

BEAST

THE PRIMORDIAL



PLAYER'S GUIDE

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EVE'S HOODIE

BY MATTHEW MCFARLAND

Mr. Coffey stepped out of the house. The door was off the hinges and the walls were tagged, but no one came in here. This part of town had homeless just like the rest of it, they stood by the highway entrance with their cardboard signs reading "ANYTHING HELPS" and "HOMELESS VET" and "GOD BLESS" and so on. This place was nice and cool, shaded by some overgrown trees, so why no squatters?

Something terrible happened here, thought Mr. Coffey. He smiled at the thought. He knew that a serial killer had once lived here, but that in itself wasn't interesting; serial killers were a dated fear, a screenwriter's joke. No, the incident here — and there *had* been an incident, Mr. Coffey could taste it in the air — had been more recent and stranger. He looked around the yard, lush and green in the wet May weather. The incident was powerful, but at the same time, Mr. Coffey tasted innocence, wonder, the kind of fear that quickened the step and widened the eyes. *Children*. There was a school nearby, wasn't there?

Mr. Coffey strolled back to his car, and waved cheerfully at the kids riding by on their bikes. He'd probably see them soon. *Social worker*, he thought. *I'll be a social worker this time.*

...

"You should file an AR." Angel didn't look angry, just concerned.

Dave shook his head and adjusted the ice pack on his eye. "It wasn't his fault. I mean, he threw the book, but he didn't mean to hit me. He was mad and he lashed out."

"Dave, this is not the first time."

"I know, but you expect that. That's why he's in my room. It's fine. I've had worse."

Angel shook his head. He thought Dave was being too indulgent, but what did he know, he just taught regular ed.

"This is Richard Fries, right?"

Dave looked at the back of the room. The teacher's lounge was weirdly shaped, and the other side of the room had an alcove that was invisible from the big table. "Who's that?"

Vince stepped out of the blind spot. "Sorry. Hi, it's me."

"Oh, hey! I ain't seen you in a while, Mr. Milliner."

Vince smiled. Some of the teachers forgot his first name, and some of them just habitually called the other staff by title. He didn't much mind, it just sounded funny. "Yeah, I'm sorry. Progress reports, you know how it is. I'm gonna come get your kids tomorrow."

Dave nodded. "OK. Yeah, Richard Fries. You know him? He doesn't get speech, right?"

"No, he doesn't. I assessed him when he was in preschool."

"Oh." Dave walked into the room, and Vince stepped back a bit. Dave checked himself; Vince got freaky about personal space. "Yeah, he's still got problems with anger and he lashes out sometimes. Hasn't, like, thrown anything in a while, but you know these kids, something happens at home, they bring it here."

Vince nodded. "Yep, I hear you." He didn't look like he was really listening, though.

• • •

Eve loosened the hoodie. She had pulled it tight around her face, trying to screen out the world, for all the good it had done. The cafeteria was too loud, and the sounds too diverse. Boys thumping on tables, high-pitched laughter from girls, the hum of the microphone that the lunch lady used, in vain, to get them to shut up. Eve stared down into her juice, and thought of water, the silent, cool, Boundless Deep. She felt the cold on her skin, and she was home, if only in her mind.

Something slammed into her back and pitched her forward. One of the boys — Antonio — was playing catch using a wadded up piece of paper and had slipped. Eve stood up, wiping juice and the remnants of her lunch from her hoodie. She turned to face him.

"My bad," said Antonio. Eve said nothing. Antonio didn't wait for acknowledgement, he just turned and went back to his game.

Eve reached out and grabbed him by the hair. She pulled, using only a fraction of her true strength, and yanked him backwards into her arms. *If we were in the ocean, she thought, I could crush him. I could eat his skin and liquefy his flesh in my mouth, and drink him slowly.* The thought appealed, and started to call her home.

Seawater trickled into the room from the corners. No one noticed. The students chanted "Fight! Fight!" Someone ran to get the principal.

Eve let him go. Antonio turned, and curled his hands into a fist. And then he glanced at his forearm, and stopped.

A row of angry, circular wounds had appeared across his arms. Eve hadn't touched him there. He looked at her in horror, and she pulled the hoodie strings tight again. "Don't touch me," she said.

Antonio could only nod.

• • •

"You think she's still coming?"

The principal kept glancing at the door as though she expected Richard's mother to show up. Dave knew better; Richard's mother — Alyssa — hadn't shown up for a single parent-teacher conference, and the only way he'd managed to get his IEP signed was to catch her in the parking lot. Ruby, Dave's aide, smirked at the question and they exchanged a look.

"I don't think she was ever coming," said Ruby. "She don't ever come into the building."

The principal squared her shoulders. Dave recognized the gesture; Ms. Prost was about to take charge. "OK, so, what do we do, here? Do we go ahead and have the meeting without her? Can we do that, legally?"

Dave nodded. "It's not best practice, but yeah, we can. But really, I don't think it's a big problem. He got mad and he responded inappropriately. He's on an IEP for emotional disturbance, he's in my room for a reason. He's been good for months. I think he just had a bad day."

Ms. Prost nodded. "You're OK with him staying in your room?"

"Of course."

"All right, then. That was easy." Ruby and Dave started to get up, and Ms. Prost cleared her throat. "One other thing. I wanted to ask your opinion on a student. She's a transfer from JFK. I know you know a lot of these kids pretty well, Dave."

Dave sat back down. "Sure. This about the fight in the cafeteria?"

"Yeah. What do you know about Eve Forgas?"

"Um. Not a lot. Like you say, she's new. She's what, seventh grade?"

"Yeah," said Ruby. "She's in Ms. Cruz' homeroom."

"OK. She's always wearing that hoodie, right? With the hood pulled?"

"She's already gotten in-school suspension once for that, yeah."

Dave rolled his eyes before he could stop himself. "Maybe let that go?"

"The rules apply—"

"Of course they do." All three of them turned to look at Mr. Coffey. All three had forgotten he was there. "You have a dress code for a reason. You let her get too comfortable with thinking the rules don't apply to her, that's ultimately not good for her."

Ms. Prost stayed poker-faced. Dave, who had a lousy poker face on the best of days, cocked an eyebrow. "Don't know if giving her an ultimatum is the best idea. Anyway, weren't you here for Richard? Social worker, right?"

"Right." Mr. Coffey smiled even wider. "But mom didn't show."

• • •

Richard kicked a rock into the parking lot. He was *hungry*. It wasn't food-hungry, either. It was mean-hungry. The Dead Dog was growling and pacing and wasn't leaving him alone. Throwing the book and hitting Mr. Luther had helped, but not much, and he felt super bad about it because Mr. Luther was always cool to him.

He looked across the street. The line at the ice cream place was already long. He checked his pocket, but only found lint. His lips curled up in a snarl, and he knew the Dead Dog was mad. He wanted ice cream. He wanted to *take* ice cream from someone, but there were little kids there, and he knew he'd get in trouble if he beat up a little kid for ice cream.

So what?

He dug his fingernails into his palms. He wasn't going to walk across the street.

Go. The little black girl with the puffy hair. She's by herself. Take her ice cream and shove her down.

Richard was walking across the parking lot before he knew what was happening. He was going to do it. This is how it always happened. He was going to do it and he'd feel terrible and he'd get in *so much* trouble and his mom would give him a whipping and he'd probably get that terrible, sad look from Mr. Luther but he *needed*—

"Hey." He felt a hand on his shoulder. A girl was standing behind him. She was older than Richard, maybe in middle school. She was wearing a gray hoodie with the strings pulled, so he couldn't see her hair, but he could see her eyes and they were so...deep.

She wasn't a girl. She was a monster. She didn't have arms and legs, she had tentacles, and they were big enough to crush the whole world.

She leaned over to him. "Hey," she said again. "Can I walk you home?"

Richard crunched up his face. He felt like crying, but he wasn't going to do that here. "Yeah."

...

Vince stood at the window, looking down at the parking lot. He'd been hearing thunder all day. Not actual thunder, not the kind that preceded rain and washed away the oil in the streets and broke the pressure, but the kind of thunder that meant *the monsters are hungry and someone is going to die*.

It was Richard, he was pretty sure about that. He'd been watching Richard for years. Dave's heart was in the right place, but he was shit for recognizing patterns. Richard tended to get hungry every few months, and he'd get into little fights for a week or two and then someone would get really hurt, and then he'd be on his best behavior for a while. In September, right after school started, it was the custodian — a stack of boxes in the storeroom fell over on top of him and he wound up with a concussion. In March, when everything was still frozen over, one of the substitute teachers slipped and fell in the parking lot and broke her wrist. And now here it was May and school was just about out for the year, and Richard was hungry again.

That was just this year, though. Vince was pretty sure the cycle went further back, but he wasn't sure how to find out about it. He figured Richard hadn't ever seriously injured anyone or Dave would know about it (and Dave was pretty free with that kind of information), but there were still too many unknowns.

I need to stop him before he hurts someone, Vince thought, *but it's not like I can...*

He made himself think it. *It's not like I can kill him. He's a kid, he needs help.*

Vince was wondering whether Richard really was a kid when he saw a girl in a hoodie step up behind him. The thunder crackled again, and Vince's eyes widened. *Her, too.*

He gathered up his coat, his computer, and a stack of paperwork. He would have to catch up on his real work later. He needed to follow them. He couldn't let the thunder get any worse.

...

"What's it like for you?"

"Which part?" Eve bit the bottom off her ice cream cone and starting sucking out the ice cream.

Richard took a big lick of his ice cream. His tongue and lips were already blue. "The thing in your head. Is it like an octopus?"

Eve shook her head. "It's a kraken."



Richard frowned. "A crack in what?"

"You're funny." Eve smiled at him. He reminded her of her cousin Ronny. "A kraken. It's like a giant squid or something. It's a sea monster."

"So...are you from the ocean?"

Eve's smile faded. "No. I'm from here. I've never seen the ocean. In dreams, I guess, but that's it."

"Does it..." Richard trailed off. "What does it want you to do?"

"It's hard to explain." Eve crunched the rest of her cone and wiped her face with a napkin. She looked west. It felt earlier than it was. The sunsets were getting later every day.

"The Dead Dog likes it when I hurt people." Richard was staring at his shoes. He looked mad, but Eve had already figured out that he almost always looked that way.

"Why 'dead?'"

Richard sighed. "It smells dead. Like, not gross and rotting, but...like dirt. Like a grave. I don't know. I had to bury my dog once and that's what it smells like."

Eve stared at him. "You had to bury your—"

"I don't want to talk about it!" Richard's eyes flared and Eve heard a snarl from behind her. *The Dead Dog*.

"OK. I'm sorry." She resisted wiping the blue off his face. She'd need a wet cloth for that anyway, and she wasn't going to lick the napkin like her mother always did. "The kraken wants...it doesn't really care if I hurt people. It wants to break things. Like, I see it in my dreams, I'm on a boat, like an old wooden one, and then the tentacles come up and smash it, and the sailors or whatever, they all scream and they have to watch as it all falls apart. That's what it wants."

Richard nodded slowly. "So like, yours wants to break things, and mine wants to hurt people."

"I guess."

He moved a little closer to her. They were sitting under a tree in the school grounds, out of sight of the ice cream place. Richard leaned in so he could whisper. "The Dead Dog is still hungry. I don't know what to do."

