell would be read on the "Push" column versus his* fire combat *skill value and his skill would be reduced by the push value).*

DESTROY MAGIC

Skill: *Alteration: wizardry*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Magic*
Difficulty Number: 15
Feedback: 15
Effect Value: 20
Range: 10 (100 meters)
Speed: 10
Duration: 9 (One minute)
Cast Time: 18 (One hour)

Modifiers:
  Gestures: Chop and point
  Concentration: One hour (DN 12)
  Area of Effect: Ten-meter diameter circle
  Charges: 1

Some 'caster getting in your way? Had enough of fighting your way through *plant cuffs* and reanimated dead? This potent little spell burner will take out any moderately powerful magic within a ten meter circle for up to a minute.

To cast *destroy magic*, bring one hand down in a chop against your wrist. To release the spell from the charge in your mind, point right at the center of the area you want to target and *poof!* instant power failure.

(The effect value of the *destroy magic* spell is compared to the effect values of any magic within the area of effect. If the effect value of the spell is higher than *all* other magical effect values within that area, they go away until they leave the area of effect or the *destroy magic* spell expires. If *any* spell is cast into the area of effect with a *higher* effect value — successfully — the *destroy magic* spell goes away. *Destroy magic* does not affect charged items until they are actually used.)

DETECT MAGIC (O/OB-O)

Skill: *Divination: wizardry*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Magic*
Difficulty Number: 18
Feedback: 19
Effect Value: 20
Range: 10 (100 meters)
Speed: 10
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Cast Time: 15 (15 minutes)
Modifiers:
  Gestures: Tracing
  Area of Effect: Ten-meter diameter circle
  Incantation: Complex (DN 8)

Just like it says: this rite lets you tell if anyone's been spellslinging in the neighborhood (what are the odds?) Do it right and you'll get enough dirt to work with. Do it wrong and you'll know that ward is going off a second before the floor opens up underneath you. All you have to do is trace the area of effect and speak a complex incantation about "finding true magic."

(The effect value of the spell should be compared to the effect value of the rite cast in the area. Find the result points on the "General Success" column of the Success Chart.

On a *minimal* success, the caster knows the magic skill and focus involved in the spell. On a *solid* success, the caster knows the identity of the spell used. On a *good* success, the caster knows the

applicable arcane knowledge and whether the sorcerer who cast the target spell made use of it. On a *superior* success, the caster knows the effect value of the target spell.

To cast this spell, the character must recite it from memory (Mind difficulty of 8 to remember it).

EXPEL (C)

Skill: *Conjuration: sorcery*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Dimension*
Difficulty Number: 25
Feedback: 24
Effect Value: 40
Range: 10 (100 meters)
Speed: 10
Duration: 0 (one second)
Cast Time: 10 (100 seconds)
Modifiers:
  Gestures: Pantomime door opening

DETERMINING EFFECTS FOR UNKNOWNS

In the spell *expel*, the creator had to know the "distance" between the plane of Marl and the "average" demonic realm. In this case, that distance was determined by the designers of the *Bloodshadows* world. However, what if that value *wasn't* revealed? How can a spell creator come up with values he needs to beat with his effect values for a spell to work?

Usually, the gamemaster can help out. And we'll help the gamemaster. Simply decide, as the gamemaster, how easy or how hard you want something to be to do. If you think a spell should be easy, then allow it to have a low effect value—if you think it should be hard, then, hey, it's hard.

In general, *divination* and *alteration* spells are fairly easy—you have to beat time values and character attribute values in most cases. *Apportation* spells are also pretty easy—mass is the usual consideration. It's the *summoning* and *conjuration* spells that should be hard—bringing something to you or sending it away instantaneously, or creating something out of nothing should be a trick.

The point is, the magic system presented here, and used with the special effects system in *MasterBook*, is somewhat arbitrary. There are lots of rules, and lots of options, but only the gamemaster can decide what he's going to use and what he isn't.

Incantation: Say demon's name and "Go!"

You brought that demon here and got it to do what you want. But now it's squatting in your living room, drinking your brew and levitating your girl. How do you get rid of it?

That's why some sharp mage came up with *expel*, which lets you force the damn thing back into its own dimension. Remember that this ain't the same as a *gate* spell — only the target can get through the portal that's going to open and it's going to close behind him. Anybody else tries to go through and it's no dice, the gate says no. That's why a demon on his way out usually tries to grab the caster. It'll still end up hitting the road, but it might take the caster's arm with it.

This spell's got a range of one hundred meters. Take a tip and use every centimeter of it …

To cast, the mage must recite a litany while pantomiming opening and closing a door, and he must tell the demon, using its name, to "Go!"

(This spell attacks two "attributes"—the demon's *willpower* or Confidence and the "distance" between the dimensions. Most demons seem to come from a dimension with a "distance value" of around 38, so this should be sufficient.

Compare the effect value, minus two, of the spell to the planar distance value — usually 38 — between Marl and the demon's dimension. If the effect value is higher, than compare the effect value, minus four, to the demon's Confidence or *willpower*. The demon may try to resist. If the effect value is not higher than either total, the demon stays put.

Note: If the demon *wants* to go back to its dimension, it can generate a bonus number and *subtract* it from either the dimensional distance or its Confidence or *willpower* score.)

Note: The effects of this spell could also be produced using *summoning: wizardry*. Instead of conjuring up a gate, the caster would "summon" the demon *from* him — teleportation between the planes.)

FACADE

Skill: *Alteration: vitomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Living forces*
Difficulty Number: 10
Feedback: 10
Effect Value: 25
Range: 0
Speed: 0
Duration: 18 (One hour)
Cast Time: 7 (20 seconds)
Modifiers:
  Gestures: Pantomime
  Unreal Effects: Illusory (DN 6)

FOCUS ON FIREBALLS

As was mentioned earlier in the chapter, some spells are common to many schools of magic. They may require different components or be cast in slightly different ways, but the results are largely the same.

Basically, this means you, as the gamemaster, and your players have a little more freedom in choosing and creating spells. If your technomage, for example, would really like to cast *windstorm*, but doesn't possess a skill with the *elemental* focus, all is not lost. If he can build a technomancy spell that will achieve the same effect but is true to the nature of his school — and you're satisfied with it — there's no reason he can't use it.

Listed below are a few examples of how different schools of magic cast a *fireball*:

FIRES OF DEATH (C/OB-C)

Skill: *Conjuration: necromancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Fire*
Difficulty Number: 11
Feedback: 12
Effect Value: 20
Range: 8 (40 meters)
Speed: 8
Duration: 0 (one second)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Modifiers:
  Components: Corpse candle (destroyed), jar
  Gestures: Snatching and throwing

The component for this spell is a corpse candle rather than any open flame. A corpse candle is a ball of light, usually blue or greenish, that hovers over graves at night. Just what it is remains a mystery, but it's definitely some form of energy. Corpse candles rarely appear before midnight and, in most places, only on certain nights. Obtaining one means sneaking into a graveyard, risking arrest, and catching its essence in a jar specially enchanted for that purpose (usually one with some minor necromantic runes on it will do). It's also possible to buy bottled corpse candles, but they're rare and fairly expensive. Unlike a firemage, a necromancer really has to plan ahead of time if he wants to cast this spell.

The casting itself is similar. The mage releases the corpse candle, mimics catching it in his hand, then "throws" it at his target. A fireball flies from his hand and you know the rest. Again, there is no area of effect (making the spell fairly easy to cast).

(The caster uses his *thrown weapons* or Dexterity skill to hit, and the damage value of the attack is the effect value of the spell.)

TEMPORAL FIRES (O/OB-O)

Skill: *Alteration: chronomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Time*
Difficulty Number: 16
Feedback: 14
Effect Value: 25
Range: 7 (20 meters)

This rite's usually only used by Unnaturals and geeks. It's an illusion that makes you look Human, but before you start worrying, it's not much help at impersonating somebody. Most Unnaturals have some Human look they're bound to and that's how they'll show up if they use this. The caster has to have a clear picture of how he wants to appear when he uses this. The caster must pantomime "sculpting" his body into the desired form.

(The effect value of the spell is compared to the *disguise* skill or Charisma of the target. Read the result points on the "Push" column of the Success Chart, and add the push value to the character's skill, using that value as the character's *disguise*. See the rules for the skill "Disguise" in the *MasterBook* rule book. If a character has reason to disbelieve the reality of the disguise, he needs to beat the Illusory DN of 6 with an Intellect total.)

FIREBALL (C/OB-C)

Skill: *Conjuration: elemental*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Fire*
Difficulty Number: 13
Feedback: 12
Effect Value: 20
Range: 8 (40 meters)
Speed: 8
Duration: 0 (one second)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Modifiers:
  Components: Open flame
  Incantation: "Burn!" (loudly)
  Gestures: Shape and throw

This is the firemage version of this spell, as opposed to the ones used by other spellcasters (see "Focus on Fireballs"). You need an open flame (it could be a match, a campfire, a lantern, a blazing tenement, etc.). Make like you're snatching some of

Speed: 7
Duration: 0 (one second)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Modifiers:
 Components: Day-old fire ash
 Gestures: Pick up and throw

The component in this spell is the ash of a fire that burned no longer than one day ago. The caster takes the ashes and throws them at the target as he invokes the spell. While the magic does not actually "change time" for the ashes, it does "reawaken" the fire in them, causing them to burn their target.

(A *thrown weapons* or Dexterity total is needed to hit. The effect value of the spell is the damage value of the flying ash.)

SUN BURN (O/OB-O)

Skill: *Alteration: photomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Light*
Difficulty Number: 10
Feedback: 10
Effect Value: 15
Range: 9 (60 meters)
Speed: 9
Duration: 0 (one second)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Modifiers:
 Components: Magic jar, sunlight (destroyed) 6
 Gestures: Opening and throwing

This lower-damage fireball uses natural light to produce its effect. The caster must imprison some sunlight in a magical jar (with photomancy runes on it — fairly expensive), releasing it only when casting the spell. He mimics throwing it at the target — on its way there, the sunlight converts into beams of fiery energy.

(The caster must generate a *thrown weapons* or Dexterity total to hit, while the effect value of the spell is the damage value of the attack.)

It is theoretically possible to create the same sort of spell, with the same values, using just about any type of magic — so why do characters learn different types of magic? Why not just pick up one type and leave it go at that?

Good question. Here's the answer:

There are always things you can't do with certain types of magic, and it violates many different "rules of good roleplaying" to make everything fit under one neat blanket. Certainly, if you spend enough time at it, you can come up with some way for your *divination: necromancy* character to create a "fireball" spell, but *should* you? Probably not.

Moreso than any other character type, magic-using characters risk losing their identities to the neat things they can do every time they are played. A good roleplayer will begin to come up with "rules" and "conducts" that fit his or her character's "attitude" and abilities. "Sure, my character *could* do thus-and-such, but why would he want to?" should be one of the first questions you ask before creating any spell.

the fire and shaping it into a ball, then say "Burn" as you let it go. A fireball will shoot from your palm and fly toward the future barbecue. This is a good spell for in-city defense; there's no blast radius.

(The caster must generate a Dexterity or *thrown weapons* roll to hit with the fireball, since there is no *apportation* element built in. If the fireball hits, it does damage equal to the effect value.)

FIRST AID (O/OB-O)

Skill: *Alteration: vitomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Living forces*
Difficulty Number: 19
Feedback: 13
Effect Value: 20
Range: 0
Speed: 0
Duration: 25 (one day)

Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Modifiers:
 Components: Small cloth, water, silver
  needle
 Gestures: Use cloth, water, needle
 Focus: On target
 Incantation: "Heal and be well!" (loudly)
 Other Modifiers: Target must lie still and
  be silent

If you've got a buddy with a high enough skill value to pull this off, it's a great spell to have around. Just lie still and quiet, and he can use this spell to set your bones or heal your cuts — better than most sawbones.

(If this spell is cast successfully, the effect value is used as the *first aid* total applied to the target — see the rules for "First Aid" in the *MasterBook* "Skills and Skill Use" chapter. The spell is focused on the target. However, if the duration lapses before the target has either undergone "real" first

aid or been healed, he will revert to his original condition.)

FREEZE (O/OB-O)

Skill: *Alteration: elemental*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Air*
Difficulty Number: 16
Feedback: 12
Effect Value: 19
Range: 8 (40 meters)
Speed: 8
Duration: 0 (one second)
Cast Time: 7 (20 seconds)
Modifiers:
  Gestures: Make shiver motion and blow at targets
  Multi-Target: One or two targets
  Incantations: Make blowing and shivering noises

Some joker's hot under the collar — maybe he's even got flames coming out of his fingers — this oughtta cool him down some. Just let a shiver run down your spine and then give out with a big blast of breath. Cold air slams into up to two mugs within the range and leaves 'em colder than a succubus' kiss.

(To hit the targets, the character has to make either an *apportation: elemental* skill total or an *untrained* Intellect roll. Because of the multi-target aspect of the spell, however, this is only one skill total, not a multi-action.)

GATE (C)

Skill: *Conjuration: sorcery*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Dimension*
Difficulty Number: 16
Feedback: 11
Effect Value: 30
Range: 5 (10 meters)
Speed: 5
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 14 (ten minutes)
Modifiers:
  Gestures: Draw gate and open it
  Concentration: Ten minutes (DN 11)

This spell's more dangerous than it looks. It opens up a gate you can use to travel from one place to another on Marl. But, since the caster is not actually *summoning* or *apporting* himself or his targets from one place to another — rather, the gate is doing that — there is a degree of uncertainty. Dimension-hopping isn't for simps or milksops — there's some scary stuff out there, and this from a guy who used to work stock in a Taxim Quarter meat market.

Take your finger and draw a door in the air (difficulty number of 8) and then "open" it. Once the spell hits, I'll be damned if a door doesn't appear where you drew one. But don't expect no welcoming committee on the other side, brother.

(The effect value of the spell, minus two, is the maximum distance value anyone walking through the gate will go. The effect value, minus four, is the maximum mass value — 26, or 150,000 kilograms — that can be moved through the gate during the duration.

However, unless the caster states *very specifically* where he wants to go, and has a *very* good picture in his mind of where that is, the gate could open up *anywhere* within the range value, or even in a "sideways" dimension — one closer to Marl than others.

The gamemaster will have to decide on how easy or how hard it is for the character to identify specific places for gates to open up. Use the rules for determining Difficulty Numbers and Modifiers in the *MasterBook* rule book to make this easier — with the character's Mind value being used as his or her ability to "remember.")

GLASS JAW (O/OB-O)

Skill: *Alteration: vitomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Folk*
Difficulty Number: 19
Feedback: 11
Effect Value: 18
Range: 5 (Ten meters)
Speed: 5
Duration: 9 (One minute)
Cast Time: 5 (Ten seconds)
Modifiers:
  Gestures: Point and pantomime

This spell's always been a favorite of Galitian gamblers who favor ringside seats at prizefights. A little jab of this and the odds-on favorite will fold faster than a card player with nothing but junk in his hand.

(The caster points at the target while pantomiming collapse. Compare the spell's effect value to the target's Toughness on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. Subtract the push value from the target's Toughness for the duration of the spell, or until the target moves out of range.)

HEIGHTEN AGILITY (O/OB-O)

Skill: *Alteration: vitomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Living forces*
Difficulty Number: 12
Feedback: 14

Effect Value: 16
Range: 0
Speed: 0
Duration: 15 (15 minutes)
Cast Time: 9 (one minute)
Modifiers:
 Related Skill Total: *acrobatics* (DN 7)

This, and all those other *heighten* spells, have a nasty little side-effect. Once a Joe's run faster, jumped higher, moved better than ever before, he doesn't want to go back to being the poor slob he was before. He'll do most anything for another hit of the spell, get me? That's why so many sorcerers give out the first one of these for free.

(Compare the effect value of the spell to the target's Agility on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. The push value is added to the target's Agility for the duration of the spell.

While casting this spell, the mage must make a successful *acrobatics* total of 7 to mimic the increased Agility the target will soon have.)

> **Example:** *Merr wishes to cast* heighten Agility *on Resk, who has an Agility value of 9. The effect value of the spell is 16. Compared to Resk's Agility, that yields seven result points. On the Push column, seven result points yields a +3 — Resk's Agility is increased to 12 for the duration of the spell.*

ICE DAGGER

Skill: *Alteration: elemental*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Water*
Difficulty Number: 17
Feedback: 13
Effect Value: 16
Range: 8 (30 meters)
Speed: 8
Duration: 5 (Ten seconds)
Cast Time: 4 (Five seconds)
Modifiers:
 Components: Water
 Gestures: Hold and throw

All you need is water, and then not more than a handful. Blow across its surface and then pitch it at your target. On the way, it freezes into a sharp little dagger and takes him out.

(The caster generates a *thrown weapons* or Dexterity total to hit with the dagger, which has a damage value equal to the effect value of the spell.)

ILLUSORY PAIN

Skill: *Alteration: vitomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Folk*
Difficulty Number: 15

Feedback: 10
Effect Value: 36
Range: 8 (30 meters)
Speed: 8
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Cast Time: 3 (4 seconds)
Modifiers:
 Gestures: Point at target
 Unreal Effects: Illusory (DN 0)

Pretty much everybody's got some kind of a basic *pain* spell. Just point your finger at today's target and watch him spasm. It won't do much more than slow him down — and he'll be real mad once he's moving again — so use the time to plan your next move.

(Compare the effect value of the spell to the character's Endurance on the "Trick/Taunt" column of the Success Chart. The condition that results comes from the intensity of the pain the character is subject to. The spell is brief, and the effects illusory, with an Intellect DN of 0 to disbelieve — but most people won't have time to realize that. Note: On a *player's call*, the character passes out from system shock.)

INTUITION (O/OB-O)

Skill: *Alteration: vitomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge:
Living forces
Difficulty Number: 18
Feedback: 14
Effect Value: 19
Range: 10 (100 meters)
Speed: 10
Duration: 9 (One minute)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Modifiers:
 Concentration: ten seconds (DN 8)
 Incantation: Complex (DN 8)
 Gestures: Draw and sit
 Components: Circle
 Other Modifiers: Eyes closed and facing
  north

Sure, it's hard. Spellcasting isn't for creampuffs, pal.

You ain't going to waste time on this spell to sense if the lightmage bill came today or some dame whose name you can't remember used her key to your apartment. But when a tip leads you to a warehouse in the middle of nowhere and the whole thing smells of trap, it's worth the risk to know for sure.

(*Intuition* allows the character to substitute the effect value of the spell for his *perception*, or use it as *perception* if he does not have that skill.

In addition, *intuition* will allow the character to

sense things even when he is not actively searching. In this case, the gamemaster generates a *perception* total for the character using the effect value of the *intuition* spell and then lets the character know if he senses anything.

BUILDING SPELLS THE EASY WAY

If you have read over the *MasterBook* system, you know that building a spell for use in the *Bloodshadows* universe can take a few minutes, right? Well, if you're a gamemaster and in a hurry to have a certain spell, you might want to "cheat" a little to make things quick and easy — until you get the hang of spell creation.

The first step is to find a spell here that's *similar* to the effect you want to create. Use the following list as an example:

Spells that increase attributes:
   heighten Agility

Spells that do damage: *fireball*

Spells that create creatures:
   animate golem

Spells that provide information:
   intuition

Spells that emulate skills:
   lockpick

Spells that protect: *mystic barrier*

Spells that bind: *mystic chains*

Spells that decrease attributes:
   slow

By examining these spells, you can create similar effects very quickly. For example, you have a spell that increases a character's Agility attribute, right? Well, make a few cosmetic changes and it can be used to increase *any* attribute, by the same amount, with the same mechanics and numbers. The same thing goes for other spells — certainly a *fireball* does damage, but you could have a "ball of magic energy" or a "stone ball" doing the same thing, with different arcane knowledges and foci.

But, remember, all these spells *are* different. If you decide, as the gamemaster, to have your watermage construct a "wall of water" instead of a *mystic barrier* — but with the same effect — that's fine. But, remember, it is actually a *different* spell — if a player character wants to learn it, he'll have to do so on his own. Player characters cannot just swap effects like you can.

This spell lets the character sense *anything* out of the ordinary that might pose a threat. If there's a hidden trap, the difficulty number is the *camouflage* total used to conceal it. If there's a being in the area, the difficulty number is the being's Agility or *stealth*. If a creature is invisible within range of the spell, the DN is the creature's "invisibility value," or one set by the gamemaster.

To cast this spell, the mage draws a circle on the floor and sits in its center, facing north, with his eyes closed. He must actively concentrate on the spell for one round of casting while reciting an incantation. He has to beat an Intellect DN of 8 to concentrate and a Mind DN of 8 to remember the incantation.)

INVISIBILITY (O/OB-O)

Skill: *Alteration: vitomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Folk*
Difficulty Number: 20
Feedback: 16
Effect Value: 20
Range: 0
Speed: 0
Duration: 18 (One hour)
Cast Time: 10 (100 seconds)
Modifiers:
   Components: Piece of target
   Incantations: "Do a fade."
   Focus: On target

You need something of the target's to do this one right. Popular choices are a lock of hair, a little blood, some nail clippings, something easy to get and carry around. Lay it out and cover it with a white cloth. Then clap a hand on your buddy and say something clever like, "Do a fade." Next thing you know, he's gone. This spell works even better if he owes you money.

(Compare the effect value of the spell to the target's Agility on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. Add the push value to the target's *stealth* skill or his Agility, for purposes of *stealth* attempts only.

Note: This is not actually invisibility — rather, it is an increase in a character's ability "not to be seen." However, it has one advantage over an "increase stealth" spell because of its nature — observers will not generate active *perception* totals to find the target unless *they* have a good reason (like he makes noise or "fades" right in front of him).)

LIGHT

Skill: *Conjuration: photomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Light*
Difficulty Number: 14

Feedback: 8
Effect Value: 0
Range: 0 (One meter)
Speed: 0
Duration: 20 (Two hours)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Modifiers:
  Concentration: One round (DN 8)
  Other Modifiers: Close eyes
  Area of Effect: Three-meter diameter sphere
  Gestures: Put hands over eyes, then remove

Some spells don't make people explode. Some spells are just practical. It won't make you rich, but it might keep you from tripping over somebody in the dark.

Close your eyes, cover them with your paws, and concentrate. Think about a little pinpoint of light, one that grows bigger and bigger. Then take your hands away and open your eyes, and you'll see that light made real. Before it's done, it'll be bright enough to fill a three meter diameter sphere around you with light.

(There is no effect value of the spell, but an effect as simple as light requires none. The brightness is about the equivalent of torchlight.)

LIGHTNING BOLT (C/OB-C)

Skill: *Alteration: wizardry*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge:
Inanimate forces
Difficulty Number: 15
Feedback: 11
Effect Value: 21
Range: 7 (20 meters)
Speed: 7
Duration: 0 (one second)
Cast Time: 4 (six seconds)
Modifiers:
  Gestures: Quick motion and throw
  Apportation: Movement only
  Components: Metal bits

Sit around a bar some night and get to talking about 'casters, and somebody will always bring up a really good *lightning bolt* they saw once. One of those real beauties that crackles through the air, makes everybody's hair stands up, and dances the mark across the floor before it fries him. They don't make 'em like that anymore ...

If you want to try, get a fist full of something that conducts electricity (bits of metal, if you can find them). Make a quick, jagged motion with your arm and then open your fist. The metal hits the ground and the target follows right after, as soon as your bolt hits him.

(The spell has the "apportation" optional element built in, so the caster's *alteration* skill total must be equal to or higher than the target's *dodge* or Agility to hit. The effect value of the spell is the lightning's damage value.)

LOCKPICK

Skill: *Apportation: technomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Metal*
Difficulty Number: 9
Feedback: 8
Effect Value: 16
Range: 0 (Touch)
Speed: 0
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 5 (Ten seconds)
Modifiers:
  Components: Key
  Incantations: "Swing wide!"

There isn't always a cracksman on hand when you need to get into a safe, or a good 'shifter cat burglar when you need to get through that locked window. That's where *lockpick* comes in.

To cast this spell, the mage needs a key — any key. He holds onto the key, mutters something like "Swing wide," and bingo, lock open. Of course, you still have to worry about alarms ...

(The effect value of the spell is used as the caster's *lockpicking* skill. See the rules for the skill "Lockpicking" in the *MasterBook* rule book.)

MOTION

Skill: *Apportation: wizardry*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge:
Inanimate forces
Difficulty Number: 16
Feedback: 10
Effect Value: 10
Range: 5 (10 meters)
Speed: 5
Duration: 13 (Five minutes)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Modifiers:
  Gestures: Hand motions
  Apportation: Basic movement

Real simple. This spell lets you move objects — say, your rod's on the other side of the room and you want it in your hand, but quick. *Motion* will bring it on the fly.

(The effect value is equal to the maximum mass able to be lifted with this spell. The direction in which the object moves is controlled by the motions of the caster's hand. If he makes no motions, the object will hover. If the target of the spell is animate, the caster's *apportation* total must equal or exceed the target's *dodge* or Agility to "grab" it.

The value of the speed at which the object can be moved is equal to the effect value minus the object's mass value. So, a rock with a mass of five kilograms

has a mass value of 4. Ten minus four equals the value six, so the rock can move at a speed value of 6, or 15 meters per second.

If the target of the *motion* spell is dropped before the duration of the spell ends, another object may be picked up. If the target moves outside of the range of the spell, the spell fails.)

MYSTIC BARRIER

Skill: *Conjuration: wizardry*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Magic*
Difficulty Number: 20
Feedback: 14
Effect Value: 25
Range: 0
Speed: 0
Duration: 25 (One day)
Cast Time: 13 (Five minutes)
Modifiers:
  Concentration: forty seconds (DN 9)
  Gestures: Pantomime
  Components: Clear diamond (destroyed), string
  Variable Duration: On/off

I'd like this spell better if it stopped slugs as well as spells …

To cast this spell, the mage pantomimes feeling walls that imprison him. He holds a diamond tied by a string while he does this, and he must actively concentrate on the barrier forming for four rounds of the cast time (DN 9).

(*Mystic barrier* constructs a shell of force around the caster, protecting him against spells that employ the arcane knowledge *magic* or the *wizardry* focus only.

When any spell is using *wizardry* or *magic* tries to affect the caster, compare the effect value of this spell to the intruding magic. If this spell's effect value is higher, then the intruding spell is completely repulsed. If the intruding spell has a higher effect value, then only the part of the effect that exceeds the protection gets through.

For example, an attack spell is thrown at a character protected by a *mystic barrier*. The *barrier* has an effect value of 25. The attacking spell has an effect value of 30. Five points will get through to affect the protected character. **Note:** spells that cover areas of effect "flow around" the protected character if they do not penetrate. Also, the caster may not throw any *wizardry* or *magic* spells while this effect is on — fortunately, it has an on/off switch.)

Spell Creation Note: In order to protect oneself from other magic, a caster could create a similar spell using another focus and/or another arcane knowledge. Virtually any combination is possible, but the effects may be slightly different — as the gamemaster sees fit.

MYSTIC CHAINS

Skill: *Conjuration: wizardry*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Magic*
Difficulty Number: 17
Feedback: 14
Effect Value: 18
Range: 9 (50 meters)
Speed: 9
Duration: 14 (ten minutes)
Cast Time: 20 (Two hours)
Modifiers:
  Charges: 4 (into any object)
  Incantation: "This binds you."
  Gestures: Hold wrists together, point at target
  Components: Good, steel handcuffs (destroyed)
  Focus: On target

Get yourself a pair of good, steel handcuffs. Hold them in your hands and keep your wrists together like the sentinels just clapped the bracelets on and say, "This binds you." The bracelets become magical energy. Charge the energy into a bullet, a cane or something else you're carrying and you can make magical chains wrap around some other Joe. (The spell can be charged into any object. To release the spell, the character has to point at the target. No skill total is necessary "to hit." The effect value of the spell is equal to the Toughness of the bracelets. They can take six *wounds* before being destroyed. The spell is focused on the target and remains until the duration of the spell expires.)

PAIN (C/OB-C)

Skill: *Conjuration: vitomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Folk*
Difficulty Number: 12
Feedback: 8
Effect Value: 24
Range: 0
Speed: 0
Duration: 0 (one second)
Cast Time: 12 (five minutes)
Modifiers:
  Components: Baton, broken glass (destroyed)
  Gestures: Repeated hitting motions
  Concentration: five minutes (DN 10)
  Other Modifiers: Must make successful attack to release
  Focus: On baton
  Charges: 5

This spell is favored by your average sentinel or local cop. Take a baton or billy-club and rub some broken glass over it. The glass gets absorbed into the club, and you make some repeated hitting

motions — like you're trying it out on a striking Taxim's skull. The spell gets charged into the baton five times.

(The spell can only be released by a successful *melee combat, martial arts,* or Agility attack by the wielder. Damage for the club is assessed normally, but the "carrier" spell is released automatically. For a split second, the spell caused intense pain to the target. Check the effect value versus the target's Endurance on the "Trick/Taunt" column of the Success Chart. The condition is caused by the intense pain caused by the spell and lasts until the end of the round — even though the duration of the spell ends instantly.)

COMPONENT DESTRUCTION: A CHEAP GARBAGE DISPOSAL?

Some spells use a pinch of salt, others a diamond. One uses handcuffs. When creating spells, casters get bonuses for having components — and those bonuses are increased when the components are destroyed.

Hmmn. So, I'm locked up by some unfriendly sentinels. They've got handcuffs on me. All I have to do is throw *mystic chains* and I'm free, right?

Wrong.

Components for spells are special — *especially* those that are normally expensive or really tough. You can't say something like "that creature's a component of my spell, and he'll be destroyed when I cast it," and get away with that. You'd have to make special preparations — like capturing the creature and rendering it helpless.

Same thing goes for objects. The tougher or more useful the item, the more "preparation" it should take to make the component work in a spell. There are no game mechanics for this — but the object should be completely within the character's power — not vice versa. So, if an imprisoned character can get ahold of some handcuffs, he can throw *mystic chains* — but not if the handcuffs have power over *him*.

Gamemasters, all you can do is use your judgement. Components should make spells more interesting and easier to cast — but their destruction should not be the end the character wishes to gain.

"… And this prison door is a component of my *light* spell, so it will be destroyed when I cast it …"

Yeah, right.

PERSONALITY (O/OB-O)

Skill: *Alteration: vitomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Folk*
Difficulty Number: 16
Feedback: 10
Effect Value: 20
Range: 0
Speed: 0
Duration: 15 (15 minutes)
Cast Time: 9 (One minute)
Modifiers:
  None

Some guys use this spell to improve their chances with the dames. Not me, of course …

(This spell increases the target's Charisma and related skills temporarily. Compare the effect value of the spell to the target's Charisma on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. Add the push value to the target's Charisma for the duration of the spell.)

PLANT CUFFS (OB-O)

Skill: *Apportation: vitomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Plant*
Difficulty Number: 21
Feedback: 14
Effect Value: 16
Range: 7 (20 meters)
Speed: 7
Duration: 10 (100 seconds)
Cast Time: 4 (six seconds)
Modifiers:
  Components: A living plant
  Focus: On plants
  Other Modifiers: There must be plants
    growing in the area
  Gestures: Point at target

This spell is a good delaying tactic when you're on the lam. The caster grabs a hold of a vine or something else green and growing and points at the target. Next thing you know, plants are wrapping themselves around his wrists and ankles and he ain't going nowhere. Of course, there have to be plants around to grab the target … so this spell doesn't work too well in cities.

(The caster's skill total is compared to the *dodge* or Agility of the target. The effect value of the spell is equal to the plants' Strength. The Toughness of the plants depends on the plants used — grass is very fragile, while vines can be extremely tough. The spell is focused on the plants.)

QUICKSAND (OB-O)

Skill: *Alteration: elemental*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: Earth
Difficulty Number: 20
Feedback: 14

Effect Value: 15
Range: 5 (10 meters)
Speed: 5
Duration: 18 (One hour)
Cast Time: 20 (Two hours)
Modifiers:
  Components: Dirt and water
  Gestures: Mixing
  Area of Effect: Two-meter sphere
  Variable Duration: Off only
  Charges: 2

Only saw this spell used once, and that was at the track. Cost me a bundle, too ...

Anyway, this is another spell you're better off charging. When you need it, you need it, and the bad guys aren't going to give you two hours to make mudpies. And that's just what you gotta do: mix water with dirt for two hours and make a lot of mud.

When you trigger this spell, it turns a two-meter, spherical area into quicksand. Walk on it and you're up to your hip pockets before you know it. It's swim or sink, brother.

Most casters (like this one) build in an "off" switch that will send the mud back to solid ground.

(The pull of the muck is equal to the effect value. It is also the DN for *swimming* or using Agility to get out of it. Characters stuck in the muck suffer *fatigue* (two shock) every round until unconscious, then a *wound* every round thereafter. Note: If the caster leaves the range of the spell, the quicksand dries up, since the spell is not focused.)

RAIN OF RAZORS

Skill: *Apportation: technomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Metal*
Difficulty Number: 18
Feedback: 13
Effect Value: 18
Range: 8 (40 meters)
Speed: 8
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Modifiers:
  Components: Sharp metal fragments
  Gestures: Throwing motion

Want somebody sliced and diced? Then find yourself a technomancer to teach you this baby. All you need is a handful of sharp metal fragments — razors are real nice. Hold 'em in your fist and mimic tossing them at your target. They'll fly out as a rain of razors and cut him to pieces.

They tell me this spell is also good for filleting meat. Judging from what I've seen it do, I'd believe it.

(The caster's *apportation: technomancy* total is used to hit the target — versus his *dodge* or Agility.

THESE SPELLS ARE HARD!

As mentioned before, these spells were all created using the *MasterBook* special effects system — and some of them are even *easier* than they should be because they've been "broken in." Are they still too hard for your average beginning spell-thrower?

Well, good.

Your average beginning mage has about the ability of a decent novice — remember, three adds in any skill is the max for beginning characters, and even with background Advantages, they aren't going to get much past "intermediate" or basic "professional" level — see the section on "Skill Add Comparison" in the *MasterBook* character creation section. And magic spells, even on Marl, aren't the easiest things to be working on.

Gamemasters can allow characters to learn some of these spells, and they can definitely encourage player characters to create their own — more within range of their abilities. Then, they can work their way up. Magic is very powerful — beginning mages aren't world-stoppers. And if they know enough not to blow their heads off throwing spells they shouldn't, they are well on the way to survival.

If your players want to be the "big guns" of the party, they might consider playing mages — but only if they are willing to be patient and learn. Otherwise, they can go *buy* a big gun and be better off.

The damage value of the *rain of razors* spell is its effect value.)

SENSE UNDEAD

Skill: *Divination: wizardry*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Entity*
Difficulty Number: 24
Feedback: 15
Effect Value: 18
Range: 10 (100 meters)
Speed: 10
Duration: 5 (Ten seconds)
Cast Time: 9 (One minute)
Modifiers:
  Area of Effect: Five-meter diameter area
  Concentration: One minute (DN 9)
  Related Skill Modifier: *perception* (DN 9)

Sense Undead lets you cue in on vampires, reanimated dead and the like within the area of effect. It won't sense entities or demons, but I hear

there's a *sense entity* spell out there somewhere.

If you only got enough gold for one spell, I'd make it this one. You can't get away from them if you don't know they're there, right?

(The caster must remain still and actively concentrate for the duration of the cast time. He must then generate a *perception* total against a difficulty number of 9. If successful, the caster will detect any Undead whose Confidence or *willpower* is less than the effect value of the spell that are within the radius of the spell. He will know where they are, what species they are and how many are present.)

SLEEP OF THE DEAD (C/OB-C)

Skill: *Alteration: vitomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Life*
Difficulty Number: 20
Feedback: 15
Effect Value: 19
Range: 0
Speed: 0
Duration: 25 (One day)
Cast Time: 20 (Three hours)
Modifiers:
  Variable Duration: "Off" only
  Charges: 3
  Concentration: Two minutes
  Components: Hand of murderer, candles,
    sand, grave-earth
  Gestures: Mingle components, mimicry
  Area of Effect: Five-meter sphere
  Focus: Hand

No self-respecting burglar should be without this — saves a lot of mess. It's usually charged into a Hand of Glory (see "Equipment"), but it can be used with other things, too. As long as your targets don't get buried alive, you're not looking at too much jail time for just knocking 'em out.

(When released, this spell causes any living thing within the area of effect to fall asleep for one day. Along with the slumber will come a slowing of the metabolism that will cause some to believe the target is dead (a *medicine* total of 12 is needed to discover signs of life, or *perception* total of 16.

To release this spell, the mage must concentrate for 12 rounds. In one hand, he holds some sand, and in the other, some earth from a grave. He lets them run from his hands so that they mingle together and then lays his head upon the earth and mimics sleeping.

Any living thing with a Confidence or *willpower* less than the effect value of the spell will be affected by the spell. Amulets of will can help counteract the effect of these spells (and a would-be burglar better get one, or he'll go unconscious), as can *awaken* spells that beat the effect value of this spell.

The variable duration modifier allows the caster

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to turn the spell off before the duration expires, if he should choose to. The spell is focused on the hand, so, usually, the user will leave the hand in the house until he is ready to depart.

Note: This spell is usually used around unconscious or sleeping people, because they cannot actively resist its effects.)

SLOW (O/OB-O)

Skill: *Alteration: vitomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Folk*
Difficulty Number: 21
Feedback: 14
Effect Value: 16
Range: 7 (20 meters)
Speed: 7
Duration: 13 (Five minutes)
Cast Time: 15 (Fifteen minutes)
Modifiers:
  Gestures: Point
  Incantation: "Freeze!" (loudly)
  Charges: 5

This spell is a favorite among sentinels who walk the beat and hate getting stuck in long chases. It's usually charged into a baton or some other piece of equipment the patrolman carries for use on felons lamming out.

The rite does exactly what it sounds like: slows 'em down.

(The spell is usually charged into a badge or other sentinel-carried object. To cast the spell, the character merely needs to hold the object and will the magic into it. To release the spell — up to five times — the wielder must point the object at the target and yell "Freeze!" as loud as he can. The effect value of the spell is compared to the target's *movement rate, ground*. The result points are then read on the "Push" column of the Success Chart, and the push value is subtracted from the target's movement rate for the duration of the spell. Note: The spell is not focused, so if the target moves out of range, the spell goes away.)

SORCEROUS SHIELD (O/OB-O)

Skill: *Conjuration: wizardry*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Magic*
Difficulty Number: 22
Feedback: 14
Effect Value: 25
Range: 0
Speed: 0
Duration: 25 (One day)
Cast Time: 9 (One minute)
Modifiers:
  Concentration: One minute (DN 9)
  Gestures: Hand up, palm out

Given the choice, I'll take this over *mystic barrier* any day. Sure, it don't cover you as well, but at least you can still shoot back. The caster must hold his hand up, palm out, and concentrate for one minute on putting up the shield. From then on (until the duration is over), it is "linked" to his hand and he can put it in front of himself to ward off *wizardry* and *magic* spells.

(*Sorcerous shield* creates a small circle — less than a meter in diameter — of mystic energy that can be wielded like a shield by the caster. The spell is similar to *mystic barrier*, in that no *magic* or *wizardry* spell can pass through the shield without first overcoming the effect value of the spell — see the rules for *mystic barrier* for some clarification.

However, the spell is different. Because the *shield* is only a circle about a meter in diameter, only spells that the character can "see" coming (he sees the caster throwing them) can be affected. The caster does not have to generate any particular skill total — unless the gamemaster thinks it is necessary — all he has to do is hold the "shield" between himself and the caster.

Sorcerous shield is no good versus area of effect spells, however, or versus spells that a caster can send around the shield (using the "apportation" optional element), but it is good for casters who see their foes face-to-face.)