Eve put her hand on his shoulder. Richard flinched a little, but then relaxed. "I don't know, Richard. I guess you need to find someone to hurt so the Dog can eat."

"I don't want to hurt anyone," whispered Richard. "I get in trouble when I hurt people."

• • •

Mr. Coffey stood on the corner, leaning on a car, watching the block. It was alive and it pulsed and breathed and dreamed. He watched the boys — he knew their names now: Juan, Manny, and Dmonte — ride by on bikes. He waved, and Dmonte waved back, but the other two ignored him. He watched the lady on the corner weeding her garden. He hadn't caught her name yet, but he knew she had a little terrier named Billy and she was on disability; he'd heard her talking on the phone on her porch

when her check was late. He was still no closer to learning what had happened in that house, but he was enjoying his time at the school.

The Stranger tapped him. The Stranger was never insistent or rude or loud, but it was persistent. Mr. Coffey shifted his weight a bit. He thought about stealing Billy from the woman in the yard, but then he checked himself. If he stole a pet, he'd have to either kill it or keep it, and he didn't want a dog.

He heard approaching footsteps, and saw two children, a young boy and a tween girl, walking up the street. The Stranger tapped him again, and he saw who they were — Richard Fries, the little boy who'd hit his teacher with a book, and Eve Forcus, the girl who'd gotten into a fight in the cafeteria. Did they know each other? They were two grades apart and they weren't related, so it seemed unlikely.

They walked closer, and Mr. Coffey's eyes widened. *Both of them are family.* He turned and made himself invisible, waiting for them to walk by. He saw Eve glance over at the gardening woman and pull her hoodie strings tighter.

She's afraid of people, he thought. *Afraid she'll hurt them, maybe, or just afraid to talk to them.* That wouldn't do. Mr. Coffey wasn't the showiest of his Mother's Children, but even he understood that being afraid of people was no way to live.

He turned and started walking after them, slowly. He'd never fed on a sibling before, but then, he'd never had anything to teach one. But he was excited about this.

• • •

"This is my house," Richard looked glum. The house was dark, and although the weather was pleasant and sunny, the place looked empty and cold. "You want to come in? I have an Xbox."

Eve shrugged. "OK."

Richard pulled a key on a string out of his shirt and unlocked the front door.

Eve's nose wrinkled. The house smelled like cigarettes. Richard didn't seem to notice. "I just got the new *Mortal Kombat* game."

"I haven't played any of those."

"It's OK. I'll show you how to play." Neither of them noticed the door was ajar.

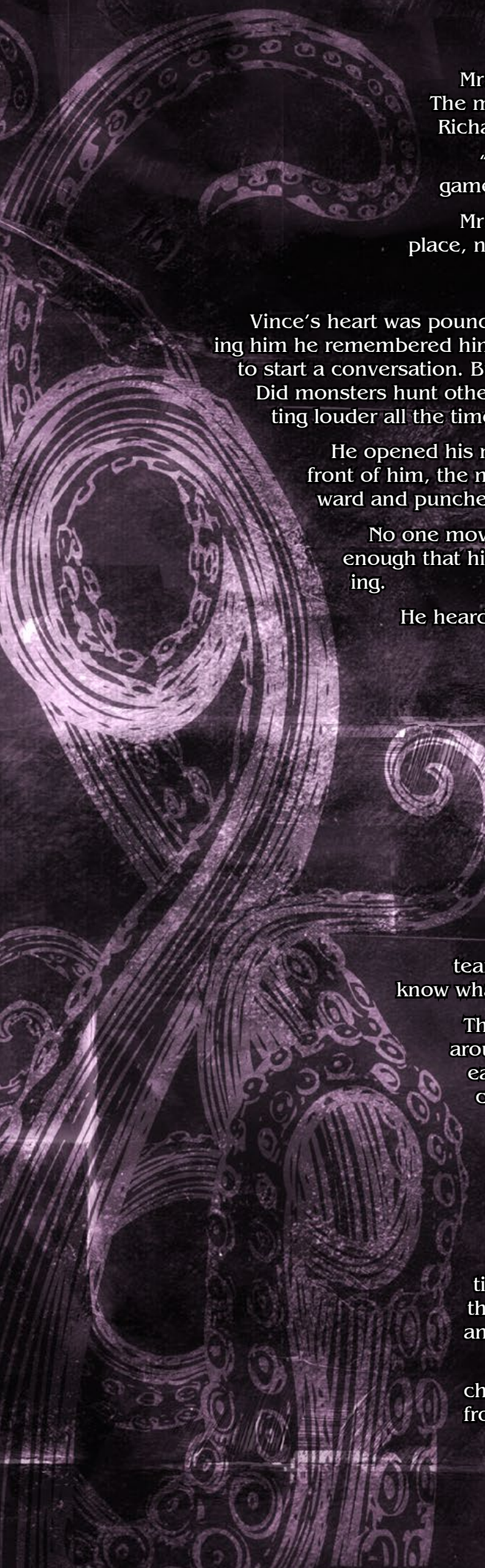
• • •

Mr. Coffey slipped up to the door and peeked in. He heard loud noise from inside the house, and then heard Richard yell "Oh, damn! You got me!" Mr. Coffey smiled, and stepped inside.

Eve and Richard were sitting on the couch playing a video game. Mr. Coffey thought he recognized it from his youth, but of course everything was so much faster and louder and more violent now. Eve's hoodie was draped over the back of the couch. Perfect. She'd miss it, she'd be upset, but she'd learn that she didn't need armor.

He grabbed the hoodie and backed away slowly, silently, the Stranger guiding his steps. He turned toward the door, and saw a man standing in the doorway.

"What are you doing?" the man asked.



Mr. Coffey cocked his head. This was a surreal turn of events. The man was, as far as Mr. Coffey could tell, just a man. He wasn't Richard's father — maybe an uncle? He looked familiar.

"Hey!" Eve and Richard were standing behind Mr. Coffey. The game was, as they say, up.

Mr. Coffey's eyes narrowed. He hadn't been hungry in the first place, not really, but he wasn't giving up on the feast.

• • •

Vince's heart was pounding. He'd been planning on catching up with Richard and telling him he remembered him from preschool assessment — flimsy, but probably enough to start a conversation. But then he'd found *another* one, this one stalking the first two. Did monsters hunt other monsters? Vince had no idea and the thunder was just getting louder all the time.

He opened his mouth to acknowledge Richard and Eve, and then the man in front of him, the man holding Eve's hoodie like it was made of gold, moved forward and punched him in the stomach.

No one moved that fast. *Nothing* moved that fast. The man hit him hard enough that his feet left the ground briefly, and he collapsed, heaving, gasping.

He heard a growl, but he couldn't lift his head up enough to see it.

• • •

Richard looked past the man carrying the hoodie and saw another man standing in his doorway. He recognized the other man from school, but he wasn't sure what he taught. He just knew that the man came and took some of his classmates out of the room sometimes, and then everything was quieter for a while and Richard got to work with Ms. Ruby, so that was nice. Mr. Luther called him Mr. Milliner.

But then the man who was stealing Eve's hoodie — *stealing a hoodie?* — jumped at Mr. Milliner and hit him. Mr. Milliner fell and started coughing like he was going to throw up, and Richard froze up. He balled up his fists and he felt tears in his eyes. He was tired, and he was hungry, and he didn't know what to do.

Then everything stopped, and the sun went out. Everything around him was dark, and he relaxed, and started to breathe easier. He felt warmth around him, like being held, like being cradled.

He's not allowed to hurt people in your house if you don't want him to, said Richard's Mother.

I don't want him to, Richard said back.

You can stop him, then.

Richard ran forward and punched the man in the leg. His tiny fist ripped through the man's pants, through his skin, through flesh and through bone. The man screamed and pain, and backhanded Richard to the floor.

The house started to creak. Richard, lying on the floor, his cheek stinging and his hand covered in blood, saw water leaking from the corners.

"That's mine," said Eve.

The man, blood streaming down his leg, looked up at her and panted. "Yeah. I was just—"

"I don't care," said Eve. "Give it back."

The man stumbled back. His leg was buckling.

"What's the matter, asshole?" Mr. Milliner said, pushing himself up the wall to standing. "You afraid of kids?"

• • •

Mr. Coffey was ready to walk out with the hoodie, wound and all. The little shit had gotten in a lucky shot, and he couldn't fault him that, but no way was this girl going to deny him his meal. He'd deal with this fucker from the school, whoever he was, later.

And then something changed. "You afraid of kids?" The words rang in his ears, and Mr. Coffey realized that yes, he was. They were terrifying. *They* were the Strangers from nightmares he hadn't had in years. They were unfeeling and blank, people without being people. Mr. Coffey backed up, dropping the hoodie, pushed past the man, and staggered out into the street. He left a trail of blood on the sidewalk, and the people stared, watching him, calling after him, asking if he needed help.

He was exposed. He was *known*. He needed to get away.

• • •

Eve picked up her hoodie from the floor. It was smeared with blood, but she'd washed it before. She helped Richard up. "You OK?"

"Yeah," he said. "Who was *that* guy?" He looked at Mr. Milliner. "What are you doing here? You OK? Did he break your ribs? He punched you right off the ground! It—"

"Yeah, I know. I'll be OK." Vince was wheezing a bit, but his stomach was feeling better. "I'm here because...I was worried about you."

Eve and Richard exchanged a look. "Why?"

Vince shrugged. "I know you have a hard time. I remember you from when you were really little, and I know you get mad."

Eve tensed up, but Richard nodded, quickly, enthusiastically. Eve thought he looked like her cousin Ronny after too much pop. "I know, but I'm OK now." He looked down at the floor. "Oh, man! We gotta clean this up before my mom gets home!" He ran off down the hall, and Vince heard cabinets opening in the kitchen.

Vince looked at Eve. "You OK, too?"

Eve pulled her hoodie on. "Yeah." She tightened the strings a little.

"You gonna help him clean up? I probably shouldn't be here."

"OK. Yeah, I'll help him."

"Listen." Vince cleared his throat. "I don't know what's—"

"You just need to be careful," said Eve.

"Yeah."

Vince turned, and walked out. Eve shut the door, and went to go help Richard clean the blood off his hands.