SPEAK TO DEAD (C/OB-C)

Skill: *Divination: necromancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Death*
Difficulty Number: 15
Feedback: 8
Effect Value: 20
Range: 0 (one meter)
Speed: 0
Duration: 15 (15 minutes)
Cast Time: 9 (One minute)
Modifiers:
  Components: A "close" object

Never met a dead guy I wanted to talk to. Hell, if I liked his conversation, I wouldn't have shot the slob to begin with, right? But if you forgot to ask the old man where he hid the will, this is the way to do it.

First, get an item that the dead guy cared about: a favorite book, his wedding ring, something. That ought to lure him back into his body long enough for you to get the answers you need.

(Compare the effect value of the spell to the Confidence of the spirit you want to talk to and find the result points on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. This will tell you the number of questions you can ask the spirit.

This spell does not guarantee that the spirit will cooperate with the caster or answer truthfully. The caster may use *charm*, *persuasion* or, if he can figure out how, *intimidation* or *interrogation* to get the corpse to answer truthfully. He can even use other spells.)

SPEED (O/OB-O)

Skill: *Alteration: vitomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Folk*
Difficulty Number: 16
Feedback: 12
Effect Value: 21
Range: 0
Speed: 0
Duration: 13 (Five minutes)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Modifiers:
  Incantations: "Hasten"

Great for those times you hear the tax man knocking and that fire escape sure looks sweet …

This spell increases the mage's running speed temporarily. To cast it, the mage says simply, "Hasten."

(Compare the effect value to the target's *movement rate, ground* and read the result points on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. Add the final result points to the character's *movement rate, ground* for the duration of the spell. The character's "MAX" movement rate is ignored, and the character can attempt to push his movement, using his new movement rate as the base DN.)

STRENGTHEN (O/OB-O)

Skill: *Alteration: vitomancy*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Folk*
Difficulty Number: 20
Feedback: 16
Effect Value: 20
Range: 0
Speed: 0
Duration: 18 (One hour)
Cast Time: 5 (Ten seconds)
Modifiers:
  Concentration: DN 8
  Focus: On target
  Incantations: "Feel the power in your
    limbs!" (loudly)

Heard about a Gris once who had this cast on his women. Some clown made a crack about how much he was getting charged for a tumble and the broad pitched him out of a third-story window. He bounced a few times, too. Nothing wrecks a nice evening faster than fighting over money.

(To cast this spell, the mage concentrates, touches the target and cries out "Feel the power in your limbs!"

Compare the effect value to the character's Strength on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. Add the final result points to the character's Strength for the duration of the spell. This rite does allow Strength to exceed normal attribute limits. It is focused on the target.)

SUMMON DEMON (C/OB-C)

Skill: *Summoning: wizardry*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Entity*
Difficulty Number: 17
Feedback: 18
Effect Value: 40
Range: 0
Speed: 0
Duration: 15 (15 minutes)
Cast Time: 18 (One hour)
Modifiers:
  Gestures: Draw pentagram
  Other Modifiers: Symbol, written name
    Incantations: "Demon, I command thee to
      appear!" (loudly)

It's your funeral, pally

Draw a pentagram on the floor and write in it the name of the demon you want to call up (or at least where he lives). Then say, "Demon, I command thee to appear!" and try to do it with a straight face. At the end of the cast time, the demon shows up and he's stuck in the pentagram — for about a second and a half. Better know *bind demon* or you'll find out just what lousy guests demons make.

The effect value of this spell is compared to two attributes. First, compare the effect value of the spell, minus two, to the distance between the demon's plane and our own (38 is average). Then, compare the effect value of the spell to the demon's highest attribute and read the results on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. If the result points equal or exceed the demon's Confidence, it is summoned forth. Otherwise, the spell fails.

More powerful versions of this spell (to summon more powerful demons from farther away) are available.)

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WALL OF AIR

Skill: *Alteration: elemental*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Air*
Difficulty Number: 25
Feedback: 13
Effect Value: 30
Range: 5 (10 meters)
Speed: 5
Duration: 10 (100 seconds)
Cast Time: 22 (Four hours)
Modifiers:
  Gestures: See text
  Area of Effect: Five square meters
  Charges: 4 (+6)

Ever run into a wall you couldn't see? Sure you have, usually about the same time you're seeing pink manticores playing brass. But this rite gives you the real thing: a wall of air tough enough to stop a slug, and that's no lie.

Only thing is, you have to get it charged into something. That's partly because it's too hard to cast otherwise, and partly because the caster looks like such a jackass when he's doing it that he don't want anyone else around to see.

If you thought being an airmage was glamorous, think again. To cast this spell, the mage climbs up on whatever furniture he's got handy and makes like he's sculpting a wall out of the air. Then he spends the next few hours making pretend that he's slamming into it and bouncing off (both gestures have difficulty numbers of 8).

Once it's charged, the lucky purchaser has a wall of air he can slap up four times before he has to get the spell redone. (The wall is five square meters and the effect value of the spell equals the wall's Toughness. Being behind it is equal to having *complete cover*.)

WINDSTORM (O/OB-O)

Skill: *Apportation: elemental*
Most Applicable Arcane Knowledge: *Air*
Difficulty Number: 17
Feedback: 12
Effect Value: 24
Range: 8 (40 meters)
Speed: 8
Duration: 0 (One second)
Cast Time: 5 (Ten seconds)
Modifiers:
  Gestures: Whirl in place
  Incantation: Make blowing noises
  Concentration: Ten seconds (DN 8)

This spell will buy you some time in a tight spot, but don't be surprised if you wind up with a nauseous airmage on your hands when it's over. The caster has to whirl himself around like a kite in a gust and make a noise like wind blowing (kind of explains why you don't see this one performed in public all that often, don't it?) And he's got to keep his mind on what he's doing for the full 10 seconds. When he's finished, a stiff breeze knocks his target over like a tenpin.

Best change you can make to this rite is work it so it hits more than one guy. But if you're going do that, you might want to think about getting it charged into something, cause it's going to be a bear to cast.

(The damage value of the spell is equal to the effect value. The caster's *apportation* total must equal or exceed his target's *dodge* or Agility to hit.)

CANTRIPS

The use of cantrips is described in Chapter Six, "New Skills." These are some cantrips commonly possessed by the average citizen of Marl.

BREEZE

Effect Value: 8
Range: 3 (Four meters)
Speed: 3 (Four meters)
Duration: 4 (Five seconds)
Cast Time: 1 (One second)

Okay, here's the situation. The sentinels just knocked on (or in) your door. They've got an elderswrath that lets 'em search the place and you've got a little something you don't want found. Trigger this spell and maybe a draft blows through the room, just strong enough to push the whatsit out of the way, maybe into someplace they already searched. Better be a damn good liar, though ...

(The effect value of the *breeze* is equal to the Strength of the wind. Versus really weak characters, it could actually cause damage.)

CHILL

Effect Value: 18
Range: 0
Speed: 0
Duration: 2 (two seconds)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)
Modifiers:
  Variable Effect: May be less

You like your Tarik ale straight, but she takes it on the rocks. Trouble is, you've got no cubes. No problem — this cantrip will turn water into ice, or just chill that bottle.

'Course, Human skin freezes, too, and this spell can sting if used against somebody's bare skin. Not that I'm encouraging you to do that or anything, though, right?

—

(Read the effect value of the spell versus the value of the current temperature — in degrees Celsius. Check the result points on the "Push" column of the Success Table. Subtract the push value from the temperature value to find the new temperature of whatever the character is touching. After the duration expires, the substance heats up normally.

Example: Average room temperature is around twenty degrees Celsius (68 degrees Fahrenheit). The value that includes this temperature is 7 (25). The effect value of the cantrip is 18, so, when this is read against the temperature of a substance at room temperature, the push value is 7. Seven minus seven equals a temperature value of 0, or one degree Celsius — which, in game terms, is close enough to the freezing point to make you some ice.

CLEAN

Effect Value: 5
Range: 5 (10 meters)
Speed: 5
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Cast Time: 5 (10 seconds)

You can't get good help these days, so if you want something scrubbed right, you got to do it yourself. Just make a sweeping motion with your hand and the dirt's swept off any object. You'll have to do this quite often, since there isn't an area of effect.

(The effect value of the spell is the value of the maximum distance the dirt can be moved at a speed of ten meters a second.)

FIND

Effect Value: 6
Range: 5 (10 meters)
Speed: 5
Duration: 4 (six seconds)
Cast Time: 4 (six seconds)

You're busy doing other things and don't have time to look for those keys that have gone missing. *Find* lets you search without taking your mind off your business. If it's within range of the spell, it'll turn up.

(The effect value of the spell is used at the character's *perception* or Intellect. It isn't much, but it should be enough to find objects lying in plain sight that the caster doesn't want to search for — as long as they are in range.)

HEAT

Effect Value: 15
Range: 0
Speed: 0
Duration: 5 (10 seconds)
Cast Time: 2 (Two seconds)
Modifiers:
  Variable Effect: May be less

This is the flip side of *chill*, a little spell used to heat up coffee quick and such like. It's great for boiling water — and, yeah, like *chill*, slap somebody in the face and trigger this and it's going to hurt.

(The boiling point of water is 100 degrees Celsius — a value of ten. Measure the effect value versus the measure of the temperature of the object touched — usually around 20 degrees Celsius (value 7) — and check the result points on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. Add the push value to the temperature value for the duration of the spell — the object will cool normally.)

NOTE

Effect Value: 0
Range: 4 (Six meters)
Speed: 4
Duration: 12 (Four minutes)
Cast Time: 4 (Six seconds)
Modifiers:
  Components: A piece of your reader
  Charges: One
  Gestures: Mimic writing

Two Hugos want to take you for a ride, the kind that usually leads to the healer's or the morgue. This ward lets you leave a note that will stay out of sight until the right person walks in to read it. All you need to do is mimic writing something down and then leave something of your intended reader on the spot — a few hairs, whatever. As soon as they get in range, the message will appear on whatever surface you wrote it.

CHAPTER EIGHT

EQUIPMENT

The second Taxim got out and opened the back door for Deacon. The driver's gun never wavered as the detective slid across the seat and stepped out into the alley.

It might have been any dead end in Galitia, stinking of trash and stale liquor. But the bum curled up with his bottle had been dead for six months at least, and was only still around because something needed his body. In life, the guy might have been a merchant or a politician — but the demon renting his body now wanted booze.

The second sentinel car had kept going. Most likely, Scales was going to be getting his pay-off, probably in the form of a runeslug to the head.

The two Taxim shoved Deacon toward the side door of a dingy warehouse. Inside, it was dark, but the smell was unmistakable: once you'd gotten a whiff of the stuff used to preserve Hands of Glory, you never forgot it. These curios had probably been dumped in here and forgotten months ago, so that now the place reeked. (That was the big problem with Hands of Glory — after a while, the chemicals the flesh was treated with started to eat away at the crates they were stored in. They didn't have much shelf life.)

Deacon was led to the center of the warehouse, where the light of a single glowstone played upon a chair. The Taxim sat him down in it, then took a step back.

There was a moment of silence before the voice came from the darkness. "I thought this an appropriate site for our last meeting, Mr. Deacon. There was a time, not so long past, that I would not have required any help in capturing you. But that has changed — *you* changed that."

Deacon knew the voice. It was one he'd hoped never to hear again.

"Whisper," he muttered.

The voice sounded pleased. "Very good, Mr. Deacon. A man should always remember those he has … wronged."

Deacon shot up. "'Wronged'? That's not how I remember it, buddy."

"It makes no difference. It will be settled now. But we need no witnesses, do we?"

Deacon saw something flying toward him. No, not toward him — *past* him. At first, he thought they were swarms of insects, until he saw them slice into the Taxim. Clouds of razors turned the two Undead gunmen into bloody strips of flesh.

A soft chuckle came from the shadows. "And now, Mr. Deacon, it's your turn …"

Club/Baton: A piece of wood (in the case of the baton, small and shaped so as to be easily held in one hand), sometimes with a nail driven through it. Clubs are most often carried by breeds, who do most of their beatings in areas where they don't have to worry about witnesses. Clubs are notoriously hard to conceal. Batons are favored by legal authorities, like sentinels, who like to bring in their captives alive and relatively unharmed.

Stake: A piece of wood with one end sharpened to a point, this weapon is traditionally used against vampires (but works equally well against everyone else). In fact, unless the vampire in question has some particular vulnerability to wood, any sharp implement will do to kill them, provided it severs the spinal cord or wrecks the brain. It's believed that the idea that a wooden stake through the heart was the only way to kill an Undead was created by vampires so people would stop shooting at them. Because wood is softer than metal, decrease the damage plus of the weapon by one every time it causes a wound or greater, until it can be sharpened again.

Switchblade: An easily-concealed knife whose blade snaps back into its base after use. It does about as much damage as a standard knife, and the ability to hide it is what sets it apart. It is favored by youth and breed gangs because of its concealability and "reputation" as a "tough" weapon. Switchblades, however, often break on a setback in combat.

Knife: A small blade which is normally carried on the belt, in a boot sheath or concealed against the body (often up a sleeve). More ornate versions are used by cults for blood sacrifices and are considered sacred. Most people in the world of Marl, especially in the smaller cities, carry a knife as a matter of course — they use it for eating, working, and self-defense.

Cleaver: A larger knife capable of chopping as well as stabbing, and thus able to do more damage than other blades. Cleavers are hard to conceal but the sight of them is more intimidating.

Brass Knuckles: Linked metal rings or a metal bar with holes, worn on the hand. Brass knuckles can be kept in your pocket and slipped on unnoticed during a fight, significantly increasing the damage of your punch. They're often used by bouncers and enforcers to drive their message home.

Blackjack: Also called a "sap," a blackjack can be something as simple as a sock two-thirds full of packed earth or buckshot. Most often, it's a small, black mesh bag containing two steel balls, attached to a flexible leather handle. A blackjack is small enough to be concealed easily and does a good deal of damage to its target. If you need to take someone down before he can squawk, a blackjack is a quick and quiet way to do it.

MISSILE WEAPONS

The most common missile weapons in *Bloodshadows* are alchemical potions (using the *thrown weapons* skill, usually). These are kept in stoppered glass vials, usually kept in a pouch or special belt. They can be hurled against a target and, when the vial breaks, the potion is activated. Other, more beneficial potions, are listed under "Adventuring Gear" and can be drunk by the user or introduced on to a weapon to improve its attributes.

Alchemical potions can be built using the "Special Effects" rules in Chapter Six of *MasterBook*. Specifically, an alchemist is charging the potion with the ability to produce a certain effect (see "Charges," in the same chapter of *MasterBook*). Since most potions are designed to be splattered on an opponent or consumed, they need only be charged for one use.

Each alchemical potion listed below includes the statistics for the charge. Keep in mind that the difficulty number, feedback, cast time, etc. are of concern only to the alchemist who is actually creating the potion. The only thing the user need worry about is the effect it will have on the target and how long that effect will last. The person throwing the potion will not suffer feedback from the potion's activation or need to beat the charge's difficulty number to produce the effect.

Also listed are the components of the potion. These relate to the "Optional Modifiers" explained in Chapter Six of *MasterBook*. All alchemical potions have specific components — therefore, you cannot mix the ingredients of a *thunder* potion and expect it to act like a *blind* potion. The components used dictate the kind of charge produced.

ALCHEMICAL INGREDIENTS

As mentioned above, specific ingredients are needed to produce an alchemical potion. These can be purchased from apothecaries in small (usually three-ounce) bags and then mixed together, or the potions can be purchased ready-made. But note that all ingredients are not available in the same quantities in all cities — each substance listed below has an *Availability Rating* of 1–4. A 1 means the substance is extremely common and easy to find; a 2 means it is somewhat less common, and will only be found in mid-sized and larger cities; a 3 means it is relatively rare and will only be found in large and well-stocked cities; a 4 means it is very rare and will only be found in a few of the larger cities, or it may have to be found in the Wilderness.

All alchemical potions must be mixed in water or some other liquid (which will be listed) to be effec-

NON-LETHAL WEAPONS

If you are using the "Non-Lethal Weapons" optional rules presented in *MasterBook*, you'll need to use the following chart to determine which *Bloodshadows* weapons are considered "lethal" and which aren't. Also, there are special "Notes" for each non-lethal weapon listed. Keep in mind that the "Notes" are only applied if you are using the non-lethal rules.

Weapon	Lethal/ Non-lethal	Notes
Club/Baton	Non-lethal	Increase damage value by +2; Change to "Lethal" if spiked club, without increasing damage
Stake	Lethal	May be used as "Club/Baton" by decreasing "Club/Baton" damage value by -1
Switchblade	Lethal	May be used closed as non-lethal, but damage value is +1/16
Knife	Lethal	May be used as non-lethal (hilt bash), but damage value is +2/16
Cleaver	Lethal	None
Brass Knuckles	Non-lethal	Increase damage value by +2 if non-lethal rules are used; May be built into the hilt of a combat knife
Blackjack	Non-lethal	Increase damage value by +1 if non-lethal rules are used; It is recommended that "Knock-Out" rules also be used

tive. Unless otherwise specified, the components list refers to one ounce of the material.

In addition, the *Availability Rating* doubles as the component's modifier for the spell, for ease of use. The rarer the ingredients in a potion, the longer it may take to produce, but the easier it will be to charge overall.

Finally, each alchemical potion has a Toxicity Rating, consisting of two numbers separated by a slash. The number before the slash is the damage per round if the potion is accidentally splashed on to the skin of the user, with the spell failing to go off. The number after the slash is the damage value per round taken by the user if he drinks the potion and the spell fails to go off. These damage values remain in effect until the skin is cleansed or the potion is purged from the afflicted person's body. **Note:** Since all the potions listed here have technically been made (i.e., the spell went off already), the Toxicity Rating will have no actual effect unless the character were creating a similar spell from scratch — they are here for *comparison purposes* only.

SOME SAMPLE POTIONS

All of these potions can be built using the alchemy school of magic and one of the five magic skills. Rather than listing each individual spell, however, these descriptions include the potion name, the characteristics and effects of the potion, and the components needed to create the potion — in case you ever want to make one yourself. Most people on Marl simply go down to the local alchemist and purchase or commission their potions.

Blind: Made using three ounces of brimstone and two ounces of magnesium and alum, the blind potion uses the arcane knowledge of light to create a flash when it impacts with a target. The effect value of the potion (30) is then compared to any sight-based or sight-dependent skill values the character tries to make on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. The result of the push is then subtracted from that character's appropriate values for the duration of the effect (30 seconds). The Toxicity Damage of the potion is 16/21.

Eagle Eyes: Made using mandrake, hemlock, and powdered henbane, and the arcane knowledge of living forces, this potion is consumed by its owner. Measure the effect value (21) of the potion versus the imbiber's perception or Intellect (for purposes of perception only) on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. The push result is added to the character's perception for one day. Since the potion is to be consumed, the Toxicity Damage is 0/28.

Potion of Power: Lead, hemlock, and cinnabar are used in this living forces based potion. When consumed, the effect value of the potion (20) is measured versus the target's Strength on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. The push result is added to the character's Strength value for one day. Its Toxicity Damage value is 11/25.

Razor's Edge: Two ounces antimony, some zincen, and two ounces cinnabar are combined into

SUBSTITUTING INGREDIENTS

Sometimes, characters might not be able to find what they need to make a particular potion. Or they might buy one off the shelf that was made by a cut-rate alchemist who used cheap knock-offs instead of genuine ingredients.

Any time a character purchases a potion pre-made, the gamemaster should secretly roll two ten-sided dice. On a 2, the spell in the potion didn't "take," and the potion won't work. For every substitute ingredient included in the potion, the chances of the spell not working go up by +2.

The same applies if a character makes a potion himself. On a roll of 2, the spell doesn't take (maybe the chemicals are too old or the proportions were off by a little). For every substitute ingredient the character uses (brimstone instead of pitchblende, say), add +2 to the chances of the spell not working. So a potion with one substitute ingredient would fizzle on a roll of 2–4; two substitute ingredients, 2–6, etc.

the *willpower* or Confidence of anyone in the area, for one minute. The Toxicity Damage value is 21/10.