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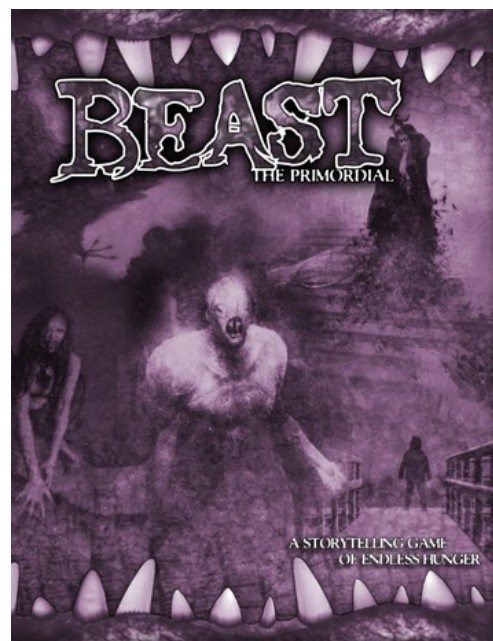
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PLAYER'S GUIDE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EVE'S HOODIE	2		
INTRODUCTION	18		
Theme and Mood	18		
More is Always Better	18		
How to Use This Book	19		
CHAPTER ONE: BEING A BEAST	22		
The Devouring	22		
The Horror	24		
Sharing a Mind	24		
Hunger Pains	26		
Feeding	26		
Atavisms & Nightmares	28		
The Lair	29		
Brood Lairs	29		
Anathema	30		
Picking Your Poison	31		
Broods	31		
Forging Bonds	31		
Merging Lairs	32		
Distant Relatives	33		
CHAPTER TWO: FAMILIES & HUNGERS	36		
Families	36		
Playing an Anakim	36		
		<i>Dreams</i>	36
		<i>Mythical Inspirations</i>	37
		<i>Horrors</i>	37
		<i>Kinship</i>	38
		<i>Inheritance</i>	38
		Playing an Eshmaki	38
		<i>Dreams</i>	38
		<i>Mythical Inspirations</i>	39
		<i>Horrors</i>	39
		<i>Kinship</i>	40
		<i>Inheritance</i>	40
		Playing an Inguma	41
		<i>Dreams</i>	41
		<i>Mythical Inspirations</i>	41
		<i>Horrors</i>	41
		<i>Kinship</i>	42
		<i>Inheritance</i>	42
		Playing a Makara	43
		<i>Dreams</i>	43
		<i>Mythical Inspirations</i>	43
		<i>Horrors</i>	43
		<i>Kinship</i>	44
		<i>Inheritance</i>	44
		Playing a Namtaru	45
		<i>Dreams</i>	45
		<i>Mythical Inspirations</i>	45
		<i>Horrors</i>	45
		<i>Kinship</i>	46
		<i>Inheritance</i>	47
		Playing a Talassii	47
		<i>Dreams</i>	47

Mythical Inspirations	47	Ravagers	64
Horrors	48	Dreams	64
Kinship	48	Mythical Inspirations	64
Inheritance	48	Horrors	65
Playing an Ugallu	49	Kinship	65
Dreams	49	Inheritance	65
Mythical Inspirations	49	Feeding Preference	66
Horrors	50	Tyrants	66
Kinship	51	Dreams	67
Inheritance	51	Mythical Inspirations	67
A Carnivorous Diet	51	Horrors	67
Changing Hunger	52	Kinship	67
Hunger Mechanics	52	Inheritance	68
When You're Ravenous	52	Feeding Preference	68
When You're Starving	53	Whispers	69
When You're Sated	53	Dreams	69
When You're Gorged	53	Mythical Inspirations	69
When You're Slumbering	53	Horrors	69
Hunger Pacing	53	Kinship	70
Setting the Table	54	Inheritance	70
Collectors	54	Feeding Preference	71
Dreams	54	Inguma	72
Mythical Inspirations	54	Nightmares of the Other	72
Horrors	55	Lives	72
Kinship	55	Stories	73
Inheritance	56	Horror	73
Feeding Preference	56	Birthright	73
Enablers	57	Lair	73
Dreams	57	Stereotypes	73
Mythical Inspirations	57	Talassii	74
Horrors	57	Nightmares of Confinement	74
Kinship	58	Lives	74
Inheritance	58	Stories	75
Feeding Preference	59	Horror	75
Nemeses	59	Birthright	75
Dreams	59	Lair	75
Mythical Inspirations	60	Stereotypes	75
Horrors	60	Whispers	76
Kinship	61	Hunger For Secrets	76
Inheritance	61	On the Hunt	76
Feeding Preference	61	The Lessons	76
Predators	62	The Families	76
Dreams	62	Enablers	78
Mythical Inspirations	62	Hunger for Transgression	78
Horrors	63	On the Hunt	78
Kinship	63	The Lessons	78
Inheritance	63	The Families	79
Feeding Preference	64		

CHAPTER THREE: UNLEASHING THE HORROR 82

Atavisms 82

<i>Alien Mindset [Inguma]</i>	82
<i>Caught in the Webs [Talassii]</i>	83
<i>Crushing Coils [Talassii]</i>	83
<i>Doppelganger [Inguma]</i>	83
<i>Enemy Within [Inguma]</i>	84
<i>Illusion of Safety [Talassii]</i>	84
<i>Lightning Strike [Ugallu]</i>	85
<i>Plague Bearer [Namtaru]</i>	85
<i>Ravenous Maw [Makara]</i>	86
<i>Shadow Stalker [Eshmaki]</i>	86
<i>Skin Deep [Namtaru]</i>	87
<i>Smashing Currents [Makara]</i>	87
<i>Terror's Friend [Anakim]</i>	88
<i>Death of Light [Eshmaki]</i>	88
<i>Vengeful Earth [Anakim]</i>	88
<i>Weakness Exposed [Ugallu]</i>	88

Nightmares 89

Common Nightmares 89

<i>The Walls Have Eyes</i>	89
<i>They Don't Love You</i>	89
<i>They Put Something In Your Food</i>	89
<i>They Walk Among Us</i>	90
<i>This Is Due Tomorrow</i>	90
<i>We're Going Down!</i>	91
<i>You Can't Dig It Out</i>	91
<i>You Don't Have a Face</i>	91
<i>You're One of Us</i>	91
<i>You Were Never Right</i>	92

Kinship Nightmares 92

<i>Checking It Twice (Wizened Changeling)</i>	92
<i>Everything You Know Is A Lie (Mage)</i>	92
<i>Evil Doll (Unfleshed Promethean)</i>	93
<i>Family is Forever (Vampire)</i>	93
<i>The Water Won't Last Forever (Hunter in Darkness Werewolf)</i>	93
<i>You Are A Meat Machine (Promethean)</i>	93
<i>You Have Foreseen This (Acanthus Mage)</i>	94
<i>You Should Fade Away (Silent Sin-Eater)</i>	94
<i>You Will Be First Against the Wall (Carthian Vampire)</i>	94
<i>Your Struggle Won't Matter (Torn Sin-Eater)</i>	94

Creating Kinship Nightmares 95

<i>The Family</i>	95
<i>The Ties That Bind</i>	95

<i>The Process</i>	95
--------------------	----

<i>You Are Running Out of Time (Vampire)</i>	96
--	----

<i>God is Testing You</i>	
---------------------------	--

<i>(Lancea et Sanctum Vampire)</i>	96
------------------------------------	----

<i>You Don't Belong Here (Harmon)</i>	97
---------------------------------------	----

<i>Final Touches</i>	97
----------------------	----

Birthrights 98

<i>Anakim</i>	98
---------------	----

<i>Eshmaki</i>	98
----------------	----

<i>Inguma</i>	98
---------------	----

<i>Makara</i>	98
---------------	----

<i>Namtaru</i>	98
----------------	----

<i>Talassii</i>	99
-----------------	----

<i>Ugallu</i>	99
---------------	----

Merits 99

<i>Direct Dial</i>	99
--------------------	----

<i>Horrorspawn</i>	99
--------------------	----

<i>Infernal Machine</i>	99
-------------------------	----

<i>Legendary Horror</i>	99
-------------------------	----

<i>Obcasus Initiate</i>	100
-------------------------	-----

<i>Primordial Cult</i>	100
------------------------	-----

Lair Merits 100

<i>Connected Lair</i>	100
-----------------------	-----

<i>Trap Room</i>	101
------------------	-----

<i>Vast Lair</i>	101
------------------	-----

<i>Well-Stocked Lair</i>	101
--------------------------	-----

Kinship Merits 102

<i>Know their Falseness</i>	102
-----------------------------	-----

<i>Feign Death</i>	102
--------------------	-----

<i>Look Between Worlds</i>	102
----------------------------	-----

<i>Sanguivore</i>	102
-------------------	-----

<i>Scent your Prey or</i>	102
---------------------------	-----

<i>Scour your Body</i>	103
------------------------	-----

<i>Step Sideways</i>	103
----------------------	-----

<i>Walk Lightly</i>	103
---------------------	-----

The Obcasus Rites 103

How to Use the Rites 103

<i>Systems</i>	104
----------------	-----

<i>Trappings</i>	104
------------------	-----

<i>Penalties and Profaned Temples</i>	105
---------------------------------------	-----

Basic Rites 105

<i>Consecrate</i>	105
-------------------	-----

<i>Horror Mask</i>	105
--------------------	-----

<i>Blood Offering</i>	106
-----------------------	-----

<i>Share your Sister's Pain</i>	106
---------------------------------	-----

Intermediate Rites 106

<i>Seek the Child</i>	106
-----------------------	-----

Night of Revels	107
Secret Ways	108
Advanced Rites	108
Heart Theft	108
Gatecraft	108
Folie à Deux	108
Epic Rites	109
Kingdom of Nightmares	109
Restore the Heart	109
Horrorspawn	109
Loyal Followers	109
The Birth of a Horror	110
Horror Creation	110
Mated Horrors	110
Horror Harvested	111
The Physical Form	111
Temporary Horrorspawn	112
Waking Nightmares	112
Anakim	112
Eshmaki	112
Inguma	112
Makara	112
Namtaru	113
Talassii	113
Ugallu	113
Little Helpers	113
Collectors	113
Enablers	113
Nemeses	113
Predators	113
Ravagers	114
Tyrants	114
Whispers	114
Creating the Spawn	114
Step One: Potency	114
Step Two: Attributes	114
Step Three: Dread Powers	114
Step Four: Apply Horrorspawn Template	115
Step Five: Advantages	115
Satiety and Feeding	115
Horrorspawn Minions	116
Increasing Potency	116
Dread Powers	116
Example Horrorspawn Creation	117
A Mind of Their Own	118
Family Attraction	118
Legendary Horrorspawn	118

Closer to the Horror	119
Death and Dying	119

CHAPTER FOUR: IN THE COMPANY OF MONSTERS

122

Community Among the Begotten	122
Seekers of the Dark Mother	122
The Athenaeum of the Dark Mother	122
The Empusae	124
The Guardian Beasts	125
The Dominae	125
Cults of the Incarnate	126
The Old Man of the Mountains	126
Our Lady of the Waters	126
The Guardian Beast	
and the Hero Who Protects Her	127
The Hungry Lover	128
The Shadows At the Edge of the Fire	128
The Culture	
of Lessons	130
Why Do Lessons Matter?	130
Teaching a Lesson	131
Lessons Learned	131
Checks and Balances	131
Family Values	131
A Framework for Feeding	132
Marko	132
Kaori	133
Lawrence	133
Cults and Cultists	134
The Cult	134
The Hungers	135
The Cultist	136
The Herald	136
The Breaking Point	136
Herald Characters	137
The Dark Mother	138
Mother Knows Best	138
Dreams Before Birth	138
Anakim	139
Eshmaki	139
Inguma	139
Makara	139
Namtaru	139
Talassii	139
Ugallu	140

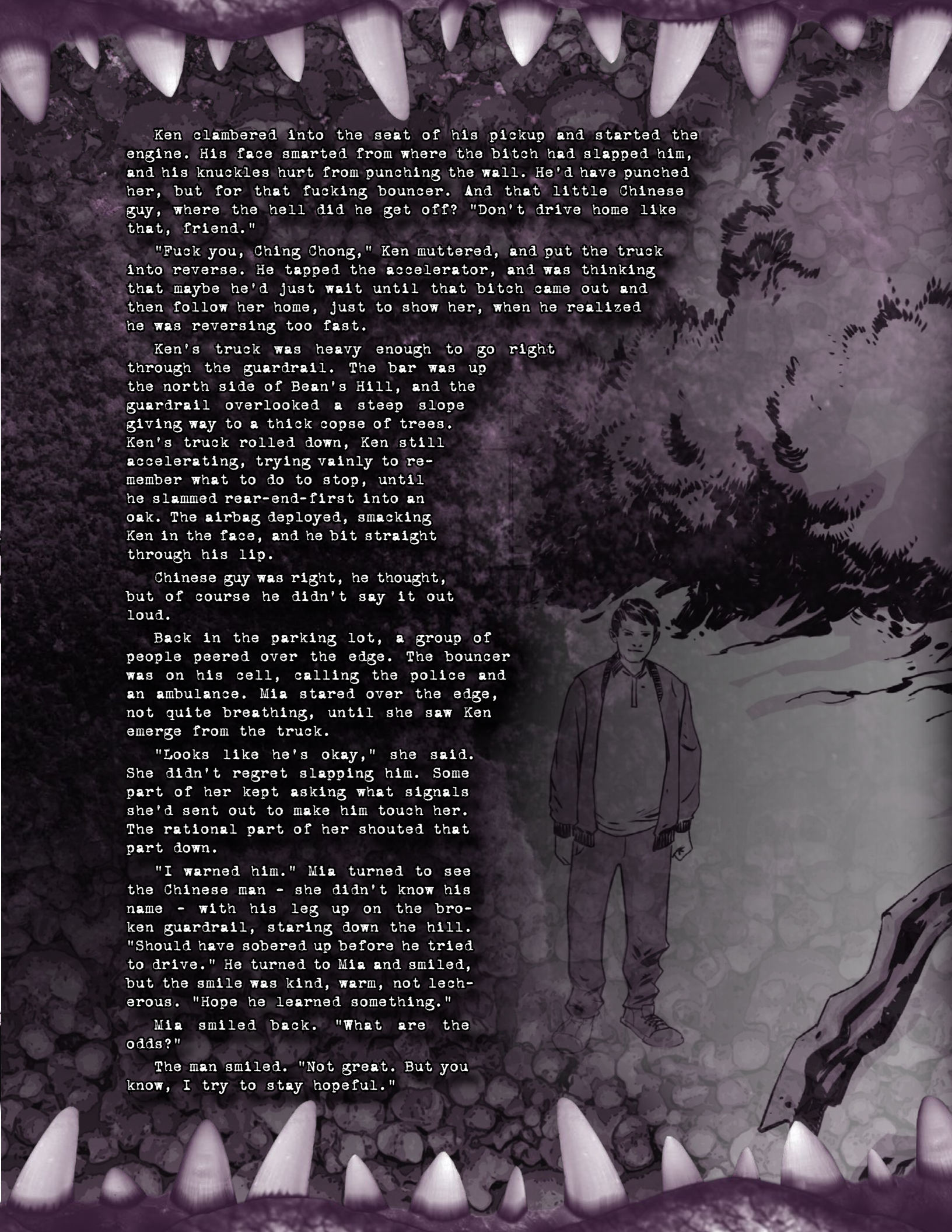
<i>The Family Tree</i>	141
Guidance	141
<i>Vivian</i>	142
<i>Ruth</i>	142
<i>Marko</i>	143

CHAPTER FIVE: THE LEGEND & THE DREAM 146

The Lair	146
Welcome Home	146
Guests and Intruders	147
Immunity	147
Minor Lair Traits	147
<i>Bad Angles</i>	147
<i>Infected</i>	148
<i>Isolated</i>	148
<i>Minions</i>	148
<i>Mirrored</i>	148
<i>Stalking Ground</i>	148
Major Lair Traits	148
<i>Bottomless</i>	148
<i>Hoard</i>	149
<i>Hunting Ground</i>	149
<i>Murmurs</i>	149
<i>Thralls</i>	149
The Primordial Dream	149
Souls, Chambers, and the Dream	149
Leaving the Lair	151

Hives and Hearts	151
The Horizons	152
<i>The Day</i>	152
<i>The Mists</i>	152
Beyond the Primordial Dream	153
<i>The Bright Dream</i>	153
<i>The Cave and The Mother's Land</i>	155
Here Be Monsters	157
<i>Actors</i>	157
<i>Dreamborn</i>	157
<i>Horrors</i>	157
Inheritance	158
Loss of Soul	158
Divergence – The Beast Divided	158
<i>Initiating Divergence</i>	158
<i>Messy Divorce</i>	159
Erasure – The Horror Eliminated	160
<i>Initiating Erasure</i>	160
<i>Almost Human</i>	160
Inversion – The Hero's Rebirth	161
<i>Initiating Inversion</i>	161
<i>Avatar of Vengeance</i>	162
Beast Triumphant – The Incarnate	162
Unnatural Selection	162
The Four Paths	162
<i>Walking the Paths</i>	162
<i>Dangers on the Path</i>	163
<i>Resonating with the Primordial Dream</i>	164





Ken clambered into the seat of his pickup and started the engine. His face smarted from where the bitch had slapped him, and his knuckles hurt from punching the wall. He'd have punched her, but for that fucking bouncer. And that little Chinese guy, where the hell did he get off? "Don't drive home like that, friend."

"Fuck you, Ching Chong," Ken muttered, and put the truck into reverse. He tapped the accelerator, and was thinking that maybe he'd just wait until that bitch came out and then follow her home, just to show her, when he realized he was reversing too fast.

Ken's truck was heavy enough to go right through the guardrail. The bar was up the north side of Bean's Hill, and the guardrail overlooked a steep slope giving way to a thick copse of trees. Ken's truck rolled down, Ken still accelerating, trying vainly to remember what to do to stop, until he slammed rear-end-first into an oak. The airbag deployed, smacking Ken in the face, and he bit straight through his lip.

Chinese guy was right, he thought, but of course he didn't say it out loud.

Back in the parking lot, a group of people peered over the edge. The bouncer was on his cell, calling the police and an ambulance. Mia stared over the edge, not quite breathing, until she saw Ken emerge from the truck.

"Looks like he's okay," she said. She didn't regret slapping him. Some part of her kept asking what signals she'd sent out to make him touch her. The rational part of her shouted that part down.

"I warned him." Mia turned to see the Chinese man - she didn't know his name - with his leg up on the broken guardrail, staring down the hill. "Should have sobered up before he tried to drive." He turned to Mia and smiled, but the smile was kind, warm, not lecherous. "Hope he learned something."

Mia smiled back. "What are the odds?"

The man smiled. "Not great. But you know, I try to stay hopeful."

INTRODUCTION

Beasts didn't ask to be what they are.

Can anyone become a Beast? Can a Horror from the deepest, surreal blackness of the Primordial Dream lunge up and Devour just *anyone*? Or does each individual Beast have an intrinsic connection to the Dark Mother, a true lineage that just waits to be unlocked?

None of the Children really know, though most of them have their theories or their particular beliefs on the matter. Many of them rely heavily on their own experience. One, Devoured against his will by an Anakim who "recognized greatness" feels that being a Beast is something thrust upon people, will they or no, and in his case, he's right. Another, waking after months of nightmares with a jubilant smile, feels otherwise. She feels that the Devouring is a way to come into one's own personal truth, and that accepting it opens the way to become a Legend.

Both of these Beasts are right. There's no wrong way to be a Beast.

THEME AND MOOD

Much like the core **Beast: The Primordial** book, the **Beast Player's Guide** relies on themes of family, acceptance, hunger, and the inherent strangeness of the Chronicles of Darkness. This book, however, lessens the focus on the supernatural Kin of the Begotten (that is, the protagonists of the other Chronicles of Darkness games) and shines the spotlight on the Beasts themselves. We don't ignore the other supernatural beings (they're still family, after all, and family is important), but in this book we pay attention to the firstborn of the Dark Mother. We look at how they interact with each other and with humanity, how they express their Hungers, and how they might grow and complete their Legends.

This book also delves into the relationship between Beasts and the Dark Mother, both in the form of Guidance (in which a Beast can gain inspiration and clarity from their Mother in moments of great distress) and the Obcasus Rites (ancient spiritual practices open to all Children, but passed along through visions and dreams). Who and what the Dark Mother is, of course, doesn't get revealed, because to a Beast, the fact that she's "real" is obvious. What's important, to a Beast (and thus to a **Beast** player) is how she interacts with the story, so that's where we've focused in this book.

MORE IS ALWAYS BETTER

Beast: The Primordial presents all of the information necessary to create characters and play through a satisfying chronicle, but many of the topics in the core book cry out for further examination. The experience of *being* a Beast, for example, or the kinds of factions and societies that the Begotten form — these are interesting topics, and worthy of more scrutiny than **Beast** had space to consider. Likewise, deeper examinations of Atavisms and Nightmares (and more options for both!) are appropriate and, moreover, fun. It's good to indulge.

One of the important themes of **Beast**, explained on p. 18 of that book, is "no neat little boxes." In this **Player's Guide**, we've applied that principle to things like the Families, Hungers, and Inheritances. The ones presented in the core book aren't the only ones. The ones presented *here* aren't necessarily the only ones. The Chronicles of Darkness don't have limits so much as unexplored borders, and the only thing that isn't true in a game of **Beast** is what you haven't established yet.

Take the skin of a cat
and the back of an eel
Then roll them in grease, —
That's the way it would feel
—Theodore Roethke,
"The Lost Son"

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

As you've probably guessed from the title, this book is mostly geared toward players of **Beast: The Primordial**. That's not to say the book is useless for Storytellers — after all, Storyteller characters can benefit from new powers as easily as players' characters, and in many places in this book, we've called out areas where the Storyteller should take note and use player actions to further a chronicle's storyline. You'll notice a definite bias toward the players throughout this book, though, all the same.

Chapter One: Being a Beast discusses what it feels like to be Begotten. We examine the Devouring, the Lair, using Atavisms and Nightmares, and being part of a brood in more detail, from the perspective of a Beast.

Chapter Two: Families & Hungers introduces two new Families: The *Inguma*, Nightmares of the Other, and the *Talassii*, Nightmares of Confinement. It also discusses two new Hungers: The Hunger for Secrets and the Hunger for Transgression. The bulk of the chapter discusses each of the Families and Hungers

in turn, providing mythological reference, the dreams they have pre-Devouring, and how they might achieve Inheritance. This chapter also includes a useful discussion on the realities of feeding, from a game mechanics perspective.