Tar Pit: Naptha, alum, and warlock's brew go into this earth potion. Toss it on the ground and it forms a ten-meter diameter pool of tar. Read the effect value (18) of the spell versus the Strength of anyone in the area on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. Subtract the push value from that person's Agility while he is in the tar pit area, for the duration of the effect (fifteen minutes). The Toxicity Damage value is 8/20.

Thunder: Naptha, coal dust, and zincen are combined in this inanimate forces potion. When this potion hits a target, it explodes with a damage value of 19. The effect is instantaneous. The Toxicity Damage value is 8/20.

Toughen: Lead, copper demon, and antimony go into this living forces potion. When this potion is ingested, compare the effect value (25) to the imbiber's Toughness on the "Push" column of the Success Chart. The push result is added to the target's Toughness for one day. The Toxicity Damage value is 0/21.

FIREARMS

There are no standard brands of firearm on Marl, due to the difficulty of importing and exporting goods. The weapons listed below are among the best available in those cities that do receive a substantial amount of goods from outside, and therefore can offer a wider selection.

All of these guns can fire both normal lead bullets and runeslugs, and can accommodate mixed loads.

.22 Delken: Small, easily concealed, the .22 does not pack the same kind of punch as its larger cousins. But if you don't want to broadcast that you're carrying a weapon, and don't care that its standard slugs likely won't stop a charging wereanything, this is the gun you want.

.38 Gelvash Revolver: The most common caliber found on the streets of most cities and standard issue for sentinels in Selastos and Galitia, to name only a few. The revolving cylinder of the .38 makes it possible for a user packing runeslugs to pick and choose which he wants to fire next in the heat of combat. Getting off the right spell in the right spot can be the difference between sleeping on a bed or a slab that night.

.44 Karr Automatic: Most powerful of the handguns available, but difficult to conceal and with one other significant drawback. Its use of clips means the wielder must live with whatever slugs come out, in whatever order, rather than having the

this metal-based potion. This potion is applied to a knife or other sharp object. If a character sustains a wound or better from a coated weapon (within one hour of the potion being applied), the character takes, in addition to any damage from the weapon, a damage value 19 attack from poison. This attack is read on the "Damage" column of the Success Chart versus the target's Endurance. The Toxicity Damage value of the potion is 0/26.

Revitalize: Naphtha, ground unicorn horn, and mandrake are combined into this *living forces* potion. The potion must be consumed, and it has a first aid skill total of 11. It will remove all shock and it will stabilize a light or moderate wound for one day. It has a Toxicity Damage of 5/18.

Smokescreen: Lead, three ounces of coal dust, two ounces of bat claws, and warlock's brew are used in this darkness potion. Throw it at a target area, and it will create a five-meter sphere of complete darkness in that area for one minute. The DN to see through or into the dark area is 20. The Toxicity Damage is 5/23.

Stench: This spell is an entity one, using brimstone, coal dust, powdered henbane, and Sketh scent glands. When it hits a target or an area, it sets up a five-meter sphere of "Sketh stench." The effect value of this stench is 15, and it is read on the "Trick/Taunt" column of the Success Chart versus

SOME ALCHEMICAL INGREDIENTS

Naptha (1): An inflammable, volatile liquid that can be distilled from wood, oil or coal tar.

Bat Claws (1): Like many alchemical ingredients, misnamed. Bat claws can be the talons of a bat, rat or other rodent and are sold in small jars by apothecaries.

Ground Unicorn Horn (1): Fairly easily obtained, since it's sold on the market as an aphrodisiac, ground "unicorn" horn is like sausage: no one knows what it's really made out of, and no one cares to ask.

Lime (1): A white powder derived by heating limestone.

Coal Dust (1): A black, combustible mineral formed by the effects of heat and pressure on decayed plant matter.

Lead (1): A heavy, soft, malleable bluish-gray metallic element, used as a base in many alchemical potions. It's valued for its ability, when properly treated, to transmute into other elements, such as gold, if only temporarily.

Brimstone (1): A pale yellow element that burns bright blue and gives off a horrendous odor. This stink explains why so many alchemists face eviction on a regular basis.

Rock Oil (1): Often refined into a combustible fuel, alchemists have no problem getting "rock oil" in most cities.

Seawater (2): If you are on a coastal city, you're in luck; water sprinkled with salt won't work as a substitute, though.

Mandrake (2): A poisonous plant of the nightshade family with a short stem and thick root.

Hemlock (2): A poisonous weed with small, white flowers.

Powdered Henbane (2): The ground-up remains of a coarse, foul-smelling plant known to be poisonous.

Vitriol (2): An oily, colorless, corrosive liquid, also known as sulfuric acid.

Antimony (2): A silvery-white, brittle, metallic element, used as a hardening agent.

Zincen (2): Also known as zinc oxide, this white powder is sometimes used to make glass or paint.

Arsenic (2): A silvery-white, brittle and extremely poisonous element, usually found in the form of a powder.

Copper Demon (2): A copperlike ore that contains no copper; nickel.

Gold (3): A potion that calls for gold wants *pure* gold, not alloys or something that was lead this morning. That's why gold is relatively rare for the purposes of potions — but efforts to use substitutes often result in explosions.

Silver (3): See the notes for "Gold," above.

Aqua Regia (3): A mixture of nitric and hydrochloric acids, so powerful it can dissolve gold or platinum.

Warlock's Brew (3): A mix of arsenic and brimstone, a key ingredient in many alchemical potions.

Alum (3): An astringent powder, a double sulfate of potassium and aluminum.

Shapeshifter Hide (3): Small triangles of flesh cut from the body of a shapeshifter or werecreature. 'Shifters down on their luck can often be seen drifting into apothecaries to sell pieces of their skin for small change.

Belladonna (3): A poisonous plant with reddish, bell-shaped flowers and black berries, also known as nightshade. Can only be found in the wild (at least the useful stuff).

Magnesium (4): A light, silver-white, malleable metallic element that burns with a hot, white light. Some northern mines have started searching actively for it, so the Availability Rating may drop soon.

Cinnabar (4): A heavy, bright red mineral, the principal ore of mercury.

Pitchblende (4): A brown to black mineral containing radium, uranium, etc.

freedom to choose as revolver owners do. For this reason, .44 users stay away from mixed loads, sticking to clips with all lead, all *lightning* runeslugs, etc. If need be, clips can be changed quickly and easily.

Degan "Guardian" Rifle: This weapon is primarily used by security on Wilderness caravans and occasionally to put down riots in cities. Other than that, collectors mainly keep them for show or for self-defense in their homes. Almost impossible to conceal without the aid of magic, it's hard to walk around with a "Guardian" and not get hassled by somebody.

Gelvash "Thunder" Shotgun: This double-barrelled piece can cut a target in half at close range. It's particularly deadly when loaded with fireball runeshot, since the scattering effect can set a large area on fire. Most users saw the barrel down to make it easier to conceal.

Skandra "Annihilator" Submachine Gun: An automatic weapon fired from the hip, the "Annihilator" is a big favorite among the gangs, particularly in Selastos. Ammo is fed to the barrel via

RUNESLUGS

Standard lead bullets are good enough for the average smash-and-grab artist on the street. But when you're up against something that shapeshifts, shoots bone spikes, or already died twice this week, you need a little something extra.

That's when it makes sense to buy runeslugs. These are bullets with magic spells charged into them, which are normally triggered when the slug strikes its target. They got their name from the fact that craftsman carve runes into the sides and backs of the shells, so users can tell by feel what bullet is going into the chamber next.

Virtually any spell can be charged into a runeslug, but the most popular are the following: *fireball*, *lightning bolt, mystic chains,* and *pain*. Runeslugs may be charged for one use or multiple uses and are more expensive than non-enchanted bullets.

Possession of runeslugs is considered an "Equipment (CII)" Background Advantage.

When using runeslugs in combat, first calculate the standard damage of the bullet and then calculate the damage done by the spell it contains. A bullet must cause at least one *wound* for the spell to be triggered.

a round drum and rate of fire is impressive. SMGs loaded with seeker bullets are particularly frightening to see at work, as a shower of lead changes directions until it tracks down its target.

SIMPLE MISSILE WEAPONS

These are three of the simplest missile weapons used in the world of Marl.

Throwing Dagger: A specialized dagger balanced so it can be thrown with accuracy at a target. Throwing daggers are traditionally easy to conceal. Used with the skill thrown weapons.

Bow and Arrow: In its most basic form, a wooden bow roughly 1.5 meters in length, which fires wooden shafts with metallic heads. Used with the skill missile weapons.

Crossbow: A bow attached to a wooden stock which allows the weapon to be kept cocked without effort by the wielder. Many crossbows are mechanically bent (or "spanned"), allowing for much stronger pulls and thus much greater power. Runebolts are extremely popular ammunition for crossbows. Used with the skill missile weapons.

ENCHANTED WEAPONS

All of the weapons listed here have spells charged into them, normally designed for multiple uses. **Note:** Not all the spells charged into these items are listed in the "Magic" chapter. Those that aren't listed are described here. Each weapon is presumed to carry one charge, unless otherwise noted. Of course, by paying more for the weapon, multiple charges can be imbued.

Ashes to Ashes: A more expensive cousin of burning blades, this is a knife or cleaver (damage value STR+4/19) with an *incinerate* spell charged in. The user must cause at least one wounds in a melee weapons attack for the spell to be triggered. (The *incinerate* spell has a damage value of 30 and causes spontaneous combustion).

Burning Blades: These are standard throwing daggers with a type of *fireball* spell charged in. Each is charged for only one use, as the dagger is usually destroyed when the fireball explodes. The dagger must score at least one *wound* with a *thrown weapons* attack for the spell to be triggered.

Chain Reaction: One of the more expensive enchanted weapons around, this is a steel or iron chain that can be worn as a belt around the waist. Each link has the *bullet* spell charged into it and, on command, will fly free of the chain to strike a target. More than one link can be fired in a round using the "Multi-Action" rules, and there are normally a dozen links to a chain.

Hand of Glory: Not really much of a weapon, but useful in the right circumstances. A Hand of Glory is the preserved left hand of a murderer, with a *sleep of the dead* spell charged into it. Why it needs to be the hand of a murderer, no one is sure — probably just tradition.

The Hand of Glory is rigged up to look like a candle, with wicks coming from each fingertip. Light all the fingers and walk around a person or a dwelling in a circle three times, and the target(s) drops into a deep sleep for the next day. The only way to wake them earlier than that is with an *awaken* or *destroy magic* spell or by dousing the Hand and returning it to the grave from which it came.

Beware of imitations — there are a lot of Hands of Glory on the market which have no spell charged in, and won't do anything but smell real bad if you light them.

Lightning Cane: These come in two varieties, simple walking sticks and ornate canes. The effects are the same — a lightning bolt spell can be triggered from the end — but the ornate version is more impressive in its execution. Often, the head of the cane will bear a serpent's or demon's likeness

and the lightning will fly from its eyes. The damage value of the lightning bolt is 21.

Pain Baton: Standard issue for sentinels, this is a club with a *pain* spell charged into it. Any amount of damage done with the club is sufficient to trigger the spell.

Razor Wire: This works under the same principle as *chain reaction*. It's a coil of wire with small, sharp pieces of metal affixed all along its length. Whip it at somebody and trigger the spell and the *rain of razors* spell kicks in, as the metal bits go flying at your target (use missile weapons to hit). Only charged for one use. the damage value is 18.

Smoke Rings: These are exactly what they sound like: brass or golden rings with *dark cloud* spells charged into them. They are charged for one use apiece and can fit on any finger. When triggered, they send up a cloud of black smoke that obscures your foe's vision, as per the dark cloud spell.

Winter's Wand: A telescoping metal rod with a *freeze* spell charged inside. The damage value of the spell is 19.

ADVENTURING GEAR

While not all adventurers will find these items useful all the time, they are interesting representatives of equipment available in most cities on Marl.

Conjurevids: A relatively new kind of magic, conjurevids are glowstones with images focused in as well as light. The images are harmless wards that can be activated by the user simply by holding the stone. The entertainment or information is displayed in the air above the stone. At present, maximum length for an affordable conjurevid is usually about two hours. Some adventurers may be supplied information on conjurevids. Sentinels also use conjurevids to show witnesses images of suspects or preserve images of crime scenes. "Recording" conjurevid crystals — those that anyone can record onto — are not commonly available, but can be had at about four times the price.

Crystal Sets: Along with the more expensive conjurevids, these are the primary source of communication and entertainment in Marl's cities. Sizes vary, ranging from large sets in bars, sentinel stations, and hospitals to handheld sets. But all work basically the same: wooden or metal housings are fitted with magically treated crystals that allow them to send and/or receive messages.

The crystal set you'll find in your local bar is equipped to receive only, and rents crystals from local stations. If it fails to make the monthly pay-

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ment, the station's crystal simply loses its charge and the owner's choices of entertainment are more limited from then on.

Sentinel sets, and handheld versions, are equipped to both send and receive. Maximum range for pocket versions is about 10 kilometers. They are designed so that all sets with like crystals can receive messages from you and broadcast in turn. That way, there's some control over who's hearing your messages.

There are some problems, though. Broadcasting from city to city is difficult, due to gates and other interfering magics that swirl around the Wilderness. At best, they'll cause interference — at worst, someone or something might intercept, divert or change your message as it goes by (which explains why couriers are still so popular). And even within a city, there's no cast-in-stone guarantee that some enterprising mage won't figure out your crystal's pattern and rig one up to hear your messages. You pay your money, you takes your chance …

Glowstones: These are spheres of polished crystal with *light* spells charged inside. The spells are usually good for roughly six months of continuous use.

Glowstones come in a number of different sizes. They can be small enough to fit in a penlight or flashlight apparatus or large enough to act as a street lamp. The crystals can also be tinted various shades for those who like colored light (such as the notorious "red'stone" districts in most cities). Larger stones are normally recharged, but with smaller stones, it is more practical to discard old ones and buy new rather than recharge.

The light spells *charged* inside vary. Some are wards and activate as soon as someone opens a

EQUIPMENT CHART

FIREARMS

PISTOLS

Weapon Type	Damage*	Ammo	Range				Price/ Ammo**
			Short	Med.	Long	Extreme	
.22 Delken	15	6	3–10	15	40	140	10 (2)
.38 Gelvash	17	6	3–10	25	40	140	15 (1)
.44 Karr Automatic	20	6	3–10	25	50	150	40 (2)

RIFLES

Degan "Guardian" Rifle	22	6	5–20	75	200	300	40 (1)

SHOTGUNS

Gelvash "Thunder"	21	2	5–10	20	40	80	20(1)

SUBMACHINE GUNS

Skandra "Annihilator"	17	30	5–10	20	50	100	90(3)

* Damages given are for standard lead slugs. Runeslugs do this damage, plus whatever damage the charged spell causes.

** Ammo prices are for standard lead slugs.

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon Type	Damage Value	Price
Club/Baton	STR+5/20	2
Stake	STR+4/19	4
Switchblade	STR+4/19	4
Knife	STR+4/19	3
Cleaver	STR+5/20	5
Brass Knuckles	STR+4/19	10
Blackjack	STR+3/18	5

ARMOR CHART

Armor Type	TOU+/ Max Value	Price (In selasts)
Hides and Furs	+2/17	5
Bone and Hide	+3/18	8
Padded	+3/18	10
Leather	+2/17	5
Bronze	+6/21	100
Bulletproof Vest	+7/22	125

MISSILE WEAPONS & ALCHEMICAL POTIONS*

Weapon Type	Damage Value	Range				Price
		Short	Med.	Long	Extreme	
Throwing Dagger	STR+2/17	3–5	10	15	25	5
Bow and Arrow	STR+5/20	3–10	40	100	150	7
Crossbow	STR+9/24	3–10	100	200	300	15

Potion	Effect Value	Range				Price**
		Short	Med.	Long	Extreme	
Blind	30	STR-4	STR-3	STR-2	STR-1	25
Eagle Eyes	21	–	–	–	–	25
Potion of Power	20	–	–	–	–	35
Razor's Edge	19	–	–	–	–	35
Revitalize	11	–	–	–	–	50
Smokescreen	20	STR-4	STR-3	STR-2	STR-1	50
Stench	15	STR-4	STR-3	STR-2	STR-1	30
Tar Pit	18	STR-4	STR-3	STR-2	STR-1	35
Thunder	19	STR-4	STR-3	STR-2	STR-1	60
Toughen	25	–	–	–	–	80

*See notes in text.

**Per dose.

ALCHEMICAL INGREDIENTS

Item	Price Per Oz.
Naptha	1
Bat Claws	8
Ground Unicorn Horn	5
Lime	2
Coal Dust	1
Lead	4
Brimstone	2
Mandrake	3
Hemlock	3
Powdered Henbane	4
Vitriol	7
Antimony	5
Zincen	5
Arsenic	4
Copper Demon	5
Gold	6
Aqua Regia	5
Warlock's Brew	4
Alum	6
Shapeshifter Hide	8
Belladonna	6
Magnesium	10
Cinnabar	8
Pitchblende	10

EQUIPMENT CHART

ENCHANTED WEAPONS

Weapon Type	Price	Effect*
Ashes to Ashes	150	Dagger does damage value STR+4/19. If attack does one *wound* or better, *incinerate* spell is triggered, doing damage value 30
Burning Blades	120	Throwing daggers do damage value STR+2/17. If one *wound* or better is scored in the attack, *fireball* spell is triggered, doing damage value 18
Chain Reaction	300	Chain does damage value STR+4/19. Links are charged with *bullet* spell and can fly off and strike target, doing damage value 17
Hand of Glory	110	When lit and carried in a circle around the target three times, tagret is hit with *sleep of the dead* spell.
Lightning Cane	140	Cane does damage value STR+4/19. *Lightning bolt* spell can be triggered from the end, doing damage value 21; range 25 meters
Pain Baton	90	Club does damage value STR+4/19, and has *pain* spell charged in. Any amount of damage done with the club is sufficient to trigger the damage value 13 spell
Razor Wire	250	Razor wire does damage value STR+5/20, and has *rain of razors* spell charged in. Spell, when triggered, does damage value 18; range 25 meters
Smoke Rings	50	Rings can be triggered to cast dark cloud spells (effect value 20)
Winter's Wand	100	Wand does STR+1/16 damage and has freeze spell charged in. When triggered, it does damage value 19

*See notes in text for all of these weapons.

VEHICLES

LAND VEHICLES

Vehicle	Speed (kmh/mph)	Pass.	Tough	Maneuver*	Price
Tesham Cart	48/30	2	12	-3	300
Tesham Armored Wagon	32/20	21	5	-3	2000
Conor Steam Cart	30/18	13	2	-3	500
Endel Roadster	280/175	2	15	+2	1200
Signer Sedan	250/150	5	16	+2	1000
Endel Truck	125/80	2	18	0	2000
Railrunner	97/60	60	22	N/A	75k

WATER VEHICLES

Vehicle	Speed (kmh/mph)	Pass.	Tough	Maneuver*	Price
Takar Rowboat	10/6	2	13	-1	50
Elandro Schooner	40/25	100	24	+1	200k
Draman Barque	20/12	150	26	-3	400k
Caru Merchantman	30/18	125	25	-3	300k
Tarik Frigate	20/12	200	28	-2	600k

*When using a particular vehicles skill, add this modifier to any actions performed with the vehicle.

door, steps inside, etc. Others have to be activated by the user, often by touching the stone or passing a hand in front of a panel in the wall.

Heatstones: Similar to glowstones, these crystals are charged with spells that allow them to give off heat. Small versions are used as lighters and matches, and larger ones can be used for cooking food, heating chemicals, or providing warmth when outdoors.

Lockpicks: If you talk fast, you can buy a standard lockpick set from a locksmith or get a metalsmith to make you one. But the really good ones are on the black market — they're the ones charged with *lockpick* spells. You stick them in the keyhole and they do all the work.

Rope: No one wants to carry a great big coil of rope around with them. That's why the best-selling item to couriers and others who need it are meter-long lengths of sturdy rope that are ensorcelled so that, on command, they can extend to 10 meters. More expensive versions can extend up to 20 meters.

Scribepad: Used primarily by sentinels, detectives and journalists, a scribepad will unerringly record any word spoken by a subject. The user must be within earshot of the subject for the pad to work. Words can be taken down in any language or, for a little extra, a code known only to the user.

Sleeping Mat: Designed for use in the Wilderness, sleeping mats commonly have *alarm* spells charged into them to wake up their occupants if anything comes too close. And it's a good thing they excel at that, because they're not very comfortable. **Note:** More expensive "alarm mats" are able to wake the sleeper silently, instead of screaming into his ear.

ADVENTURING GEAR

Item	Cost
Conjurevid	10
Handheld Crystal Set	8
Glowstone	1
Lockpicks	5
Rope	3
Sleeping Mat	15

VEHICLES

The most common vehicles in Marl's cities are land vehicles. Boats and ships can be found around those cities with access to rivers or the ocean, such as Galitia or Guildsport. There are no air vehicles on Marl, the theory apparently being that, though you can see everything from the air, everything can see you as well. And people in crude aircraft are extremely vulnerable to sorcerous attack. Thus, the technology has simply never been developed, at least as far as is known.

Land vehicles may be beast-drawn, combustion or steam-powered, or powered by elemental magic. Boats and ships are powered by oars, wind, steam or magic. In both cases, vehicles powered by magic are more expensive, and beast-drawn or man-powered the least expensive.

As with weapons, there are no standard makes and models, but this section will present you with some of the better types of vehicle available.

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LAND VEHICLES

Tesham Cart: The basics, still found in some smaller cities and inland towns, particularly in poorer areas. Teshams are almost always beast-drawn. They are open wagons that afford virtually no protection to driver or passengers, but do have room to carry some cargo in the back. Fine for in-city use, but not recommended for Wilderness travel.

Tesham Armored Wagon: If your business needs to send goods through the Wilderness, in areas where trucks can't go, the Armored Wagon is a good choice. From the outside, it looks like a standard covered cart. But both cart and cover have been treated magically to repel bullets and some low powered spells. This is available in both beast-drawn and elemental powered models, seats two, and can carry cargo in the back.

Conor Steam Cart: A popular vehicle in smaller cities like Guildsport, the steam cart is an open wagon with a steam engine mounted on the back that moves the wheels. It's narrow and light enough to get places cars can't but can reach respectable speeds and handles well. Unfortunately, steam carts cannot be covered, due to the heat given off by the engine. With a firemage on board and an endless supply of water, these carts can run forever.

Endel Roadster: Built for speed and style, this convertible is in favor among the rich of Selastos. The canvas top can be placed up if more privacy is desired. Endels are available in combustion or elemental models, but the latter are far more popular. It seats four.

Signer Sedan: This is a typical auto, and ones just like it can be found in most of the larger cities. Big, relatively slow, but providing driver and passengers a great deal of protection, the Signer is used by everyone from middle-income families to crime bosses. Steam, combustion and elemental models are available, and all three are in common use. The Signer seats five, but two more can stand on the outside running boards.

Endel Truck: A small truck that can navigate narrow streets as well as the larger boulevards of cities like Selastos, the Endel is also equipped to handle rough terrain. It can seat two in the cab and carry 15 tons of cargo in the rear. Steam and combustion Endels are common in cities, but few businesses will use them in the Wilderness (what happens if you run out of fuel?) There, the elemental powered Endel comes into play, *fire* and *inanimate forces* spells keeping it moving.

Railrunners: The primary means of mass transit in Selastos, Galitia and some other large cities, railrunners are long, open cars that run on tracks built into the streets. They can travel both above ground and below (in specially designed tunnels), moving down the middle of avenues so as not to interfere with auto traffic. Railrunners are either beast-drawn (in poorer sections) or elemental powered. A railrunner can seat up to 40 people and 15-20 more can travel standing.

For more information on railrunners, see Chapter Four, "Selastos."

WATER VEHICLES

Takar Rowboat: If all you need to do is get from your ship to the nearest island, or across a calm river, you could do much worse than choose the Takar. What makes it so appealing is the apportation spells charged into the oars, which allow them to do the rowing for you. A less expensive Takar model (without the spells) is also available.

The Takar seats two comfortably, but can hold as many as four.

Elandro Schooner: Much more practical for a party traveling the rivers of Marl, the schooner is favored by smugglers as well as legitimate traders. It can carry up to 40 tons of cargo and can be handled by as few as 6-8 crewmen. Extremely fast and maneuverable, which makes up for the fact that it is commonly not well armed.

Draman Barque: About the largest ship you'll spot on a river, the Draman boasts 60 tons of cargo space and a crew of around two dozen men (it can be handled by as few as 12, if need be). The manufacturer warns against taking these out on the ocean, because rough seas will play havoc with the hull. The Draman comes equipped with both sails and oars. Sails are charged with a month's worth of *wind* spells upon purchase.

The Draman is slow and not very maneuverable, but carries far more armament than the Elandro's deck gun.

Caru Merchantman: The most common vessel among those brave enough to challenge Marl's oceans. A Caru can carry 100 tons of cargo and usually boasts up to a dozen cannon, often with spells charged into them. As few as 20 men can handle this rather ponderous ship. Fewer with a couple air and watermages.

Tarik Frigate: Named after the port city of Tarik, this ship is not known to see much use outside of that city. Tarik uses the frigate to patrol the straits it controls and ensure that traders from Guildsport and elsewhere can make it into port. They are primarily military vessels, requiring 100 men to crew and carrying 25 cannon, as well as deck guns. Too big for river travel and too expensive for most cities to afford.

CHAPTER NINE

RUNNING AND PLAYING BLOODSHADOWS

Strangely enough, Deacon's whole life didn't flash before his eyes as he stood in the chill warehouse, waiting for the sorcerer to make his move. Only the portion Whisper had played a part in appeared, as if the memory could show him an escape route.

Whisper was out-of-town talent, brought into Galitia for a few little murders. He was no slouch with a spell, and he'd given Deacon a few bad moments. Then he'd played bait in a trap that killed a woman Deacon loved.

When the detective finally tracked him down, he fought down the urge to kill the sorcerer. But a few shots from his revolver had made certain Whisper would never forget him …

And apparently he hasn't, Deacon thought to himself.

A second pool of light appeared on the opposite end of the warehouse. Whisper sat there, in a wheelchair, hands on his ruined knees. "They offered to heal me," he said icily. "But I said no. I wanted no prison healers touching me. And I wanted to remember the pain, Deacon, so I could return it to you one day."

Whisper lifted his arms, and for the first time, Deacon saw his hands were artificial, probably made of wood. "They did give me these. Pretty, aren't they? Of course, I cannot gesture with them as once I did. But a … business associate saw to it that each finger was charged with a spell. You see?"

A dagger of ice flew from one of Whisper's digits and buried itself in the wall behind Deacon.

"The last time we encountered each other, Deacon, you used my illusions against me," Whisper continued. "But this is no illusion. This is death, detective."

Deacon dove for one of the guns the Taxim had dropped, but the trigger glowed red-hot when he touched it. He yelled and let go even as a bolt of lightning crackled through the air above his head.

"Run and hide, Deacon. There is no escape. But I will enjoy hunting you down in this place, as you once did me. It may take days, or weeks, but the end will be the same: you will die."

Deacon turned and disappeared into the darkness, seeking a moment to plan his next play. But there was a feeling in his gut that maybe, just maybe, Whisper was holding all the cards …

It's a good bet that *Bloodshadows* is a different from every other roleplaying game you've run or played. So we're devoting a chapter to hints and tips on gamemastering a *Bloodshadows* campaign:

GOOD GUYS AND BAD GUYS

"The only things that separate the good guys from the bad guys are this badge and an invisible line. One's just a piece of tin, and the other's damn easy to cross. Too damn easy."
— Captain Thom Banff,
Galitia Sentinels

The world of *Bloodshadows* is a dark one, it's true. Adventures are played out in shadowy back streets, amid the wails of the streetsingers, the come-ons of the Shifters on the game, the curses of their Gris keepers. A man might get killed with a gun, a sap or a knife — or he might trigger a ward, or get fried by some sorcerer with a mad on from 10 blocks away. Life isn't cheap, not everywhere, but it can be easily lost.

Many of the characters you run into in this universe might seem cynical, violent, not quite black or white but somewhere among the shades of grey. So, as a gamemaster or a player, you might be wondering if there are no such things as "good guys" or "bad guys" in *Bloodshadows*.

The answer is yes, there are, and you should feel free to play them. Bad guys, of course, are always easy to find (check out Whisper in the mini-adventure, "Whisper of Destruction" in the back of this book). And there are heroes as well — people who, for money, for a cause, or just out of a need to do what's right, make sacrifices and take chances.

Heroes on Marl learn pretty quickly that the end, more often than not, has to justify the means. Sometimes they have to do things they don't want to do to achieve their goal. But most will have lines they won't cross, and when building your *Bloodshadows* character, that's something to think about. You know what skills and abilities he has, and what he *can* do — but what things *won't* he do, under any circumstances? This will help you to define the kind of person (or being) your character is, and it provides good fodder for gamemasters as well.

For example, Bill's character is a Shapeshifter who gained his abilities through a curse. He's still managed to put together something of a normal life, but the people he's close to (including some of his fellow party members) don't know just what he is. If the gamemaster presents them with a situation dangerous enough, Bill's character will have to decide between using his abilities to save them and risking their prejudice and mistrust, or holding

back and risking their getting hurt or killed. It makes for a great subplot and gives Bill a chance to do some substantial roleplaying. No matter what decision his 'shifter makes, the character will have to live with the consequences. And that's how characters grow and change.

Heroes in *Bloodshadows* may be noble or mercenary, suspicious or willing to give somebody the benefit of the doubt, honest or a little more on the shady side. A character might even be naive and trusting, but he better be good with a gun or a spell to get himself out of the situations he's going to get himself into.

The important thing to remember is that the characters — and the campaign — are what you make of them. A character who does the right thing only for money isn't always going to succeed, any more than a character who does the right thing because it *is* the right thing will always fail. It's a mean old world out there, and most characters are looking out for themselves — but sometimes the best way to do that is to look out for the other guy.

And that brings us to our next topic …

THE PARTY

"All for one, and nothing for anybody else."
— Walter Gibson,
Murder By Magic

Roleplaying games always revolve around a party of adventurers, and *Bloodshadows* is no different in that respect. But since the pulp stories that make up part of the mix of this universe always seem to revolve around lone wolves, some people might wonder why a party comes together, stays together, and what it is they do.

Parties exist on Marl for the same reason they do in other fantasy and horror games:

1) A mixture of skills is needed to solve a problem. You might be great at tracking down a thief, but aren't charming or persuasive enough to get information from people in his neighborhood. And when he's cornered, you might be strong enough or have the kind of spells needed to take him down. That's where allies come in handy.

2) Somebody has to watch your back. Whether in a cheap apartment in Selastos or out in the Wilderness, you have to sleep sometime. And all the *alarm* spells in the world aren't as much of a comfort as having someone you trust on guard.

3) Time is short, and there are a number of tasks that have to be done. In these cases, it's best to split the party and do everything at once than go from one job to another. This is a little harder on you, as gamemaster, but is in keeping with the kind of adventuring world this is.

MARL

Chapters One and Two gave you some idea of the layout of Marl and its history. Now how can you use this in your campaign?

Well, the first thing you should notice is that this universe affords you a lot of freedom. Suppose you have an idea for a city that doesn't exist in the game world yet, but you'd like your player characters to go there? You can feel free to create it for your campaign, and when the characters wonder why they never heard of it before, point out that there are a lot of unknowns on Marl. Just because the people of Selastos might not have heard of Guildsport doesn't mean that city doesn't exist. The average person is aware of those cities that do some business with his own, and those are probably relatively few in number.

And, since most of the city-states of Marl have developed in their own ways over the last 900 years, your city need not have the same government, laws, culture or types of magic as those published in the game material.

This same guideline can be applied to many aspects of *Bloodshadows*. Want the characters to run into the ruins of a forgotten city in the Wilderness? No one knows for sure what's out there, so it's easily done. Want to drop some Unnaturals of your own invention into the campaign? There's room for countless numbers of breeds, demons, shapeshifters and Undead in this universe.

As noted in Chapter Two, the Godwar is intended as a backdrop of your campaign, and you may want to keep it well in the background when you first get started. After all, the characters will probably have to establish a reputation for themselves before the "powers that be" will tap them for a job. Introduce elements of it at your own pace, but remember that the vast majority of player characters won't recognize it for what it is. Most will see it as some sort of cult war, worrying but not really a problem until it touches their lives.

THE WILDERNESS

"I'm the person you don't want to meet in the place you don't want to go."

—Buck Granger,
Wilderness courier

Just how dangerous is the Wilderness, and in game terms, why is it there? How easily can characters travel from place to place, and what are the best ways to get them from City A to City B, if your adventure demands that?

First off, the Wilderness is there to help discourage your players from going "off the map." Suppose you're running an adventure in Selastos, and things are starting to get hot for the player characters. They're caught between two opposing factions, or there's a killer on their trail, or they're wanted for crimes they didn't commit. Normally, the easy way out would be to blow town — end of problem, sure, but maybe also end of adventure.

Keep in mind that *Bloodshadows* is dark fantasy and horror, and both of those suffer if it's a simple matter for the player characters to escape from the menacing situation they're in. The Wilderness ensures that any problem they find out there will be worse than the one they're in right now — and the reputation the Wilderness enjoys means that the characters will know that, too. This doesn't mean they'll never hop a boat or a truck to escape from a city, it just makes it a little less likely.

Given that — and the fact you might *want* them to travel from place to place at some point, to keep things moving — what are the best ways to travel? There are five possibilities, which are ranked in order of possible danger and the potential for adventure during the trip:

1. Gates. The player characters walk through a portal and wind up somewhere else. There's some potential for danger — Wilderness creatures sometimes lurk inside gates — but little potential for adventure, since there is no real journey. One second they're here, the next, they're there. The adventure would lie in finding the gate and, if it's not a permanent one, taking a chance on where it will lead.

2. Ship. If the characters live in a port city, they may want to board a boat or ship to get from one place to another. They can buy passage, work their way across, or simply stowaway.

This is a relatively safe way to travel. Ships, especially merchantman, usually have scores of protective spells on them to protect them from ocean creatures, storms, and the like. Most Marl ships should be considered "locals" instead of "expresses" — they specialize in short voyages, or long trips with multiple stops. It's a rare ship's master who will sail his craft into the middle of an unknown ocean with no land in sight. Protective spells are all well and good, but old-fashioned caution is still the best defense.

There's some potential for adventure on sea or river journeys (especially if the boat passes through a gate by mistake), but not as much as in overland travel, where encounters of all kind are more common.

3. Caravan. If the characters aren't in a port, and would like to make a little money on their trip, traveling with a caravan is the way to go. Whether it's wagons and carts or a line of trucks, caravans through the Wilderness need protection. And they're willing to pay through the nose for it.

Karl Waller

Karl Waller

4. Vehicle/Beast. The characters decide to go on their own and take off in a car, truck, wagon, or on horseback. If their vehicle has got sufficient enchantments so as to be able to handle rough terrain, great, and it does give them an advantage of speed. But a breakdown (or the death of one of their animals) might well prove fatal to them, and they will certainly seem like an easy knockover to any Wilderness creature or raider party.

5. On foot. If the characters *have* to get out of town, and can't find a vehicle that can manage off-road, they may have no other choice but to challenge the Wilderness on foot. They have a much better chance this way of stumbling on lost artifacts, ruined cities and the like, since they can get places on foot a vehicle can't. Unfortunately, they'll be moving at a much slower pace and are unlikely to be able to outrun anything that comes after them.

HOW DANGEROUS IS IT?

The Wilderness is potentially deadly, but gamemasters should realize it is not suicidal to venture out there. If it were, it would severely cramp your ability to move your player characters from city to city when an adventure requires it. But the characters are certain to encounter any number of people who *think* setting foot beyond the walls is inviting certain death.

Part of what makes the Wilderness so dangerous is its reputation. Everyone knows there are things well beyond Human out there, and everyone has heard stories about Wilderness creatures infiltrating cities and slaughtering innocents. Let's put it this way: if you and your party are in a city, and one of the members starts acting strangely, you'll probably just slap him around and tell him to knock it off. But if he's acting weird in the Wilderness … well, he might have a screw loose, or he might be possessed by something. Most parties will quickly realize that there's time and risk involved in finding out the truth, and shooting him would be quicker and easier. Right there — simple fear and paranoia engendered by the Wilderness' rep — you have the explanation for why there's such a high mortality rate among travelers on Marl.

If your adventuring party does decide to go into the Wilderness, how difficult should you make their lives? (Keep in mind they're more likely to encounter creatures traveling overland than on water.) Well, the Wilderness need not be a killing ground where they have to fight for every inch of territory. Instead, make them sweat for the duration of the trip — little noises in the brush, that feeling of being watched, strange sounds in the night, anything to convince them that Death's right around the corner. Terror by suggestion is

There's a tremendous potential for both profit and adventure here, and it's a device that makes for easier gamemastering as well. For example, you want the characters to encounter a fearsome Wilderness creature, but don't want a combat-heavy episode. If the characters are with a caravan, the creature can strike at the trucks and kill some of the gamemaster characters, leaving the player characters untouched. You've sparked a little fear without ruining anyone's game.

In addition, you can bring in other opponents into such a scenario with ease. A valuable cargo is always a tempting target, and there might be lowlifes, insufficiently discouraged by the presence of the player characters, willing to make a grab for it.

MARL SLANG

Here's an abbreviated list of slang terms common in the cities of Selastos and Galitia. Other words or phrases may describe the same things in other cities:

Box Artist	A safecracker
Canary	A female singer; someone who informs for the sentinels
Grifter	A con man or woman
Newscribe	A reporter
Rod	A gun (also heater, piece, roscoe)
Runeslug	A bullet with a magic spell charged into it and identifying runes carved on the shell
Scorch	An alchemist
Sentinel	A policeman in Selastos or Galitia
Spellslinger	A mage, often one who hires himself out for semi-legal or illegal work
Stir	Prison
Triggerman	A gunman
Witch Wind	A gale that springs up suddenly

sometimes a great deal more effective than having a huge, amorphous mass ooze out of the ground and swallow the party (though that can be fun, too).

A sure sign that the party is asking to be attacked by something (Wilderness creatures, breed raiders, whatever) is if they start taking this too easy. Not posting a guard at night; not bothering to put people on point or on the flanks; blazing away at everything that moves and making enough noise to waken a comatose queskworm. In that case, they're begging for it, and you should feel free to oblige. Bloody them just enough so that they learn to respect the Wilderness in future.

DENIZENS

"I can see and hear things you cannot; I can fly with the night winds; and I would wager that my love of life is far fiercer than yours. Perhaps you should reconsider which of us is truly dead?"
— Larissa Martel,
Hell's Feast

The Unnaturals — the non-Human inhabitants of Marl — are a big part of the *Bloodshadows* mythos. Chapter Five gives you some tips on creating Unnaturals for your campaign, either as gamemaster or player characters. Here, we'll address a few of the possible gamemaster concerns regarding these types of characters:

Humans vs. Unnaturals: If a player can roleplay a creature with all sorts of unique powers, why would he want to play a Human? That's one of the questions that was brought up to us when we were designing *Bloodshadows,* and it's got more than one answer.

First off, Humans are the dominant species on Marl. They run most of the known cities, have most of the wealth, and more than a few Unnaturals get by only because they can pass as Humans. A party of all non-Humans would be fairly powerful, but might have a hard time getting jobs.

Humans have a natural advantage when casting magic spells (evidenced by their automatic +1 to casting totals mentioned in Chapter Three), and though they might not have the powers possessed by Unnaturals, they don't have the significant drawbacks either. Most Unnatural characters have certain Advantages and Compensations they must take — Humans don't.

Creatures as Characters: The most important thing to think about when designing gamemaster or player Unnaturals is that they are *individuals.* Compare Larissa, Black, East and Gresh from the *Bloodshadows* novel, *Hell's Feast,* and Thet from the novel *The Fifth Horseman,* and you'll see that they are very different characters. A half-dozen werewolves might have the same powers and weaknesses, but they're still six unique beings. They have different fears, loves and hatreds, and should be played that way. Unless a creature is mindless or simply incapable of relating to any Human concept (as many Wilderness creatures are), they should be invested with just as much character as any Human adventurer would be.