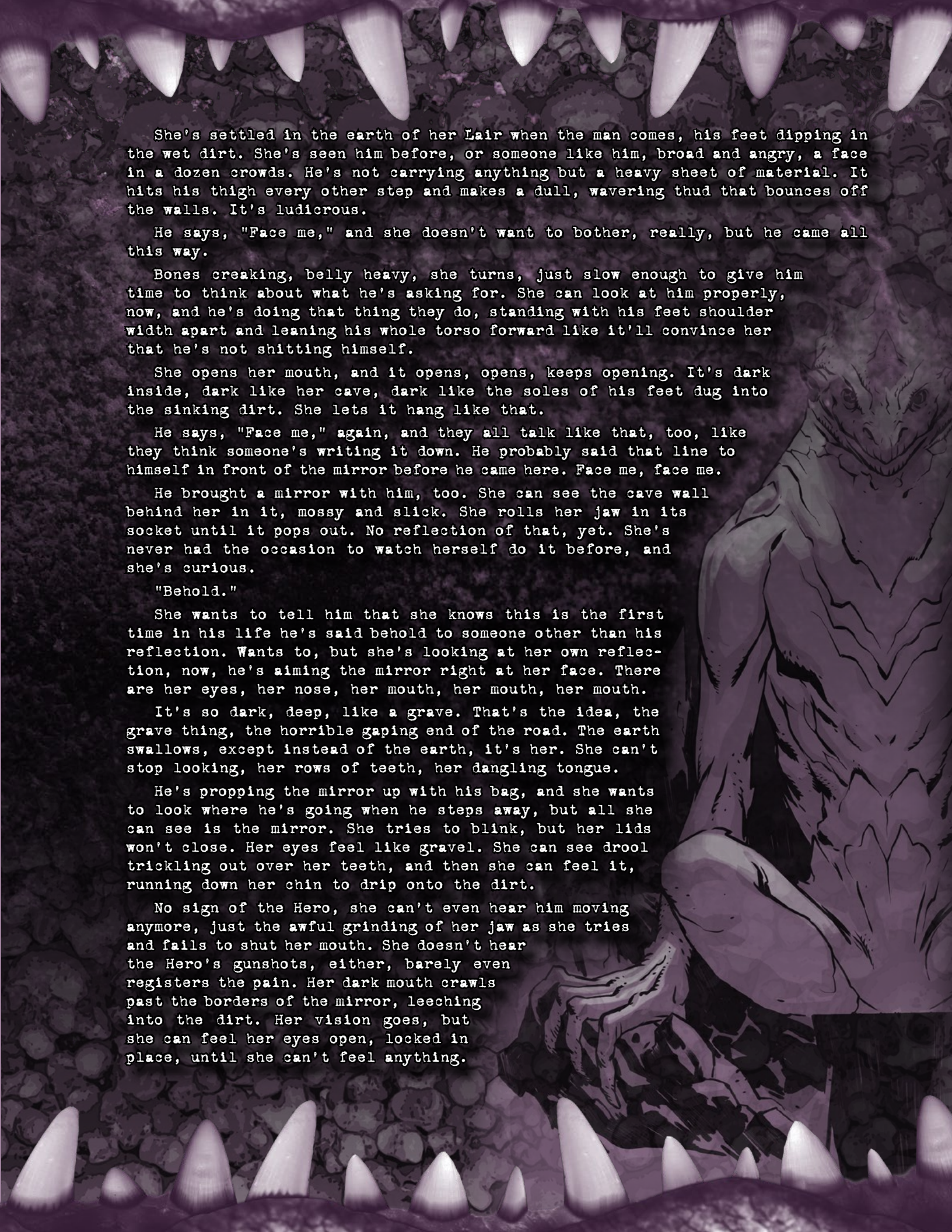
Chapter Three: Unleashing the Horror is where you'll find all the new toys. We present new Atavisms, new Birthrights, new Merits, and an expanded section on Nightmares that discusses how to build Kinship Nightmares from specific Kin acquaintances. In addition, this chapter introduces two new mechanical concepts: the Obcasus Rites (Beast-specific sorcerous rituals) and Horrortspawn (breeding smaller versions of the Horror to act as minions or soldiers).

Chapter Four: In the Company of Monsters explores the social structures of Beast society, beginning with some factions among the Begotten, and then discussing Beast-centered cults and the culture of teaching lessons while feeding.

Chapter Five: The Legend & The Dream delves into the Primordial Dream, exploring the metaphysics of this mysterious realm, how to travel there, and what characters might find if they do. It also expands on the Lair, and provides a deeper look at Inheritance, including three new expressions of the Legend: Divergence, Erasure, and Inversion.







She's settled in the earth of her Lair when the man comes, his feet dipping in the wet dirt. She's seen him before, or someone like him, broad and angry, a face in a dozen crowds. He's not carrying anything but a heavy sheet of material. It hits his thigh every other step and makes a dull, wavering thud that bounces off the walls. It's ludicrous.

He says, "Face me," and she doesn't want to bother, really, but he came all this way.

Bones creaking, belly heavy, she turns, just slow enough to give him time to think about what he's asking for. She can look at him properly, now, and he's doing that thing they do, standing with his feet shoulder width apart and leaning his whole torso forward like it'll convince her that he's not shitting himself.

She opens her mouth, and it opens, opens, keeps opening. It's dark inside, dark like her cave, dark like the soles of his feet dug into the sinking dirt. She lets it hang like that.

He says, "Face me," again, and they all talk like that, too, like they think someone's writing it down. He probably said that line to himself in front of the mirror before he came here. Face me, face me.

He brought a mirror with him, too. She can see the cave wall behind her in it, mossy and slick. She rolls her jaw in its socket until it pops out. No reflection of that, yet. She's never had the occasion to watch herself do it before, and she's curious.

"Behold."

She wants to tell him that she knows this is the first time in his life he's said behold to someone other than his reflection. Wants to, but she's looking at her own reflection, now, he's aiming the mirror right at her face. There are her eyes, her nose, her mouth, her mouth, her mouth.

It's so dark, deep, like a grave. That's the idea, the grave thing, the horrible gaping end of the road. The earth swallows, except instead of the earth, it's her. She can't stop looking, her rows of teeth, her dangling tongue.

He's propping the mirror up with his bag, and she wants to look where he's going when he steps away, but all she can see is the mirror. She tries to blink, but her lids won't close. Her eyes feel like gravel. She can see drool trickling out over her teeth, and then she can feel it, running down her chin to drip onto the dirt.

No sign of the Hero, she can't even hear him moving anymore, just the awful grinding of her jaw as she tries and fails to shut her mouth. She doesn't hear the Hero's gunshots, either, barely even registers the pain. Her dark mouth crawls past the borders of the mirror, leeching into the dirt. Her vision goes, but she can feel her eyes open, locked in place, until she can't feel anything.



CHAPTER ONE

BEING A BEAST

When I was a child I truly
loved: Unthinking love as calm
and deep
//As the North Sea.
But I have lived,
//And now I do not sleep.

—John Gardner, *Grendel*

You have power, and you have a choice.

You grew up with humans, probably thought of yourself as one of them for a little while. You've seen the way they work. You watched how people changed when they thought no one was looking, the things they did when they thought they could get away with it. Maybe you heard about the underbelly of humanity on TV, or read about it on the internet; maybe you experienced it yourself. You certainly *felt* it, crawling along the base of your skull, ripping at your eyelids while you slept.

Then, you met your real family.

Humans still look at you like you're one of them, but you know better, now. You know better than humans about a lot of things. And lucky for them, you're going to be their teacher.

All that's left is for you to choose your lesson plan.

Will you show people the worst of themselves to remind them of the best? Will you warn them what lies at the end of the dark roads they've chosen? Will you drop all pretense and just *punish*?

Whatever you decide to do, you'll need to do it soon. No matter what you believe about the potential of your prey, you're still hungry.

THE DEVOURING

It lingered at the edge of her vision every night in her dreams, but vanished the second she turned her head. Every morning when she woke, she wrote down everything she could recall in her journal, pages upon pages detailing the same encounter over and over. Stalked, never touched, but occasionally spoken to; a whisper that sent a chill down her spine and raised the hairs on the back of her neck.

"I know what you've done," the voiceless whisper always said. "I know what you dream of doing."

Her cheeks would burn with shame, every misdeed, every wrongdoing, every cruel thought turning her face crimson. It lasted until the day she didn't try looking anymore, instead simply reaching out and grabbing for the murky figure that lingered at her side, determined to drag it into sight if she had to.

"At long last," it finally spoke something new. "We meet."

Nightmares remind mortals of just how fragile their lives really are. The disturbing images and scenarios fade in the light of day, slowly but surely for most. A bad night's sleep now and then, a rough

THE UNEXPECTED DEVOURING

Not all Devourings go peacefully. If an established Beast elects to pull someone into the Devouring without preparing her first, she is at a loss as to why her nightmare has taken such a visceral turn, why she feels something is being torn out of her in a way she's never experienced before. When she meets her Horror for the first time, she has no understanding that this creature is meant to be part of her, or if she does understand, she rejects the concept. As long as she lives in rejection of her Horror, she remains asleep. Of course, the creature is rarely patient, and will often settle for making a meal of an indecisive dreamer. As long as she entertains the notion that she may be one and the same with the Horror, the two coexist (though not necessarily peacefully). In the waking world, the incipient Beast thrashes about in the grip of her nightmare. If through the course of the night she decides to join with the Horror, she awakes feeling tired but exhilarated. She recalls her experience and knows it has made her stronger. If she rejects the Horror outright, she wakes feeling hollow and exhausted, with no memory of the nightmare that affected her so gravely. She knows she has something in common with other Beasts when she meets them, but cannot place what it is. Beasts living near one of these half-Devoured humans find their Horrors target her as often as they can.

morning to follow, and they become nothing more than hazy memories.

The Begotten knows these nightmares well. She doesn't experience them. She causes them.

Humanity's collective unconscious is a crowded place. Most humans brush the very surface in their dreams, reliving images and scenarios they've already witnessed, whether or not they remember experiencing them. The Begotten have the ability to navigate the claustrophobic realms of humanity's subconscious and move deeper into the dreaming realms. Beyond the Bright Dream, the realm humanity skims while it sleeps, is the Primordial Dream. Incipient Beasts explore beyond the Bright Dream and skim this deeper level, where Beasts that have undergone the Devouring carve out their homes and stake their claims. Beyond even this layer is where the nightmares that inhabit all Beasts, present or future, stem from.

Before a Beast encounters a Horror, these activities of the denizens at the deepest level still reach out to her. She experiences them every night as she sleeps. While intense and visceral, the imagery in the nightmares is often cryptic, and it isn't until waking — shaking, screaming, and sobbing — that the message it carries becomes clear. While the nature of these nightly visions is alluring to some, prompting them to try and guide their messages and seek information on certain events or beings, others are terrified by the premonitions and wish only for them to cease.

Brushing up against the Primordial Dream alerts these Beasts to their potential brethren, and draws their established brothers and sisters to the newcomer. Dormant Beasts are beacons to those that have already endured their Devouring, especially as their nightmares pull them to the Primordial Dream. Oftentimes when an established Beast discovers a potential brother or sister, he takes her under his wing. Sometimes this includes approaching her in the material plane and mentoring her directly, but Beasts less willing to reveal themselves prefer to introduce themselves through nightmares. Hoping the sensation resonates with the prospective Beast to spark their own Devouring, they wait in the shadows to usher them through the experience of joining with their otherworldly partner for the first time.