You Put It Together: We included some basic Unnatural types in this volume and more will be included in future supplements. But gamemaster and players should feel free to generate their own using the character creation rules presented here and in *MasterBook.* Virtually any kind of creature can be created in this way, and the only limit is your imagination.

MAGIC

As with Unnaturals, the rules allow you to build virtually any kind of magic spell your campaign needs. It's up to the gamemaster to keep an eye on what kinds of spells their players are building to make sure they won't unbalance the game. In addition, if a character is constantly using spells that run counter to his alignment, the gamemaster

should ensure that those the character encounters treat him differently (an Order character who constantly uses Chaos-affiliated magic would probably be treated like a Chaotic by outsiders. You're judged by what you do in most cases).

When designing equipment that boasts magic within it, let yourself go. Any spell included in this book or in upcoming supplements can be charged into an item — and, if you wish, you can introduce items featuring spells not included here. As long as you know the effect value, range and duration of the spell involved, you need not worry about things like difficulty numbers, optional modifiers and backlash (at least, not until the characters go someplace to get the item recharged).

DESIGNING ADVENTURES

Bloodshadows can, in a sense, be a number of roleplaying settings in one. Every city is different from the other, some in subtle ways, others much more radically. The overall feel might be the same — dark, gritty, with lots of mystery and intrigue — but the kinds of characters the adventurers encounter can differ, as can what's considered important or valuable there.

If you prefer more of a straight fantasy setting, you can take your characters into the Wilderness. There, they'll discover lost cities, haunted ruins, and other relics of the first Godwar, all the trappings of a high fantasy campaign.

Finally, if you want to plunge your characters into some other plane entirely (as part of an adventure or an ongoing campaign), you can use the gates. Remember, there are no hard and fast rules governing where gates can and can't go, how long they stay in place, etc. They can be manipulated however you, as the gamemaster, choose to do so.

Here are some types of adventures you can run in a *Bloodshadows* campaign:

The "Molehill Into a Mountain" Adventure: The player characters get hired to do a little job — investigate a break-in, trace down a missing piece of property — something innocent and innocuous. Rapidly, it turns into a *big* job — before they know it, the player characters are in over their heads.

The "Mountain Into a Molehill" Adventure: Just what it sounds like: the player characters think they're involved in a complex affair, only to find that tugging the right string will undo the whole knot. The trick is finding the string …

The "Every Hand Against Him" Adventure: This is great if the characters have been traveling and have reached a new city. There's a secret everyone's hiding, and the characters find numerous factions united against them. Survival means blowing the lid off whatever dark doings are going on here.

A FINAL WORD

As with any West End game, if the rules get in the way of your campaign, ignore them. The purpose of roleplaying is to *have fun*, not to be a slave to printed rules and regulations. If you've got a great story to tell, tell it, and worry about the rules later. In the end, you and your players will gain a good deal more enjoyment all around.

CHAPTER TEN

MINI-ADVENTURE: WHISPER OF DESTRUCTION

This is a brief, one-act mini-adventure that you can use to get your *Bloodshadows* campaign started. It is set in the city of Selastos (detailed in Chapter Four) and takes up where the fiction sections of the previous chapters of this book leave off. The player characters are hired to find private detective Jack Deacon, who disappeared shortly after arriving in Selastos.

You should read this adventure through before running it. There are 6 templates in the back of this book that your players can choose from for starting characters. Or, if they prefer, they can generate their own, using the rules in *MasterBook* and this book. We recommend, however, that you use the pregenerated ones, only because it will get you started playing faster.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Jack Deacon and the sorcerer known only as Whisper met once before in the city of Galitia, a few months before this adventure takes place. That meeting is detailed in the first *Bloodshadows* novel, *Hell's Feast*. But if you haven't read that, don't worry: you don't need to have done so to run this adventure. We'll tell you everything you need to know.

Suffice it to say that Whisper came out on the losing end of that encounter and wants revenge. He engineered a complicated plot to kidnap Deacon and bring him to Selastos for execution. But Deacon turned the tables on his kidnappers, then traveled to Selastos on his own to find the brains behind them.

Eventually, he was captured by Taxim (corpses reanimated by demons) disguised as sentinels and taken to a warehouse, where Whisper awaited him …

(For more details on this, see the fiction intros to each chapter in this book.)

As the adventure begins, Whisper has been torturing his prey for almost twenty-four hours, and it is only a matter of time before he delivers the killing spell.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The characters are in a dive in the Oasis section of Selastos. One of them is tracked down by a courier from Galitia, who carries a message from arms merchant Roland

Belrand. It seems that Belrand's friend and long-time customer, Jack Deacon, has vanished from Galitia. Belrand believes he may have gone to Selastos and could be in trouble ... or trying to stiff him on the tab. Regardless, he wants Deacon found, and the Selastos sentinels don't seem interested in looking for a Galitian private detective.

Belrand includes some money with his message, suggesting the characters use it to bribe a sentinel at the wall to find out if anyone matching Deacon's description came into the city in the last day and a half.

SCENE ONE: MONEY SPEAKS LOUDER THAN WORDS

THE SITUATION

Standard. The characters are relaxing at Gel's Galitian Bar in the Oasis section of Selastos, when they are contacted by a courier with a message for them. The message asks them to investigate the disappearance of private detective Jack Deacon, starting with the sentinels who man the gates of Selastos.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

> "The city of Selastos turns surprisingly cold at night. Even the 'shifter streetwalkers are inside tonight, nursing ales and trying to latch on to a miner who still has some of his pay left.
>
> "The crowd at Gel's Galitian Bar is well-off for this area, mostly merchants who drift into the Oasis section at night to enjoy some forbidden pleasures. In the morning, they're missing their bank-rolls and a few well-placed spells convince are enough to convince them they really did so something wild the night before. More likely, Gel dropped something in their ale to put them under the table and the 'shifters rolled them.
>
> "Still, the ale's cheap and the smoke's so thick that you don't have to see anyone too clearly. You've been in worse places."

GEL'S GALITIAN BAR

Gel Vena is a Trollin breed, a mixture of Troll and Human blood with the worst traits of both. He was run out of the city of Galitia six years ago, for reasons he won't discuss (although if he has a little too much to drink, he starts talking about an Elder's wife, a potent little mixture of liquors spiked with a little ground gharb horn, a pair of Hugors and the conjurevids that resulted).

He left the city with enough dough in his pocket

CONNECTION

The most logical reason for Belrand to contact a character would be that the character and Belrand have met or know each other through intermediaries. Belrand could be the object of a *connection* card, or he could be a "contact" for one of the characters — if one of the characters has that background Advantage.

Belrand is an arms dealer (legal and slightly shady) and, overall, a decent guy. He won't sell to overt criminal types, and he doesn't put stuff on the market that will get him in trouble with Galitia's sentinels. He is also a bit of an alchemist, so he can craft some pretty nasty loads for his weapons — maybe he has used the character he is "connected" with to get materials before, or he could have sold the person some weapons on occasion.

to keep his mouth shut ... for a while, anyway. He found his way to Selastos, buying passage on a trade caravan, and used the money to set up a bar that would remind him of home. Gel's Galitian is just high-class enough (by Oasis standards) to attract money. That means that, though there's a lucractive black market operating out of there and countless shady deals made at every table, there's less chance of the sentinels raiding the place. Imagine their embarassment when their dragnet nabbed some of their top officers, right?

The Galitian is a ground floor and a nicely appointed cellar. The upper floor looks pretty seedy and the clientele is normally miners (Humans only; Taxim aren't allowed in here), a few gamblers running games, and prostitutes. Off to the side, a door leads to a spiral staircase.

At the bottom of the stairs is the better part of the bar. Booths covered in rich upholstery from Dela, liquor all the way from Tarik, and the ultimate in "player pianos" (an Orris shapeshifter who transforms into the instrument and plays himself. Why he's so willing to do this for little pay, Gel doesn't know and doesn't want to).

Down here, you can find Selastos Elders, sentinel detectives, merchants, traders and other executives. Most of them would rather their families not know they frequent the place, so there's an unspoken agreement that Gel's is neutral ground. No sentinel will make an arrest based on something he overheard here; no cardsharp or pickpocket will step up to blackmail using info whispered in one of the back rooms (the few who've tried have wound up as cornerstones in Selastos buildings).

GEL

Species: Trollin
AGILITY 8
Dodge 14, melee combat 13, unarmed combat 14
DEXTERITY 8
Fire combat 12
ENDURANCE 10
Resist shock 15
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 11
INTELLECT 9
First aid 10, perception 12, trick 11
MIND 7
Business 8
CONFIDENCE 9
Alteration: vitomancy 13, con 10, gambling 10, intimidation 10, streetwise 11 (Selastos 13), willpower 10
CHARISMA 8
Life Points: 3
Alignment: Chaos 1
Equipment: Bat, damage value STR+5/20; Gelvash "Thunder" shotgun, damage value 21; brass knuckles, damage value STR+4/19
    Spells: *Glass jaw*
    Arcane Knowledges: Folk 2
    Description: Trollin look like squatter versions of Hugors: coarse, dark hair, large, crooked teeth, warted skin and generally unpleasant dispositions. Gel is a sterling example of Trollin-kind.

THE ACTION

As the characters are enjoying another round, a woman steps into the bar. She's clad in khakis and a leather jacket, and she signals Gel as she walks in. He rushes over to her with a shotglass full of crimson liquid and they have a brief conversation. Gel points over to the characters' table, and she starts in that direction.

If any of the characters are couriers or Selastos sentinels, or if there's a *Connection* card out, they will recognize her as Dala Sanqui. She's a well-known courier, one of the few who makes the Selastos-Galitia run on a regular basis. She starts to undo the leather pouch on her belt to take out a message scroll (specially designed so that the message won't appear until it's in the hands of the person it's intended for).

If any of the characters know her, this scene works a little easier. Otherwise, you have to assume she has heard of one of them. She'll introduce herself and explain the following:

She was contacted by a merchant in Galitia who is close friends with a private detective named Jack Deacon. It seems that Deacon disappeared a few days ago, while working a divorce case. He was last seen leaving an inn in Galitia with a blonde, and

the merchant's afraid he might have been set up. For reasons he didn't go into, he's convinced Deacon's been taken to Selastos and is willing to pay to have him found.

The merchant, whose name is Belrand, hired Dala to take a message to the local sentinels. If they weren't interested (which they weren't), she was to get in touch with independents who might be able to help. She thought of the player characters and says the job is theirs, if they want it.

Included with the message is a conjurevid of Deacon (tall, late thirties, reddish hair, looks like he's been on the losing end of a few brawls) and 500 selasts. Part of this is a down payment (Belrand's willing to go as high as a thousand), and part of it's bribe money. His suggestion is that the player characters talk to the sentinels that guard the city gates to see if anyone of Deacon's description entered in the last 36 hours.

Dala's already been paid for her services and isn't interested in playing hide and seek with a private eye — that's not her line of work. The characters can contact her through Gel when they've found some answers, and she'll relay them to Belrand.

DALA SANQUI

Species: Human
AGILITY 9
Climbing 10, dodge 14, maneuver 12, stealth 16, swimming 10, unarmed combat 15, unarmed parry 14
DEXTERITY 9
Fire combat 13, vehicle piloting: wheeled 14
ENDURANCE 8
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 9
INTELLECT 9
Camouflage 11, first aid 10, navigation 16, tracking 14
MIND 7
Cartography 13
CONFIDENCE 10
Intimidation 11, survival: desert 11, survival: mountains 11
CHARISMA 8
Summoning: wizardry 10
Life Points: 5
Alignment: None
Equipment: Leather jacket, armor value +2/17; boot knife, damage value STR+4/19; .38 Gelvash revolver, damage value 17; Degan Guardian rifle, damage value 22; 12 runeslugs (fireball); pocket glowstone; rope; sleeping mat
    Spells: Gamemaster's Choice
    Arcane Knowledges: Enchanted 3
    Description: Dala is a businesslike woman. Her job is to go between cities, running messages or

errands. It's a tough line of work and it suits her personality. She isn't interested in much socializing or chit-chat.

If the characters don't want the job, this is not a problem. After all, Whisper's people in Galitia know Belrand hired Dala, and Dala was spotted talking to the player characters. Whether they say yes or no, Whisper will assume they said yes. If they turn the job down, have them roughed up a little by the Taxim from Scene Two. It should become obvious to them after a few near-misses that whoever has Deacon is after them now. (If they take the job, the Taxim don't show up until Scene Two.)

If the characters want to, they can canvas the bar and try to get a little information (has anybody seen this guy? Anybody heard of a snatch being put on someone?) Those who will bother to talk to them won't have any information, and after a while, Gel will remind them that if they want questions answered, they should find a seer. He serves ale to guys who want to get drunk in a hurry, and isn't running a diviner's parlor.

If the characters decide to check out the sentinels at the wall, cut to "Questions and Queskworms."

QUESTIONS AND QUESKWORMS

There are two sets of gates in Selastos — the western gates lead to the miner's camps and the mountains, and it's doubtful Deacon would have come in that way. The eastern gates are a much better bet, but there are three gates to a wall and three sets of walls, so it means a lot of legwork. The party may even want to split up.

You can use the sentinel stats in Chapter Four. Make a point of letting the characters know that, as they approach one door, an armored car passes through it, heading out into the desert. The door is then sealed behind it.

Have some fun with this scene. A few sentinels might resent any attempt to bribe them into opening the gate, and the characters will have to do some fast talking to avoid getting arrested. Most of them don't know anything about Deacon. But there is one who was on duty the night Deacon and Vera came in, and for the right number of bills, will tell what he knows.

(**Note:** If one of the player characters is a sentinel, the bribe might not be necessary. He can probably get the information he needs using standard *persuasion*.)

Once the sentinel starts to talk this is what he says:

"Yeah, I remember this mug. Tough guy, or thought he was. Came in a big car, and the dame with him was a real looker. Me and her had a few words, and her boyfriend started getting nasty. I told him to shut up or I'd push his face in. Then they drove on."

The sentinel will go on to say that he watched them go and they seemed to be heading toward Oasis. If they want to know where he went from there, they should ask the streetsingers. ("Hell, they know more than anybody else does in this burg.")

As soon as the characters have gotten the information they need, shots ring out from beyond the walls. Runeslugs with *lightning bolt* spells in them are being fired, the flashes lighting up the night. Just outside of the city, a queskworm has emerged from the ground and is attacking the armored car.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

"The sight that greets your eyes looks like the cover off of one of those pulps you used to read as a kid. A massive creature, its shell reflecting the lights mounted on the outer walls, rears up and then falls again, sending a tremor through the ground. Sentinels and armored car guards frantically shoot at the thing, their runeslugs trying to find chinks in the queskworm's armor."

Nobody expects the characters want to get involved in this combat. It's not their fight and there's little to be gained by them here. The sentinels on the walls are staying at their posts (those are orders) and watching the battle like it was a prizefight.

There are a half dozen sentinels and another four guards fighting the queskworm. The characters will be allowed through the gates if they want to help, but the sentinels will make a point of telling them that they must be nuts.

If the characters do not get involved, the battle will end in a matter of moments, with the queskworm destroying the armored car and consuming the guards. The sentinels will retreat back behind the walls and the creature will return underground.

If the characters join the battle, and the creature is *heavily wounded*, it will break off the attack. Remember that the point of this is to let the characters see something that lurks outside the walls, not to kill them all off. The queskworm will focus on the armored car and its guards — player characters should get out of this relatively unscathed, but wiser. If they get too heroic, they can always generate new characters anyway.

Guards' stats are identical to those of the sentinels in Chapter Four. All the combatants are armed with .38s and rifles, loaded with *lightning bolt* rounds.

QUESKWORM
AGILITY 9
Unarmed combat 18
DEXTERITY 5
ENDURANCE 23
STRENGTH 25
TOUGHNESS 28 (34 with armor)

INTELLECT 4
Perception 13, tracking 13, trick 9
MIND 4
CONFIDENCE 5
Intimidation 20, survival: desert 10, willpower 19
CHARISMA 5
Natural Tools: Carapace, armor value TOU+6/
34; mandibles, damage value STR+3/28; crush-
ing attack, damage value STR+10/35
Life Points: 7
Description: For more information on the
queskworm, see page Chapter Four, "Denizens of
Marl."

THE STREETSINGER'S SONG

Once the queskworm battle is over, the charac-
ters can return to Oasis to continue their investiga-
tion. There are streetsingers every other block, and
it won't take the characters long to find one who
saw something of interest.

Of course, she doesn't work for free either. She'll
want money, and the story when it's all over. If the
characters agree to that, she'll tell them that she
saw the guy they're looking for with a blonde drive
through the night before. They stopped at the Blue
Note Hotel. Seems to her she recalls hearing some-
body was tossing lead around that place not too
long after.

The hotel is the characters' next best lead and
they're probably going to want to head there. On
the way, have them generate *perception* totals
against a difficulty number of 9 or use appropriate
magic, if they've got it — they'll discover that
they're being followed.

Once they know he's there, it won't be hard to
spot the tail. He's not making any real effort to be
stealthy (a *perception* of 7 at this point will spot
him). He's tall and thin, wearing a trenchcoat, hat
and gloves, and what little skin is exposed seems to
be gleaming in the light of the glowstones.

If the characters let him be, he'll follow from a
respectable distance and not take action against
them. If they try to talk to him, he'll stand his
ground and say nothing (being virtually mindless,
to begin with). If they attack — or, indeed, make
any physical contact with him at all — he'll explode
into a cloud of glittering dust and shards of crystal
that will settle to the ground at their feet. Anyone
within arm's reach of him will be attacked by the
shards (*missile weapons* value of 12), which do
damage value 14.

And the point of all this? Whisper can guess
where they're going — his crystal creation (pur-
chased in Galitia from an alchemist down on his
luck) was just there to let them know he knows.
Feeling confident that A) they'll never reach Dea-
con in time and B) he can destroy them whenever
he wants to, Whisper is toying with the characters.

CUT TO

Once the characters are ready to go to the Inn,
cut to Scene Two, "Ashes to Ashes …"

SCENE TWO: ASHES TO ASHES

THE SITUATION

Standard. The characters travel to the Inn and
investigate the scene of Vera's death and Deacon's
fight with Whisper's hirelings. There are some clues
to be found there about what has gone one, and
Belrand's suspicions of foul play will be confirmed.

Once they have this information and head out, a
car full of Taxim armed with submachineguns tries
to feed them a diet of lead.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

**"The Blue Note Hotel is about what you'd
expect from an Oasis place. Dark, dirty, and
it's a good bet none of the residents ever stay a
whole night. And if that streetsinger was right,
it may be that Jack Deacon didn't either.**

**"The 'shifter in the lobby has seen one of his
rooms shot up, his lobby tracked on by senti-
nels over the last 24 hours, and it cost a lot of
gold to get them to look the other way on some
of the businesses he's been running on the
side out of the hotel. But he's surprisingly
cooperative, 'cause you've given him an idea.
He can rent out viewings of the 'murder room'
at a few selasts a head. And you'll be his first
customers!"**

The manager takes the characters upstairs and
explains that the sentinels just did a quick scan of
the place. They took away one dead Hugor and
swept up some of one of the other occupants, then
left. Didn't even bother to keep their wards in
place. (Actually, he did a little dealing to get them
to do that, since he can't afford to lose the room's
rent for a long period.)

The room looks like a small war went on inside
and stinks of blood and burnt flesh. Furniture
includes a bed, a dresser, a small desk and
nightstand, but no phone. Characters with *percep-
tion* and *deduction* skills and *fire* arcane knowledge
will be particularly helpful in this scene.

First off, there are bullet holes in and all around
the door, in the headboard of the bed, and in walls
on both sides of the room. There are bloodstains in
the carpet and bloodstains in the hallway (*percep-
tion* total of 8 to spot), and it's obvious they're from
different species. The manager remembers Deacon
and the blonde going upstairs, followed a little bit
later by two others, one of them a Hugor. When he
heard the shots, he hid in his office — next thing he
knew, Deacon, the girl and one of the two gunmen

were gone and the sentinels were carrying the Hugor out under a sheet.