The nature of the Devouring, and how helpful the mentor is, depends entirely on the personality of the Beast that discovers the protégé. The Dark Mother is not known for being particularly gentle with Her children, and to some Beasts this means survival of the fittest is the law of the land; if the Devouring is enough to break her, then clearly such a weak link will be of no use in the supernatural community. However, if an older Beast had a particularly harrowing Devouring and overcame it, he may be more willing to guide a new Beast through her own Devouring. For better or worse, the first time a Beast confronts the Horror that will merge with her soul she frequently has an older, wiser Beast either skulking about to observe or actively leading her through the experience.

On rare occasions, an incipient Beast is aware for his entire life that somehow, he is inherently different. He understands that he reaches deeper than everyone around him, and that his nightmares have always — and will always — hold more meaning than his friend's most vivid dreams. Driven to understand them, he delves more deeply into the messages they hold, and comes to understand on his own more about his own nature. Exploring the Primordial Dream as he sleeps, he learns to tune out the white noise around him and pick up instead on the undercurrent beneath it all, and discovers his Beastly nature on his own.

This discovery can lead to relief as often as it leads to revulsion; for some, the confirmation that they are inherently separate from the rest of humanity comes as confirmation for what they'd known all along, and the Horror they meet with upon unraveling the mystery feels like finding an old friend. For others, hoping for a religious revelation or discovery of benevolent purpose, the nature of their tormented dreams sends them fleeing to the world of humanity again. Unfortunately for those reluctant to confront the darker side of their nature, attempting to flee is hopeless, as their nightmares only grow more vivid and insistent. Once a Beast has confronted her nature, she is never free of it again; even if she is reluctant or entirely unwilling, the Horror that lurks around her waits impatiently for the day it can replace the Beast's soul.

Regardless of how she comes to the realization, every Beast experiences one moment that is exactly the same in their Devouring. In the space between being human and becoming a



ON THE DEVOURING – KYLE JESSOP. INGUMA TYRANT, MURMURS

There's a saying my father used a lot when I was kid. "You don't know what you don't know, until you know it." That's what I felt like, before it happened. I didn't know I wasn't whole, or that my nightmares were really a sign of something deeper. I had no idea about the Dark Mother, or her other children, any of it, until I was Devoured. After that, everything made sense. Why I never fit in, why that never bothered me — but why it bothered everyone else. I didn't know that I was the nightmare. Now, I want them to know.

Beast, she confronts her Horror for the very first time, seeing it this once as it stands alone. The dreamer has one final chance to flee here, though she will suffer a hollow and tormented existence without her soul if she does, and she will never escape the knowledge of what she was truly meant to be. If a particularly cruel or secretive Beast initiated her Devouring, she may become just another victim of his Hunger, should she reject her heritage. Once the Devouring has commenced, most prospective Beasts have made up their minds, and accepted their lot as Begotten.

Once she accepts what she is, she unites with the Horror that has been waiting for her, the otherworldly creature filling the empty place left behind by her Devoured soul. For most Beasts, this union amplifies truths they have known all along. Her new Hunger resonates with desires she's harbored all her life, and her Horror's form, while perhaps not the most natural thing, is a comfortable second skin. While occasionally a Beast might feel "mismatched," it is far more common that the Beast and her Horror share a synergy that has called them together. From that moment on, she is never alone, and never far from the source of her incredible new abilities.

THE HORROR

He doesn't have long to study it from the outside, but it blinks its many eyes at him in the seconds between meeting and merging. Some of them are milky white, some bloodshot and watery, others barely open under congealed pus and mucous. The sight of it turns his stomach, yet at the same time makes him giddy.

Then he isn't looking it in the eye anymore. He's looking through its eyes, his vision fractured and blurred. It doesn't disorient him the way it used to, and he stretches, feeling wounds re-open and watching the red-black blood trickle over his sickly, hairless body. It feels more like shedding an uncomfortable guise than donning one.

Joining with the Horror for the first time, the fledgling Beast learns precisely what it is that has lurked at the edge of her mind for as long as she can remember. She discovers

the wickedly curved claws of a predator on her hands, or the glittering dark scales of a serpent coating her snakelike body. Her body surges with strength of a Giant, or the overpowering presence of a Gorgon. She has senses sharper than she has ever had before, and even some new ones if her Horror possesses them. The presence that edged about before has stepped out of the shadows and greets her with curiosity, eager to learn about its new host.

SHARING-A MIND

While the process itself may not have been pleasant, meeting the Horror mind to mind can be a relief. All her life the Beast has been different; now she knows why. She has an ally that not only understands her strangeness, but embodies it. Her Horror will never judge her for the actions she takes or the dark thoughts she harbors. It encourages her basest desires and her most vile urges, pressing her to act on them. Why deny her very nature, when there are so many that need to remember that there is no way to escape pain and fear? The presence of her Horror's mind even when they are parted and in separate worlds is a comforting thing, and she views all situations both through the expectations of mortal society and the Horror's unique perspective and desires. It is happy to offer her its thoughts and opinions, eagerly pinpointing prey it covets. In return, she visits her Lair often to understand herself and her Horror more deeply, and to learn how to more fully satisfy them both.

Peacefully coexisting with her Horror may be easy for some, but even a Beast that has been thoroughly prepared and eagerly approaches his Devouring can suddenly find he was not as ready as he thought he was. He meets his Horror and is repulsed by it, feeling caged and trapped in its inhuman body and sharing its Lair. The Leviathan he was hoping to become has passed him over and he finds himself tied to a Lurker instead, lost in the endless dark of its mind and unwilling to trust something that doesn't want to be known. Its habits make no sense to him and trying to re-frame them in ways he can understand angers it; he can feel their shared body lashing and roiling with its displeasure, but having such an undefined form in the first place makes him uncomfortable and sick. The Horror cows him and he obeys only to avoid having to face it again, and to keep its voice quiet. He avoids entering his Lair unless he absolutely must, loathing the sensation of embodying his Horror's form.

When a Beast enters her Lair, the line between herself and her Horror vanishes. Their mental connection remains the same, but instead of inhabiting her human body, she finds herself in the body of her Horror. Some are humanoid and familiar enough; a Giant can simply be a giant, Leviathans extend their Family reach to the gorgeous and deadly sirens, and even Raptors can take hybrid form of a harpy. Even those who are uneasy about merging with their Horror find it easier if their form is a semi-recognizable one, though they may still wish it was something completely alien altogether, to make it easier to distance themselves from it when they are out on their own. If a Beast makes the attempt to keep herself and her Horror separate in her mind, merging with it feels unnatural and forced, more like piloting a strange suit or manipulating a puppet.



Beasts with more congruous and unified relations with their Horrors consider merging more as shedding an uncomfortable costume and taking on their true form, or feel that the body of their Horror is a natural extension of the one they are used to.

When merged, the Beast perceives the Horror's desires before her own. If she merges with her Horror while it is Gorged, she will be hard-pressed to find whatever motivation led her to entering her Lair in the first place, as it passes on its desire to do nothing but laze about. Should she enter her Lair when she is Ravenous, all rational thought is drowned beneath Hunger, and resisting the need to hunt is nearly impossible. Beasts that consider their Horrors to be separate entities have an easier time of fighting through their Horror's condition, while those that consider themselves to be one and the same quickly lose themselves within their Horror's state.

When a Beast is outside her Lair and physically separate from her Horror, she can still sense it and, in very limited, basic ways, communicate with it. This communication is less a conversation or an exchange of thoughts, and is instead a general sense of their current moods and attitudes. Beasts that are closely bonded with their Horrors usually have a sympathetic bond, where the mood of one can change the mood of the other. Beasts less in touch with their Horror may fear its mood swings, and feed its Hunger only to keep it from lashing out. Either way, the Horror's attitude affects the way the Beast sees the world from the day of her Devouring onward.

Horrors prefer to occupy places that are comfortable for

members of their Families. An Eshmaki may suddenly become a night owl, as her Horror eagerly welcomes the dark. A Makara looking for a new home may be inexorably drawn to waterfront properties. The Beast himself may not even be aware that his Ugallu Horror's influence is what colors his attitude, only that free climbing is his new favorite hobby, and nothing feels better than summiting a sufficiently high precipice and staring out at the world below him. If this change proves to be a marked shift from the Beast's old habits, he may consider the reasons for the change if it's pointed out to him, but it's not uncommon for introspective Beasts to realize that their Horror is most at home in certain areas or conditions, and seek them out. Conversely, if the Horror is feeling impatient or aggravated, the Beast feels this as well. He may or may not be able to separate his Horror's emotions entirely from his own, growing agitated as his Horror does, or he may question why his emotions would be so negative and parse out that the pristine and antiseptic environment is irritating his Namtaru Horror instead.

When it comes to separating the Horror's mood from her own, Beasts that regard themselves as two pieces of a whole have a much easier time than Beasts that consider themselves to be one and the same. This attitude comes back to the Beast's reaction to her Devouring. Was welcoming her Horror an act that made her whole, or an action that simply revealed the face of her companion? Even if a Beast fears and loathes her Horror, she may not be able to separate herself from it in her mind and believes its emotions to be hers, and a Beast who enjoys what



she is and lives to serve and feed her Horror may draw distinct lines between their consciousnesses, considering the relationship one of symbiosis instead of a single self. Over time, either of these perceptions can change in whole or in part, allowing a Beast that dreads feeding to understand that she is driven to do so by another entity, or one who can't understand why everything she feels is "echoed" to see that she and her Horror may be closer than she thought.

HUNGER PAINS

Whether she coexists peacefully with her Horror or lives in a constant state of tension and stress, the Beast always knows one thing: that her Horror Hungers, and it is her duty to feed it. Alongside understanding her Horror's emotional state, she also has an instinctive understanding of its current level of Satiety. For many Horrors, these go hand in hand, as the hungrier it gets, the more irritable it is likely to be. The level of a Beast's Satiety also determines how effective a number of her abilities are, and savvy Beasts can manipulate or maintain certain levels to best suit their needs.

When she is Gorged, the Horror rests contentedly in one of its Chambers, lazy and full. Likewise, the Beast can grow complacent, unwilling to be moved to shows of physical power. With a Gorged Horror, Beasts that resent or fear their other half are tenuously at ease, though as time passes they begin to panic again. The longer it is merely Sated, the more irritated the Horror gets, driving the Beast to feed even if she has no real need to. The Beast may indulge her Horror or resist it, depending on opportunities that arise or how much she fears her Horror. At Starving, the Horror is no longer willing to be ignored. It Hungers and prowls its Lair, often driving the Beast's mood into one of unease, where she is easily irritated and provoked. Here, she is more likely to find any small annoyance enough of a justification to feed, and her Horror eagerly agrees. Her Atavisms are most useful to her in this condition, and the Horror is agitated and close to the surface.

When a Beast is Ravenous, she loses all rational thought. The "voice" of the Horror is too loud, and it demands to be fed. If she is hosting a Ravenous Horror, the Beast is always distracted and on edge, and responds with aggression to the slightest provocation. If through some circumstance, the Beast does fall into the Ravenous condition and cannot feed, her Horror can grow impatient and decide to take it upon itself to feed. While it's a convenient method for those reluctant to act on their Hunger, it isn't without its repercussions. The Beast follows her Horror in her dreams as it stalks prey, and is forced to watch the nightmares it inflicts in the hopes of gleaning sustenance. While they may or may not disturb her anywhere near as much as they do their victims, every night that the Horror feeds on its own robs her of any meaningful rest, and she wakes feeling just as exhausted and spent as she did before sleeping.