Let the characters investigate a little. On the far side of the room, a *perception* total of 8 will reveal two sets of ashes, very different in composition. One pile still had small pieces of bone mixed in — if any of the characters have medicine, *vitomancy* or *necromancy* as a magic focus, they'll recognize it as Human bone (otherwise, a *perception* of 9 will point this out. Somebody was incinerated here.

The second pile of ashes is very different, finer, almost like sand. A *deduction* total of 10 will reveal it to be the ashes of the phone. (If any of the characters took note of the fact that there wasn't any phone or asked about it, reduce the *deduction* difficulty to 8.)

That this was a sorcerous murder shouldn't be hard to deduce. A *perception* total of 7 reveals that nothing other than the person and the phone were burnt. A *Mind* total of 8 (augmented by any *fire* adds the character might have) is enough to show that there must have been a ward built into the phone. When it was picked up, the fireball exploded, destroying the device and whoever was holding it.

But who was holding it? Deacon? The woman?

The manager doesn't know. But it looks like Belrand was right: the room was definitely the site of an ambush. Somebody was gunning for Deacon, and might well have got him.

The characters might, at this point, think they have enough to go back to Dala with, but they don't. All they know is that there was some gunplay, but they still have no real clue as to Deacon's fate.

STONE-COLD UNDEAD

Eventually, the characters will decide to leave the hotel, maybe to try to get some more info from a streetsinger, maybe to head back to Gel's. As they step out on the street in front of the hotel, call for perception rolls. If anyone gets an 8 or above, read the following:

"You hear a screeching of tires and there's a strong smell of brimstone in the air. Suddenly, a sedan rounds the corner, flames shooting from its tires. You have barely time to see the muzzles of submachineguns emerging from the car windows before the bullet start flying."

The sedan is full of Taxim gunmen, three of them. There are two in the front seat (one's driving) and one in the rear. They were hired to keep an eye on the characters and gun them down if they were getting too close — at this point, they're not, but Taxim have an innate fondness for killing things, and today, it's the characters' turn.

TAXIM GUNMEN (3)
AGILITY 8
Dodge 12, melee combat 9, unarmed combat 9
DEXTERITY 9
Fire combat 13, vehicle piloting: wheeled 10
ENDURANCE 8
STRENGTH 11
TOUGHNESS 11
INTELLECT 8
Perception 9, trick 9
MIND 7
CONFIDENCE 7
Con 8, intimidation 9, streetwise 9
CHARISMA 7
Taunt 8
Life Points: 2–4 each
Alignment: Chaos 1
Equipment: Skandra "Annihilator" SMG, damage value 17; .38 Gelvash revolver, damage value 17; Signer sedan

The characters have a number of options. They can shoot back at the speeding car (add +5 to the *fire combat* difficulty, since they're trying to hit a fast-moving vehicle). The car provides *partial cover and the engine has a Toughness of around 20; if they do a heavy wound or better to it, it goes out of control and crashes.* All three Taxim will be killed — but a gambling chip in the possession of one of them bears the legend, "Karrk's Place," and an address in the Taxim Quarter.

They might also attempt to pursue the Taxim, who will break off the attack if they don't think they can kill the characters quickly. They can do this either by stealing a car or grabbing a cab — they'll probably have to promise a big tip to get a Human driver to take them into the Taxim Quarter. This can be a high-speed chase, if you'd like, or more of a suspenseful cat-and-mouse sort of thing. Maybe a railrunner car cuts in front of the characters' path at a crucial moment and they have to turn quickly to avoid a crash.

To run a car chase, have the Taxim driver make his skill rolls against the player character driver. Every time he wins, his car gets farther away from the player characters. When he loses, the gap closes. If either driver gets a skill total of eight or lower, something "bad" should happen (gamemasters — you've seen car chases in the movies; make up things for them to hit).

Take a look at Chapter Four and provide a quick description of the Taxim Quarter as they fly through it. Essentially, it's a slum section populated exclusively by Undead and a few (really unfortunate) Humans.

Eventually, they'll find the Taxim's car abandoned near Karrk's Place. As there's not much else around there, it's a good bet the three are in there.

Bloodshadows

CUT TO ...

The obvious next step for the characters is to go into the nightclub and see what they can find out about their would-be killers. When they do so, cut to Scene Three, "Everyone Comes to Karrk's."

SCENE THREE: EVERYONE COMES TO KARRAS

THE SITUATION

Standard. The characters get a taste of life in the Taxim Quarter and learn about the connection between the drive-by shooters and Deacon. This, in turn, leads them to the straight dope on where Deacon is being held.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

"Taxim lore says there are millions of levels of Hell, one for each damned soul. If that's true, you have to wonder just what horrible crimes the inhabitants of Karrk's Place committed to wind up here.

"First of all, the place stinks. Even though possession by a Taxim stops a body from rotting, people who have been pushing up daisies for a while don't exactly smell like them. The floor's a mess, covered in blood, occasional body parts, spilled liquor. Here and there, Taxim are lying in corners, eternally sleeping it off.

"The tables are filled with Undead, smoking, drinking, gambling, occasionally pausing to paw bar girls who've seen better centuries. In one corner, four Taxim are playing a variation of blind poker (a game where you don't see your cards when you bet): all the cards are face up, but the players have blinded each other with sticks and pieces of pipe.

"The only music comes from an old piano player who is struggling with a torch song, as his fingers keep snapping off while he plays. After a while, he gives up and puts on a pair of gloves that have spare fingers sewn on to them.

"There is no sudden moment of stunned silence when you walk in, but you're aware that everyone knows you are there. Some Taxim give you a wide berth; others deliberately brush against you or shove you as they go by. It's a thinly veiled way of saying that the living aren't welcome here."

THE ACTION

Use the stats given for Taxim miners in Chapter Four for all the occupants of the bar, save the one

Karl Waller

gunman who is here (his stats are the same as the Taxim in Scene Two).

The characters can get drinks if they want, from the bar, but would probably be better off not seeing what takes the place of pretzels in the bowls there (some Taxim are ghouls, too, just for the hell of it). They might even be invited to sit in on a game. This will seem innocent enough at first — regular cards, regular coins being bet — until they realize one of the Taxim is conjuring the coins into his stake, and another begins betting body parts when he runs out of cash. It's also possible the characters might be offered huge sums of money to run Humans into the Quarter to work as little better than slaves.

Give the player characters some time to soak up the atmosphere. Then one of them should notice somebody bolting toward the stairs. If the gunmen

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survived, it's one of them (the other two are nowhere to be seen); if they were killed, it's somebody else who panicked at the sight of the characters.

The party can reach the stairs without a problem, providing they're subtle about it. If they charge off, they're going to attract attention and some of the drunker Undead might try to stop them.

The stairs are surprisingly well-lit (you, too, would be worried about stubbing your toe in the dark if there was a chance your toe would fall off) and lead to the roof. Their quarry is waiting there, behind a chimney, and will open fire as soon as the characters show their faces. Fortunately, his revolver is loaded with lead, and he only has three shots. Once the gun is empty, he'll make an attempt to jump off the building (hey, you lose one body, you find another).

The characters would be well-advised to stop him. Once he's caught, he won't struggle all that hard (no Taxim really wants to die again, if he can avoid it) and the characters can *interrogate* him (difficulty number of 7, the Taxim's *willpower*). If he's one of the gunmen, he fled because his colleagues are dead drunk somewhere (more one than the other) and he figured the characters were gunning for him. If he's just a friend of the gunmen,

he recognizes them from his pal's description and didn't want to be around when they started shooting up Karrk's.

With a little of the right kind of persuasion, he'll spill his guts (literally, if necessary). A bunch of Taxim gunmen were hired by a Human, some bigshot sorcerer with a grudge against a private detective. He wanted someone to cover his tracks while he had his fun with the gumshoe.

Last he heard, the sorcerer — some mug who went by the name Whisper — was holed up in a warehouse on Third, just outside of the Quarter. But he's got a good number of Taxim guarding the place, and they're all packing guns.

If the characters let the Taxim go, he'll make sure Whisper is warned and the Taxim guards at the warehouse will be waiting for the characters in Scene Four. If they slug him unconscious or put him out of the way in some other way, they'll have some advantage of surprise.

CUT TO ...

Once the characters know where Deacon is being held, they can proceed there and do the job they've been hired to do. Cut to Scene Four, "Not With a Bang, But a Whisper."

WHISPER'S WAREHOUSE

WHISPER

TAXIM

DEACON

WARD
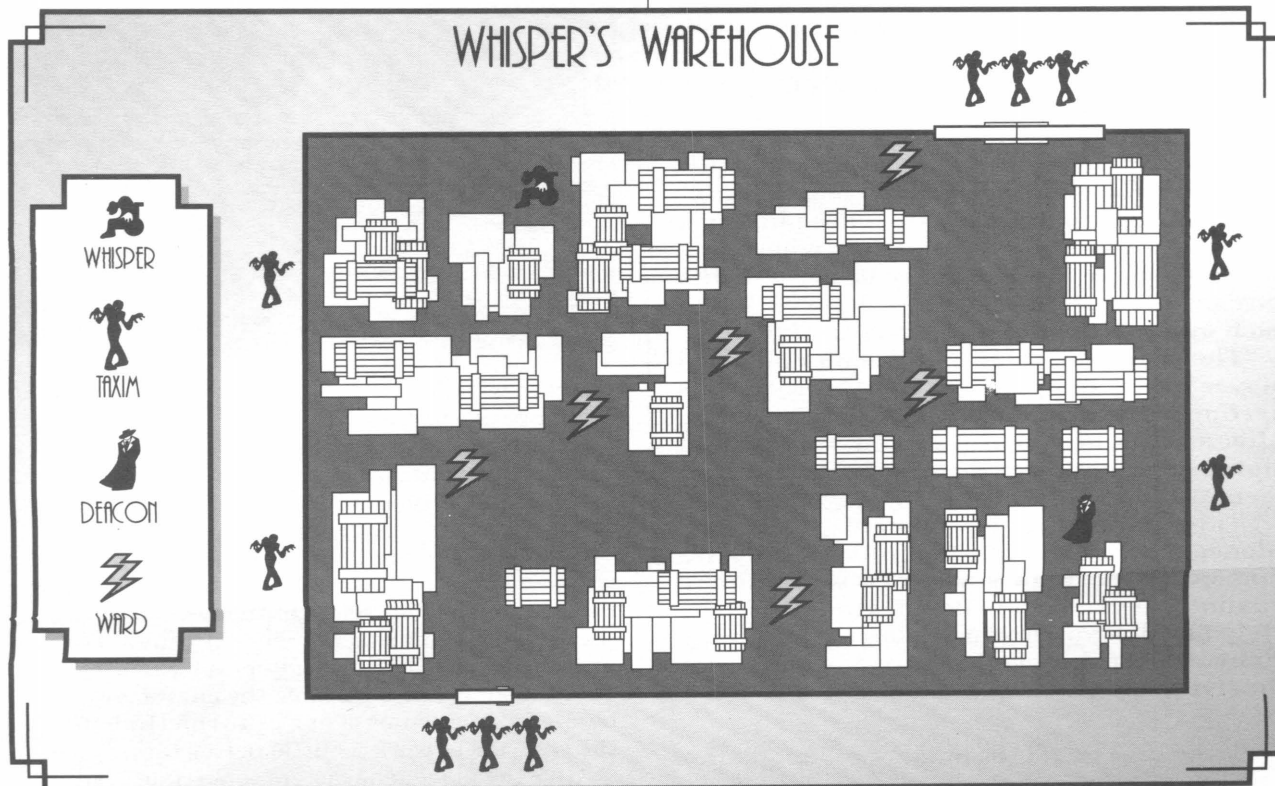
Thomas ONeill

SCENE FOUR: NOT WITH A BANG, BUT A WHISPER

THE SITUATION

Dramatic. The characters arrive at Whisper's warehouse on Third just outside the Taxim Quarter. There are 10 Taxim gunmen surrounding the place, at least some of whom will have to be dealt with before the characters can get into the warehouse.

Take a look at the map on page 152. There are two primary entrances to the warehouse, an employee door and loading bay doors. Each has three Taxim guarding it, armed with .45 Gelvash revolvers, with *fireball* runeslugs in them. Two other Taxim guard the separate ends of the building.

Use the Taxim gunmen stats from Scene Two. Note that if they've been warned the characters are on their way, add +3 to the difficulty of the player characters' *stealth* rolls.

Keep in mind that Taxim, even when expecting trouble, aren't the most aware guards on the planet. Sure, the money's nice, and Whisper's a little too powerful to cross. But they came back for pleasure, not work, and are most likely standing around grumbling about this crummy job. This being the case, if the Taxim haven't been warned ahead of time, add +1 to the characters' *stealth* totals.

The characters need to take out as many of the gunmen as possible without making too much noise and alerting Whisper. Both entrances are locked (*lockpicking* difficulty of 8).

It's possible that the characters might have thought to alert the sentinels before heading to the warehouse. If that's the case, and the scene is going really badly for the characters, have a sentinel squad show up and engage the gunmen. This should give the characters a breather and get them into the warehouse.

THE ACTION

One of three things is going to happen, most likely: the characters will take out a few gunmen and slip inside; the characters will foul up somehow and wind up in a battle with all the gunmen; the characters will get driven off by the gunmen. In either of the latter two cases, sentinels can appear to help the characters out, whether they were notified or not, drawn by the noise.

Once the characters are inside the warehouse, they'll find it pitch-dark. This is not a magical darkness — Deacon shot out the power box in which the light spells were charged. From somewhere deep in the warehouse, they can hear moaning. The only illumination is the occasional flash of lightning. Consult the map of the warehouse to see its interior layout.

If the characters produce some sort of light source, Whisper will stay in the shadows as much as possible. His movement is limited due to the wheelchair, but he has had *lightning bolt* wards charged into some sections of the warehouse. This may confuse the characters as to just where he's striking from.

It's highly doubtful the characters are going to get out of the warehouse without dealing with Whisper, although he may try to talk them out of intervening. Read aloud or paraphrase:

A voice, soft and menacing, comes out of the darkness. "My quarrel is not with you. It's Deacon I want to kill. You can turn around now and walk out of here. Or you can stay here and die. Make your choice."

This is another good opportunity to make the characters sweat. Are they the hunters or the hunted? They should never know just where the next spell will come from, or what it will be.

When they do find Deacon, he will be battered and bleeding. Consider him to have *4Wnd K6*, and he will not be of any help in the battle. His gun was emptied hours ago and he has been on the run since.

The best tactic for the player characters is to split up and try to triangulate just where Whisper is attacking from. If they give him multiple targets, they better their chances of getting out without getting fried. Note that Whisper's stats detail how many charges he has left at the moment the characters first enter the warehouse.

If you wish, you may have Whisper make some *intimidation* or *taunt* attacks. But note that he is pretty far over the edge at this point, and intent on destroying Deacon and anybody who helps him.

Note also that he will summon any Taxim guards which the characters did not dispose of into the warehouse to join the combat. Some of these might wind up getting destroyed by the wards, adding a gruesome flair to the scene. (See the map for the location of the wards.)

WHISPER

AGILITY 4
Dodge 5, stealth 10, unarmed combat 9
DEXTERITY 5
ENDURANCE 10
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 11
INTELLECT 11
Deduction 12, perception 17, tracking 12, trick 15
MIND 10
Conjuration: wizardry 19, conjuration: photomancy 20, conjuration: vitomancy 23, hypnotism 14

Karl Waller

CONFIDENCE 10
Alteration: necromancy 18, interrogation 12, intimidation 15, willpower 15
CHARISMA 10
Persuasion 12, taunt 12
Life Points: 6
Alignment: Order 1
Equipment: Wheelchair; spell components
Special Note: All spells listed below are charged into the fingers of Whisper's artificial hands. Those spells he knew at the time of his first confrontation with Deacon are not listed, as he can no longer cast them due to his inability to gesture. Arcane knowledges are listed for the sake of completion.

Note also that Whisper does not take feedback from any spell he casts, nor from the wards, as these are all charged spells.

Spells: Numbers in parentheses are the number of charges Whisper has left for each individual spell. *Destroy magic* (3), *fireball* (3), *freeze* (2), *lightning bolt* (5), *rain of razors* (3), *slow* (2), *sorcerous shield* (1), *wall of air* (3), *windstorm* (1)

Arcane Knowledges: Death 3, folk 2, light 3, magic 1

Description: Whisper is a psychotic old man — with a lot of magical energy at his disposal. He may have more Taxim in the place, if necessary, and he could have even a few more surprises. However, he is likely to go insane during the battle, killing himself and destroying the place as well.

AFTERMATH

Whether conveniently appearing sentinels take the Taxim out or not, the characters will have to deal with Whisper. If you wish, you can have him escape to plague the characters again, but it will probably be more satisfying for them to put him away, once and for all.

The next step is to get Deacon some medical attention. Once he's in the hands of a healer, the characters can get in touch with Dala Sanqui at Gel's Galitian and get the other 750 selasts they have coming to them.

Should the characters ever reach Galitia, they can count on Belrand and Deacon to serve as allies or sources of information. If Whisper escaped, he will be back, now determined to revenge himself on the characters as well as Deacon.

AWARDS

Award the characters two skill points apiece for successfully completing this adventure. Each character can also be awarded from 2–4 Life Points each, depending on how tough the adventure ended up being.

Bloodshadows™

CHARACTER SHEET

ALCHEMIST

SPECIES Human	ALIGNMENT Neutral	HEIGHT	MASS	AGE	SEX Female

ATTRIBUTES

AGILITY 7
Dodge 9, melee combat 8, unarmed combat 8

DEXTERITY 9
Thrown weapons 11

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

INTELLECT 9
First aid 10, perception 10, science: chemistry 10, trick 10

MIND 10
Conjuration: alchemy 12, medicine 11

CONFIDENCE 11
Alteration: alchemy 15, willpower 12

CHARISMA 7
Charm 8, persuasion 9

DERIVED ATTRIBUTES

9	**TOUGHNESS**
11	**TOUGHNESS** (w/armor)
5	**MRG** (Movement Rate, Ground)
4	**MRS** (Movement Rate, Swimming)
2	**MRC** (Movement Rate, Climbing)
2	**MRJ** (Movement Rate, Jumping)

LIFE POINTS	SKILL POINTS
5	

COMBAT BOX   K   ○

WOUND LEVEL	MODIFIERS
○ *Light*	no modifier
○ *Moderate*	-2 to physical skills
○ *Heavy*	-4 physical & -2 all other skills
○ *Incapacitated*	-8 to all skills
○ *Mortal*	automatic KO; see text

SHOCK CAPACITY

SHOCK TAKEN

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI): one skill add, applied to alteration: alchemy; Contacts (CI): you know a black marketeer with access to alchemical components; Fame (CI): you're well known in both Selastos and Galitia for your alchemical improvisations; Skill Bonus (CII): +1 to perception, science: chemistry, conjuration: alchemy, medicine, and alteration: alchemy checks; Wealth (CII): major wealth; Additional Attribute Point (CIII): Confidence.

Compensations: Age (CI): you are around 50; Bad Luck (CI): see text on "Bad Luck"; Price (CI): you must do a favor to recompense the black marketeer in addition to his normal, steep fee; Quirk (CI): Indecision (Minor); Advantage Flaw (CII): wealth is in the hands of a family trust, reluctant to part with it; Enemy (CII): hounded by a powerful slumlord, one of whose buildings you accidentally blew up; Bad Luck (CIII): see text on "Bad Luck".

DESCRIPTION

Even as a kid, you loved blowing things up. From that, it was a short step to a career as an alchemist. You're best known for your creative use of the *thunder* potion. Right now, you're something of a hero in your neighborhood — but you know that the wrong ingredients in the wrong combination could erase all that (and the neighborhood as well). With that in mind, you're always on the lookout for a chance to make some extra gold that the family trust can't get their hands on, to stash for a rainy (or fiery) day.