Divided Beasts fear this state more than any other, and instead long for the very opposite end of the spectrum. If a Beast feeds enough that her Horror is completely satisfied, it Slumbers peacefully. Many Beasts avoid this state if they can avoid it. Having their Horror inactive severs their connection

to it, and a Beast that enjoys being in tune with her Horror finds herself lost and vulnerable without it. While this might be preferable to those that resent having such a monstrous thing encroaching on their consciousness, it also means they must feed enough to attain it, and as the Horror gets pickier and pickier the more it eats, the actions they must take weigh heavily on their consciences. For Beasts of either variety, things end up mostly being a balancing game, where the goal is to find and maintain the happy balance between what they're willing to do to feed their Horror, and how lazy or active they wish it to remain.

FEEDING

"Have you ever starved...?" She murmurs it into her victim's ear, and feels her Horror thrash as it anticipates its meal. "Have you ever felt hunger snaking its way throughout your body, its tendrils worming their way under your skin, wracking you with almost constant pain...and just when you think you've suppressed it, it twists..." She accentuates the word by wrenching on his arm again, eyes lighting as his shoulder parts from its socket with an audible pop, leaving him screaming into the towel stuffed in his mouth. "It spikes and throbs and does all it can to remind you of just how strong it can be. Oh, yes, hunger is a terrible and powerful thing..." For good measure, she pulls his other shoulder out of its socket as well. "Just look what it's made me do."

The Horror has the tools it needs to feed itself when circumstances are dire. When it is Ravenous or Starving, it reaches out through the Primordial Dream, lashing out against the Beast that is unwilling or unable to feed it as usual. It's rare that a Beast allows her Horror to go hungry unless she absolutely must, especially as the condition her Horror is in directly affects her attitude and experiences in her everyday life. Through this connection, the Beast is always acutely aware of the state her Horror is in, and can sense exactly how much longer the Horror can go before losing Satiety naturally, as well as just how much it will change her Horror's temperament to sacrifice Satiety to power her abilities.

As the Beast feeds, the Horror is drawn closer to the surface for a few moments. It relishes in the satisfaction of fulfilling its purpose and revels in its meal. These moments are the closest a Beast will be to her Horror without merging with it in her Lair, as it rides close to the surface during the hunt and feasts when the meal is finally ready. Even the most reluctant of Beasts can't help but take sick pleasure in the act of feeding, even if it's only because their emotions are so closely tied to their Horror's state of being.

The way a Beast enjoys feeding — reluctantly, enthusiastically, hesitantly — ties directly into how willing he was to face his Devouring, and the relationship he has with his Horror. The appetite of the creature that has replaced his soul now governs his life, and his moral compass has to shift to help these changes fall in line. For some, the shift is drastic and difficult to rationalize, while others eagerly embrace the new parameters, having been waiting all their lives for an excuse to shed the societal dictates of right and wrong.

The initial shift aside, a Beast's willingness to transgress such societal rules is often malleable. The lower his Satiety, the more insistent his Horror, frequently resulting in a temporary willingness to forgo all but his most ironclad morals. Those more in line with their Horror's desires may be willing to commit atrocious acts without any qualms regardless of how well-fed he already is, but when push comes to shove and a Beast feels forced to cross lines he has sworn never to even get close to, he may for a time resent his Horror and the way it refocuses the lens through which he sees the world. He may even feel the need to repent, and spend his spare time and energy giving back to his community. The Horror, depending on how well fed it is, can react with anything from disinterest to vitriol. Lacking any known form of conscience or ethics, it sees no use in petty attempts to improve itself, caring only for when and where it will get its next meal.

While Beasts often try to rationalize their feeding, they all learn one thing early on: the Horror doesn't care. It feels no need to justify its hunger, suffers no guilt from sating itself, and has no qualms about tormenting the same target again and again until he is nothing more than a broken husk. The Horror only hungers and pushes the Beast to do whatever she must. It has no context to even consider consequences as they relate to the Beast's life, leaving the Beast herself to figure out how to feed without getting caught, or suffer whatever punishment she might incur.

Of course, this is usually why a Beast tries to direct her Horror, feeding it herself. If the Horror finds a reliable source to keep itself fed and returns there again and again, it may very well give rise to a Hero, who inevitably targets the Beast. Even then, the Horror has little care, relying on the Beast to be able to fend for herself. This kind of repeated feeding can also reveal the Beast's true nature to those close to her, resulting in broken relationships and isolation. While the Beast may feel these losses keenly as her social network collapses, the Horror has no sympathy. The Primordial Dream is far from a peaceful place, the strongest are the ones that survive, and it has no purpose for a host without the will, strength, and drive to live.

Precisely because the Horror is so insistent, almost every Beast comes to a point at which she forgoes caution, or loses her

temper and feeds impulsively. She may also feel so secure in her feeding that she approaches it casually, nibbling here and there as she desires, even if she doesn't strictly need to. No matter the situation, Beasts inevitably find themselves in situations where they forgo caution or throw it to the winds, and every once in a while, the repercussions are highly unexpected.

The actions Beasts commit in order to feed are, generally speaking, abhorrent in one way or another. In order to remind people why society has rules and laws (written or unwritten), someone has to be the example of what happens when they aren't followed. While Beasts choose who gets to be the example, they risk sacrificing everything they have if they are caught or found out. Most families aren't willing to harbor a member who tortures others for fun or seeks to destroy everything he touches. Tyrants often lose friends to their obsession with their alpha status, alienating those around them with their attitude, and the law obviously punishes anyone caught in the acts of assault, destruction of property, theft, or worse. Balancing feeding their Horror with maintaining their mundane life is a more difficult tightrope to walk for some than others, but all Beasts face some unintended consequences or well-deserved backlash at some point or another. While they may mourn or lash out further, the Horror continues to prowl its Lair, uncaring and only demanding more.

With the Horror railing to be fed and acting out when denied, a Beast must confront the darkest aspects of themselves and decide how willing they are to embrace them. Once she's experienced her Devouring, there is no ridding herself of the Horror, and the sooner she can come to terms with what she must do to keep it fed, the more quickly she can settle into the habits and conditions that allow her to feed on her own terms. Even the most reluctant Beast generally prefers to actively hunt and feed than let his Horror go hungry enough to hunt on its own, out of fear of revealing himself and the dread of what it will do unchecked.

What most Beasts eventually come to realize (or believe) is that their need to feed does not inherently make them bad people. Some Beasts choose to only feed on those they perceive to deserve the experience, doling out a kind of nightmarish vigilante justice. This kind of Beast finds the most decadent and out-of-touch in-

WHAT GOES AROUND

It was trivial thing, a knickknack really, but it made his fingers itch. He hadn't seen any cameras coming in, and the only clerk was busy talking to someone clearly interested in a larger piece across the shop. It was valuable, but small enough to fit in his pocket. He thinks he's gotten away with it, right up until the cops are at his door with a warrant for search and seizure, and claim his entire collection.

She hated losing her temper, and her Horror had been champing at the bit for days. The combination of the two meant that the poor panhandler who had made the mistake of touching her ankle as she passed didn't have much of a hand anymore, and certainly seemed like he might never touch another soul again as long as he lived. The problem was her parole officer, who had witnessed the entire thing from the coffee shop across the way.

He'd been doing his sister a favor the last time she'd broken up with her girlfriend. The woman was a type-A control freak, and had made for a delicious meal once robbed of every bit of her power. Of course, it was one year to the day when they announced they were dating again, and the daggers she's glared at him meant she certainly hadn't forgotten.



dividuals to bring down to earth, doing everything in her power to adjust their perspective to more closely match the realities of life. Whether a Ravager removing all security from an expansive private estate or a Whisper unearthing an expansive network of unrepentant embezzlement, the Beast assuages her lingering conscience by punishing the most awful of monsters — those humans that gladly elevate themselves at the expense of others, without even a supernatural excuse. This attitude toward feeding is just that — a Beast does not need to Hunger for Punishment to enact it while he feeds.

On the other side of the spectrum are those who were merely waiting their whole lives for a reason to act on their darkest desires, kept tenuously in check by the humdrum goings-on of everyday life. Simmering just below the surface is the desire to lash out, and with her soul replaced by her Horror, she finally has a reason to do so. The Horror merely becomes the justification for her actions, and she keeps herself sane by telling herself that without it, she would never have begun acting on her impulses. These Beasts don't care who they feed on, usually claiming that their Horror guides them to the victims it most desires. As they enjoy committing the acts that the Horror can feed on, they also prefer not to allow it to roam on its own. Getting her hands dirty is the highlight of the Beast's week.

Though rare in communities of the Begotten, some Beasts are so unwilling to give up the last shreds of their humanity that they refuse to feed on anyone purely human. Feeding on supernatural creatures is no more or less nourishing than feeding on mortals, but tend to take more finesse and observation for the feeding to be effective. Vampires may not cherish the same things as mortals, or be repulsed by the same imagery; werewolves themselves are predators, and might not fear being stalked if they have their pack at their back. A Beast can also unleash her Horror on another one of the Begotten, though such an act is usually a risky and desperate operation, and seldom performed by anyone other than an Apex cowing a challenger to his position or a Beast attempting to gain enough notoriety to reach the status of Incarnate.

ATAVISMS & NIGHTMARES

He takes a breath in, longer and deeper than should be possible for a human. It isn't his lungs he's filling; the dragon thrums under his skin, its belly growing hot. He spreads his arms and for a moment they are leathery black wings, and when he opens his mouth to scream, white-hot flame jets out with his voice. It's been a dry summer. The house catches almost instantly. He gives them a few precious moments to realize precisely what's going on before he seals the doors, slinking away into the shadows to watch the place burn to the ground.

The Horror is the source of all a Beast's abilities. When she is merged with her Horror, a Beast can sense all of its untapped potential, and begin to learn to bring bits of it back to the mortal world with her when she leaves her Lair and separates from it again. The Nightmares and Atavisms a Beast intrinsically knows after her Devouring are the first and strongest impressions a

Beast has of her Horror, and the nightmares she experienced most often before her Devouring.

Calling upon her Atavisms draws the Horror closer to the Beast, momentarily warping the mortal world and opening it briefly to the Primordial Dream. The Horror's power fills her enough to manifest and affect the physical world around her. Her body surges with the physical strength of her Horror, or radiates its irresistible and deadly allure. The more time she spends in her Lair, the more it truly feels like her home, and the more her Horror's form becomes an extension of her own. The closer she grows to her Horror in this way and the more she learns about it, the more she can draw upon its abilities. Learning a new Atavism is a moment of triumph for a Beast, as she learns better how to dominate her environment. Her body surges with her new power when she discovers it, and beneath her skin she can feel her Horror shift and change to reflect its new capabilities.

When using her Atavisms, the Beast invites aspects of her Horror into her physical form for a short time, almost the reverse of when she merges with it upon entering her Lair. When her Atavisms are active, she is more open than ever to her Horror's desires. Unleashing her abilities when her Satiety is low may give her access to a more devastating effect, but in drawing upon her Horror, she pulls its desires closer to the surface of her own mind. After using an Atavism, particularly if she spends Satiety to augment it, or if her Satiety is already low, the Beast cannot get her Hunger out of her head until she feeds. While this doesn't derail her from her intentions entirely or prevent her from acting rationally, she displays a marked shift toward her baser desires.