Arcane Knowledges: *Inanimate forces* 1

Spells: *Blind, eagle eyes, revitalize, smokescreen, tar pit, thunder* (i.e., you can create these potions using the *MasterBook* special effects creation system)

EQUIPMENT

Potions (2 each): *blind, eagle eyes, revitalize, smokescreen, tar pit, thunder*; naptha (one oz.), coal dust (two oz.), brimstone (three oz.), magnesium (three oz.); dagger; leather coat, armor value TOU+2/17.

"You mix this vial with that vial — or was it the other one? Well, we'll all find out in a few minutes."

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 10	11 12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21 25	26 30	31 35	36 40	41 45	+5
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	+1

ORRIS BARKEEP

SPECIES Orris	ALIGNMENT Neutral	HEIGHT	MASS	AGE	SEX Male

ATTRIBUTES

AGILITY 9
Dodge 10, melee combat 10, unarmed combat 10

DEXTERITY 9
Fire combat 10

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

INTELLECT 9
Cantrips 10, first aid 10, perception 12, safe cracking 11, smuggling 11

MIND 9

CONFIDENCE 9
Alteration: elemental 11, con 10, streetwise 9 (Selastos 11), willpower 10

CHARISMA 8
Charm 9, disguise 9, persuasion 9, shapeshifting 9

DERIVED ATTRIBUTES

9	**TOUGHNESS**
15	**TOUGHNESS** (w/armor)
5	**MRG** (Movement Rate, Ground)
4	**MRS** (Movement Rate, Swimming)
3	**MRC** (Movement Rate, Climbing)
3	**MRJ** (Movement Rate, Jumping)

LIFE POINTS	SKILL POINTS
5	

COMBAT BOX   K   ○

WOUND LEVEL	MODIFIERS
○ *Light*	no modifier
○ *Moderate*	-2 to physical skills
○ *Heavy*	-4 physical & -2 all other skills
○ *Incapacitated*	-8 to all skills
○ *Mortal*	automatic KO; see text

SHOCK CAPACITY

SHOCK TAKEN

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Skill Bonus (CI): +1 to *perception*, *deduction*, and *streetwise*; Additional Skill Adds (CI), one skill add; Additional Attribute Point (CIII): one point to Strength; Special Abilities (CIV): Natural Armor, TOU+6; Special Abilities (CIV): Shapeshifting I, inanimate only.

Compensations: Debt (CI): you owe a mortage on the bar to a local bank; Prejudice (CII): Non-Human prejudice; Advantage Flaw (CIII): Nutritional Requirements (Human bones); Quirk (CIII): Paranoia (Major), +6 to resist attempts at *con* or *persuasion* — must be *persuaded* to help even close friends); Cultural Unfamiliarity (CIII): you have been frozen in inanimate form for so long that this world seems totally unfamiliar to you.
Note: Even though the columns are not even, they are considered "balanced."

DESCRIPTION

Shortly after being freed from centuries in the form of a statue, you found a job as a bartender in the Oasis section of Selastos. While it's true that some of the patrons are put off by seeing your head emerge from the bar in front of them to ask what they want, you've managed to make enough in tips that you bought the bar. Unfortunately, that put you in debt, so you're having to moonlight as a safe-cracker.

Natural Tools: Claylike skin, armor value TOU+3/12

Spells: *Ice dagger, freeze*

Cantrips: *Candle, chill, heat, note*

Arcane Knowledges: *Air 1*

EQUIPMENT

Bat, damage value STR+5/20; .44 Karr Automatic; lockpicks; Hand of Glory (one charge).
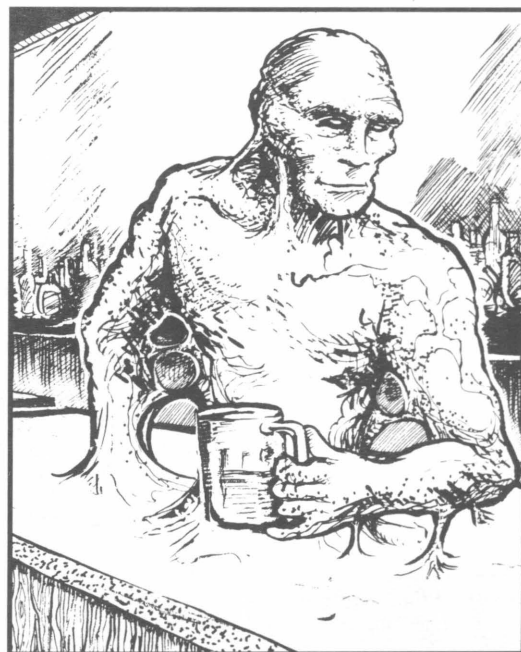
"I don't like your face, either. But at least I can change mine."

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 10	11 12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21 25	26 30	31 35	36 40	41 45	+5
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	+1

Bloodshadows

PRIVATE EYE

SPECIES Human	ALIGNMENT Neutral	HEIGHT	MASS	AGE	SEX Female

ATTRIBUTES

AGILITY 8
Dodge 9, maneuver 9, melee combat 9, stealth 9, unarmed combat 9

DEXTERITY 9
Fire combat 12, thrown weapons 10

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

INTELLECT 10
Deduction 11, perception 12

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 9
Bribery 10, con 10, interrogation 10, intimidation 10, streetwise 9 (Selastos 11)

CHARISMA 8
Taunt 9

DERIVED ATTRIBUTES

9	**TOUGHNESS**
11	**TOUGHNESS** (w/armor)
5	**MRG** (Movement Rate, Ground)
4	**MRS** (Movement Rate, Swimming)
2	**MRC** (Movement Rate, Climbing)
2	**MRJ** (Movement Rate, Jumping)

LIFE POINTS	SKILL POINTS
5	

COMBAT BOX   K   ○

WOUND LEVEL	MODIFIERS
○ *Light*	no modifier
○ *Moderate*	-2 to physical skills
○ *Heavy*	-4 physical & -2 all other skills
○ *Incapacitated*	-8 to all skills
○ *Mortal*	automatic KO; see text

SHOCK CAPACITY

SHOCK TAKEN

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Skill Bonus (CI): +1 to *perception*, *deduction* and *streetwise* checks; Contacts (CI): Selastos street people; Fame (CI): fairly well known among both the sentinels and some elements of the underworld; Equipment (CII): runeslugs, 6, charged with *lightning bolt* spell; Contacts (CII): sentinels; Luck (CIII), see text on "Luck".

Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CI): "Contacts," street people strike hard bargains and are often reluctant to help; Debt (CI) : owes two months back rent to landlady; Handicap (CI): character suffered a bad knee as a result of a bullet wound while a sentinel — DN+2 to all *acrobatics*, *long jumping, maneuver, running* and *swimming* attempts; Debt (CII): owes money to a loanwyrm who's growing impatient); Enemy (CII): the loanwyrm is perfectly willing to settle for blood in lieu of gold; Burn-Out (CIII): character will lose her contacts among the sentinels if she embarrasses them badly enough when solving a case.

DESCRIPTION

You've only been outside of your city a few times, always on business. But you've seen enough of the world to know that if a job sounds too good to be true, it usually is, and if a client looks too good to be true, he's probably a 'shifter. You left the sentinels last year with visions of cracking big cases, and wound up just one more two-bit gumshoe waiting for a juicy murder that'll make your rep.

EQUIPMENT

Equipment: .38 Gelvash revolver; glowstone flashlight; leather trenchcoat (armor value TOU+2/17).
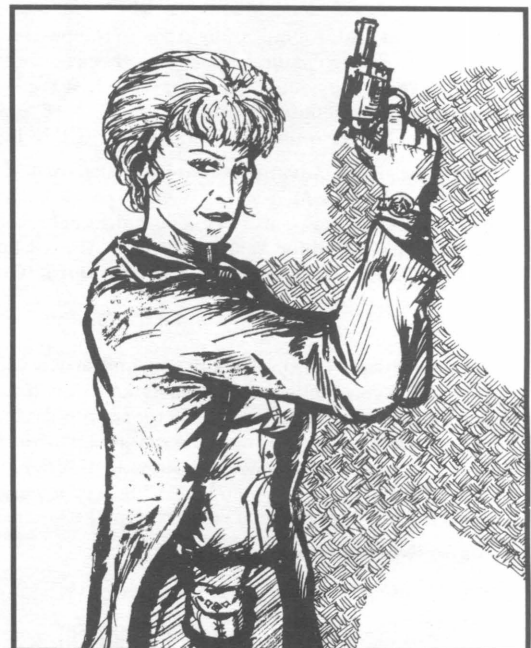
"He needed one hand for the money, one for the gun, and one for the dame. Unfortunately, that left him one free to slug me with."

BONUS CHART

DIE								9	11											21	26	31	36	41	
ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	25	30	35	40	45	+5
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	+1

Bloodshadows™

CHARACTER SHEET

SENTINEL

SPECIES Human	ALIGNMENT Order 1	HEIGHT	MASS	AGE	SEX Male

ATTRIBUTES

AGILITY 9
Dodge 11, maneuver 10, melee combat 10, stealth 10, unarmed combat 11

DEXTERITY 9
Fire combat 12, vehicle piloting: wheeled (Signer Sedan 11)

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 9

INTELLECT 8
Perception 9, tracking 9, trick 9

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 8
Alteration: vitomancy 10, interrogation 9, intimidation 9

CHARISMA 8
Persuasion 9

DERIVED ATTRIBUTES

10	**TOUGHNESS**
10	**TOUGHNESS** (w/armor)
5	**MRG** (Movement Rate, Ground)
4	**MRS** (Movement Rate, Swimming)
3	**MRC** (Movement Rate, Climbing)
3	**MRJ** (Movement Rate, Jumping)

LIFE POINTS	SKILL POINTS
5	

COMBAT BOX   K   ○

WOUND LEVEL	MODIFIERS
○ *Light*	no modifier
○ *Moderate*	-2 to physical skills
○ *Heavy*	-4 physical & -2 all other skills
○ *Incapacitated*	-8 to all skills
○ *Mortal*	automatic KO; see text

SHOCK CAPACITY	
SHOCK TAKEN	

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skills Adds (CI), one skill add; Skill Bonus (CI): +1 to *perception*, *deduction* and *streetwise* checks; Contacts (CI): a low-level snitch provides info occasionally; Equipment (CII): runeslugs, 6, charged with *mystic chains* spell; Trademark Specialization (CII), +3 to *vehicle piloting: wheeled* when driving the Signer sedan; Learning Curve (CIII): Positive.

Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CI): tied to Skill Bonus, you are *stymied* if you fail a *perception*, *deduction* or *streetwise* check until end of scene or you make the check successfully; Enemy (CI): some gangsters recently out of prison have it in for you; Wealth (CI): minor wealth; Bigotry (CII): you have a violent hatred of Taxim; Employed (CII): as a sentinel in Selastos; Quirk (CIII): Vengeful (Major).

DESCRIPTION

Your father was a sentinel before you, and so was your grandfather. So it was only natural that you'd follow in their footsteps, even if you haven't made detective yet. What's worse, your beat is on the border of the Taxim Quarter, and seeing Undead shamble around like they own the city sticks in your craw. Your frequent run-ins with them may have something do with the delay in receiving a promotion to plainclothes. You take tremendous pride in your work and aren't above bending the rules a little or leaning on a suspect to make an arrest.

Arcane Knowledges: *Folk* 1

Spells: *Glass jaw, slow*

EQUIPMENT

.38 Gelvash revolver; runeslugs (6), charged with *mystic chains* spell; blackjack; pain baton; glowstone flashlight; hand-held crystal set; sentinel uniform; Signer sedan with "City of Selastos Sentinels" markings (belongs to department).

"Never heard of a zombie speeding before. Guess you're a first, pal."

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 10	11 12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21 25	26 30	31 35	36 40	41 45	+5
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	+1

Bloodshadows™

STREETSINGER

SPECIES Human	ALIGNMENT Order 1	HEIGHT	MASS	AGE	SEX Female

ATTRIBUTES

AGILITY 8
Melee combat 9, stealth 10

DEXTERITY 7
Prestidigitation 8

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 8

INTELLECT 8
Perception 9

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 11
Alteration: vitomancy 13, con 12, intimidation 12, streetwise 13 (Selastos 15), survival: urban 12, willpower 12

CHARISMA 11
Charm 13, persuasion 13, taunt 12

DERIVED ATTRIBUTES

9	**TOUGHNESS**
9	**TOUGHNESS** (w/armor)
5	**MRG** (Movement Rate, Ground)
4	**MRS** (Movement Rate, Swimming)
2	**MRC** (Movement Rate, Climbing)
2	**MRJ** (Movement Rate, Jumping)

LIFE POINTS	SKILL POINTS
5	

COMBAT BOX   K   ○

WOUND LEVEL	MODIFIERS
○ *Light*	no modifier
○ *Moderate*	-2 to physical skills
○ *Heavy*	-4 physical & -2 all other skills
○ *Incapacitated*	-8 to all skills
○ *Mortal*	automatic KO; see text

SHOCK CAPACITY	
SHOCK TAKEN	

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI): one skill add; Contacts (CI): other Selastos streetsingers; Equipment (CI): smoke ring, found on dead gangster months ago; Contacts (CII): members of the Belasc mob; Luck (CII): see text on "Luck"; Additional Attribute Point (CIII): Confidence.

Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CI): Equipment — smoke ring occasionally fails to work (at gamemaster's discretion); Age (CI): you are a teenager; Employed (CI): you are employed by a local Selastos newspaper; Handicap (CII): you're slightly lame in your left leg — +2 to the difficulty of all Agility actions; Bigotry (CII): you have an intense hatred of Ghouls and Vampires; Quirk (CIII): you are a chain smoker, and must have a cigarette once per scene — you suffer a *setback* in any scene in which you don't.

DESCRIPTION

Life's been no bed of *clusin* blossoms. Your parents were killed in a mining accident — you spent your miniscule life savings on *preservation* spells and took to the streets, trying to raise enough gold to bring them back from the dead. You were lucky — your voice got you a streetsinger's job and you've managed to keep your pride. You're *trying to quit smoking* before it ruins your singing.

Arcane Knowledges: *Folk* 1
Spells: *Charm*

EQUIPMENT

.22 Delken; knife; smoke ring (charged for six uses); glowstone penlight.

"I know everybody worth knowing, and a few bodies who aren't."

BONUS CHART

							9	11											21	26	31	36	41	
DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	25	30	35	40	45	+5
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	+1

Bloodshadows™

VAMPIRE CONTRACT KILLER

SPECIES Human Vampire	**ALIGNMENT** Chaos 1	**HEIGHT**	**MASS**	**AGE**	**SEX** Male

ATTRIBUTES

AGILITY 10
Dodge 11, maneuver 11, unarmed combat 11

DEXTERITY 8
Fire combat 11

ENDURANCE 10
Resist shock 11

STRENGTH 11

INTELLECT 8
Perception 9, trick 9

MIND 8
Conjuration: wizardry 9

CONFIDENCE 8
Alteration: wizardry 10, intimidation 10, willpower 9

CHARISMA 8
Charm 9, disguise 9, persuasion 9

DERIVED ATTRIBUTES

13	**TOUGHNESS**
13	**TOUGHNESS** (w/armor)
4	**MRS** (Movement Rate, Swimming)
5	**MRG** (Movement Rate, Ground)
3	**MRC** (Movement Rate, Climbing)
3	**MRJ** (Movement Rate, Jumping)

LIFE POINTS 5	**SKILL POINTS**

COMBAT BOX   K   ○

WOUND LEVEL	**MODIFIERS**
○ *Light*	no modifier
○ *Moderate*	-2 to physical skills
○ *Heavy*	-4 physical & -2 all other skills
○ *Incapacitated*	-8 to all skills
○ *Mortal*	automatic KO; see text

SHOCK CAPACITY

SHOCK TAKEN

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Skill Bonus (CI): +1 to *charm*, *persuasion* and *willpower* checks; Special Abilities (CIII): Attribute Increase I (+1 to Agility); Special Abilities (CIV): Life Drain (physical); Special Abilities (CIV): Natural Weaponry (HTH), fangs, damage value STR+3/14; Special Abilities (CIV): Attribute Increase II (+2 to Strength).

Compensations: Employed (CI): you most frequently work for the Norbert Rees mob in Selastos; Allergy (CI): *stymied* in the presence of sunlight; Achilles' Heel (CI): vulnerability to holy objects of Order cults — suffers damage value 16 every round you are in contact with one; Prejudice (CII): Non-Human prejudice; Quirk (CIII): Dependency (Major) on Human blood; Advantage Flaw (CIII): Nutritional Requirements (Blood); Avantage Flaw (CIV): Infection II.

Note: *Toughness* has been increased due to *Strength* increase.

Spells: *Destroy magic, lightning bolt, mystic chains*

Arcane Knowledges: *Magic* 1

DESCRIPTION

You were a hit man for the Rees mob long before you went Undead. But after Belasc died and returned and Rees decided he only wanted to hire Unnaturals, you agreed to get transformed into a bloodsucker. And it's worked out well — you still favor your .44 over your fangs on jobs and being almost immune to slugs is great, too. Now if only so many of your hits would stop coming back, sporting fangs of their own …

EQUIPMENT

.44 Karr Automatic; switchblade; lockpicks.

"Bloodshed's a real waste, if there's nobody there to drink it."

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 10	11 12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21 25	26 30	31 35	36 40	41 45	+5
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	+1

Bloodshadows

CHARACTER SHEET

Character Name _____

Player Name _____

SPECIES	HEIGHT	MASS	AGE	SEX

ATTRIBUTES

☐	AGILITY	☐	INTELLECT
☐	DEXTERITY	☐	MIND
☐	ENDURANCE	☐	CONFIDENCE
☐	STRENGTH	☐	CHARISMA

DERIVED ATTRIBUTES

☐	TOUGHNESS	☐	TOUGHNESS (w/armor)
☐	MRG (Movement Rate, Ground)	☐	MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing)
☐	MRW (Movement Rate, Swimming)	☐	MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping)

COMBAT BOX   K   O

WOUND LEVEL	MODIFIERS
◯ Light	no modifier
◯ Moderate	-2 to physical skills
◯ Heavy	-4 physical & -2 all other skills
◯ Incapacitated	-8 to all skills
◯ Mortal	automatic KO; see text

LIFE POINTS	SKILL POINTS

SHOCK CAPACITY

SHOCK TAKEN

SKILLS

NAME	ATTRIBUTE/ VALUE	SKILL ADDS	SPECIALIZATION/ ADDS	MODIFIERS	SKILL VALUE

ADVANTAGES

COLUMN	NAME (game effect)

COMPENSATIONS

COLUMN	NAME (game effect)

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 10	11 12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21 25	26 30	31 35	36 40	41 45	+5
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	+1

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CHARACTER SHEET

EQUIPMENT

ITEM	GAME EFFECT	NOTES (ranges, etc.)

GENRE/GAME SETTING DESCRIPTION

BASIC CHARACTER CONCEPT。

PERSONALITY

BACKGROUND STORY

NOTES

THE WORLD OF

Bloodshadows™

by Greg Farshtey

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF FANTASY NOIR

It's a mean old world out there. The sorcerer upstairs conjures too loud; the guy down the hall drinks blood from a six-pack; that stiff you left in the alley is up and walking around. If you're lucky, the Guild will pay you for tonight's work; if you're not, you're going home in a box.

A small box.

The World of Bloodshadows is a roleplaying game setting that combines pulp adventure with dark fantasy. Tough detectives in weathered trench-coats swap biting comments with vampires in evening gowns. Humans walk down dark streets side by side with demonic breeds and long-dead ghouls. And death — or Undeath — waits around every corner ...

Go outside the cities and discover the terrors of the Wilderness. Even the most powerful shapeshifter or sorcerer fears what waits in the ruins ...

Your weapons on the world of Marl are magic and technology — but neither replaces a good head on your shoulders.

And you'll have to work to keep it there.

The World of Bloodshadows is a WorldBook intended for use with the *MasterBook* system. You must have *MasterBook* to play this game.