Inflicting Nightmares is a slightly different experience, drawing less directly on the Horror and instead plunging the mind of her target into the Primordial Dream. The Beast calls on the subconscious fears shared by all of humanity and brings them to the forefront of her victim's mind. Having suffered these nightmares every night until her Devouring, she commands them now, unafraid of the twisted scenes now that she has walked the landscapes where they form. Learning new Nightmares, while useful, is a largely uncomfortable experience for most Beasts. Accustomed to being the ones that teach lessons, learning new ones places them in unusually vulnerable positions. In order to truly command a Nightmare, the Beast must understand every facet of it. To do so, he must suffer through its effects until he can pinpoint not only the reason humanity reacts to it so strongly, but how his Family can express it in a meaningful way. A Talassii writhes uncomfortably at the sensation of ants and scorpions swarming over her skin; she struggles against them in vain until she can focus enough to shift the vision in her favor, turning the swarm into spiders. They are her people, capturing their prey in webs and keeping them until she deems them useful. An Anakim hides in darkened corners, night after night, trapped with a vicious predator, until he realizes he is a Giant. He is never trapped with anything. They are always trapped with him.

For many Beasts, learning new Nightmares is an experience that closely relates to their Devouring. Only by confronting and overcoming the experiences that torture them they learn enough to unleash it on others.

ON USING ATAVISMS – GINA HORNE, UGALLU PREDATOR, SPEAKS

I used to be afraid of falling. I dreamt about it every night, watching the ground come closer and closer, screaming the whole way. Now though, I know better. I don't ever have to fall again. Now, I have wings, and I fly. Just a thought and I soar, as naturally as breathing. It's not as good as being the vulture, but it's the closest thing to it. Going to meet it is one thing, but pulling it out where others can see? It's worth it just for the looks on their faces before I can sink my talons in.

Beyond the Nightmares a Beast can learn from her kin or by exploring the Primordial Dream, other members of the supernatural community spread their own brands of terror. As she spends time with other creatures, and especially if she creates Family Ties with others, her Horror begins to reflect the company she keeps (see p. 92 for a more in-depth discussion of such Nightmares). A Beast among a coterie of vampires learns precisely how to sow seeds of betrayal and mistrust to feed her Ravager Horror. A Whisper learns from the same group how far the power of silence goes to keep others talking, and just how much people will reveal to avoid silence. As the Beast learns from her companions and witnesses them using their own power, she expands her understanding of what fear truly is, drawing her closer to her Horror and the other members of her supernatural family.

THE LAIR

She paced each Chamber with deliberate steps, reflecting on the moments that created them. The shriek of terror that crystallized the little patch of woods; the desperate, defeated sobs that formed the abandoned warehouse on the outskirts of town; the pleas for mercy from the local bully that had cemented her own bedroom. Each was a badge of honor for her, a mark of pride. She considered them trophies, something else to collect. Eventually, she promised herself, she would have a sprawling masterpiece of a Lair. A Chamber on each and every continent, spreading her reach wide. One day, she swore, the entire world would be hers.

A Beast's Lair tells her story, illustrating her greatest moments of triumph. The Chambers she collects either relate directly to her personal conquests, or resonate strongly enough with her personal ideals that she has decided to take them as her own. Once she has claimed a Chamber, she may use it to travel to any other location she has claimed, using her Lair as the path. While she may remove and add Chambers as she outgrows or requires them, the very Heart of her Lair remains constant. With no corresponding location in the physical world,

her Heart is the ideal environment for her Horror, unique and perfectly suited to its needs. As long as the Heart stands, a Beast can rebuild the rest of her Horror's home, but if the Heart is destroyed, the Lair crumbles with it. For more information on creating and utilizing Lairs, see p. 146.

When a Beast is set on sating her Hunger and finds a victim, the psychological trauma that ensues is almost always enough to reach the Primordial Dream. Chambers are created when characters reach breaking points, and Beasts strive to push their victims to their limits and beyond. The Horror supplanting a Beast's soul seeks nothing more than to torment humanity in order to satisfy itself, and the Chambers such torture creates are helpful side effects. Of course, just because a Beast creates a Chamber doesn't mean she's obligated to bring it into her Lair; she may have had to act in desperate self-defense and has no interest in claiming the location she was caught in, or the Chamber site might be uncomfortably close to a site that hosts an existing Chamber that belongs to the Lair of an enemy. As Beasts can exit their Lairs and enter the physical world at the location of any of their Chambers, she might consider having an adversary so close to her own door less than ideal.

If a Chamber does go unclaimed, any Beast that happens upon it can take the space as his own. To do so, he must first determine how the Chamber was made in the first place. While Beasts know instantly when they've come upon such a place, it takes time to determine how it came to be. As he studies the scene, he collects clues that help him parse out the events that took place, and his Horror begins to accept or reject the space. An Beast that finds a Chamber at the edge of a cliff might find signs of the struggle that took place there – clawed earth, scraps of cloth caught in the undergrowth, dried blood and a fingernail at the precipice – and choose to cross over to the Primordial Dream, where he hears the echoing screams of the unfortunate man that fell, and feels the grim satisfaction of the one that pushed him. An Ugallu might elect to add the Chamber to her Lair, situated as it is at the edge of a drop off, where she can observe her victims from on high, where an Eshmaki might recoil from such an open space. Of course, regardless of how well or poorly it suits a Beast's Family, the Horror can reject a location outright and refuse to allow it as part of its stalking grounds, regardless of what the Beast's first impressions are. In these cases, it may also take such an affront to the Chamber itself that it seeks to punish whoever led to its creation.

BROOD LAIRS

While Lairs are deeply personal to Beasts, being both the place where they are most powerful and most vulnerable, even the Begotten recognize the strength that comes with numbers. When Beasts form friendships, they can choose to join their Lairs, strengthening both their bonds with each other and their defenses against intruders. Joining Lairs isn't something that can be done casually. The Beasts that wish to do so must form some kind of meaningful relationship before the connection will take. As even sharing a Burrow between two Lairs allows the respective Horrors access to each other's homes, the link



can be used to infiltrate and attack another Beast where they can't flee. It's for this reason that such connections are carefully considered before they are made, but a particularly determined and willful Beast can attempt to force his way into another's Lair by muscling their way through the Primordial Dream.

Beasts that share Lairs are usually tight-knit groups, especially if they share one or more Chambers. Brood Lairs offer more opportunities for protection, as the grouping carries Traits from every Beast; as a general rule, if Beasts know each other well enough to share Lairs, they are also willing to offer immunity to any Traits their associates may still be affected by. Beasts that do share Lairs often share a few rules of etiquette. Granting anyone unimpeded access to the Lair is something to be discussed before it is granted, as access to one Lair means access to the entire brood. Likewise, even allowing someone in for a brief jaunt or visit is generally preceded by some kind of warning, unless the circumstances grant absolutely no opportunity to inform the rest of the brood. If any one Beast disregards the spoken or unspoken rules of the brood, or violates them too egregiously even once, her fellows may choose to collapse the Burrows or Chambers that connect their Lairs to hers and leave her one her own...or, if she has pushed them too far, they may take advantage of their connection to teach her a lesson.

When threatened in her own Lair, a solid strategy employed by a number of Beasts is to simply collapse the Burrows that lead to the Chamber their attacker is currently in. While this takes a toll on the Beast, it traps the would-be assailant and protects the rest of the Lair from harm. In shared Lairs, Beasts that feel threatened by an intruder may shut off their own Lairs, or band together to exclude a single member. The degree of desperation with which the Beast reacts is of course directly proportional to how dire she perceives the threat to be; while having someone inside her Lair and potentially threatening her Horror directly is a disturbing thought, Beasts also know that the surety with which they can traverse their own homes works decidedly in their favor, and that the Traits that offer them no hindrance can be potentially fatal to anyone that must suffer them.

All Chambers, regardless of how public or private they are, are subject to the influence of the local Apex. When an Apex is challenged, all Beasts can feel the disturbance in the Primordial Dream as it vacillates between the influences vying for supremacy. When an Apex is unseated, the fallout is felt far and wide. The uniting feature of the hive shifts as the new Apex sends his own power rippling through his new territory. If a Beast is ousted as the Apex, all the Begotten with access to the hive feel their Horrors react to the shift. Not unlike a disturbance that sets a flock of birds in flight, the grinding shift as the Primordial Dream adjusts to accommodate the new alpha agitate the Horrors that are familiar with the area. The Beast can feel that her Horror is irritated and can sense that something has changed in the dreamscape, but cannot pinpoint any changes until she communes with her Horror or enters her Lair. If she has claimed one of the hive Chambers as her own, she can immediately use Family Resemblance on the new Apex (as described on p. 88 of *Beast*), though she may not know exactly who or where the Apex is.

If the position of Apex is passed from one Beast to another, Beasts from the same Families as the current and ex-Apex experience an additional layer of awareness. Unrelated Beasts simply know that power has changed hands and the hive Trait has changed, but the Family of the deposed rail against the sensation of such loss, while that of the victor roars in sympathetic triumph.

ANATHEMA

"Agatha, lie down."

I find myself lying down. I wiggle my fingers, trying to bring out the claws, but they aren't coming. I force myself up to standing, but he just gets louder.

"I said, lie down, Agatha." He punches the name. He shouts it without shouting. I lie down.

My name isn't Agatha.

A child overhears his parents arguing. One makes a cutting remark about the other, cruel, designed to hit low. Days later, the child repeats it in a fit of frustration — he doesn't know what it means, doesn't have the context or experience to understand why it's painful for his parent to hear, he only knows that he's angry and those words were designed specifically to *hurt*.

Heroes don't understand the power that allows them to place Anathema. They don't even realize there's a power that they're tapping into. Anathema are woven into the mythology Heroes have created for themselves, marking Beasts as inherently evil, destined to be destroyed. In reality, Heroes draw their power from the same well that Beasts do, but without any strategy or conscious control.

It's that complete lack of awareness that makes Anathema so viscerally repellent to Beasts affected by them. A Hero in a Beast's Lair is already trespassing, profaning a sanctuary, but for that same Hero to turn the Beast's own source of power against them is the ultimate insult to injury. Beasts spend their lives learning about the Primordial Dream and figuring out how to channel its powers in new, intricate ways, and Heroes stumble in and swing the Dream's power like a blunt instrument — and it aims just as true for them as it does for the Beast.

Perhaps the worst thing about Anathema is their sheer arbitrariness. Chances are, they have nothing to do with the Beasts themselves. Instead, they fit the narrative of the Beast that the Hero has created, hammering them into the Hero's story. A Beast might enjoy spending afternoons walking in the rain, only to find that water suddenly melts their skin. They might discover their weak underbelly just as the Hero drives a weapon into it, their own body suddenly unfamiliar as it betrays them.

Anathema are like a vampire's stake to the heart, if the stake to the heart was dreamed up by hunters who went on to insist it had always worked that way. A Hero can unconsciously project an Anathema onto the Beast they're hunting, and through the Primordial Dream and the Hero's own unfaltering belief in their own subjective truth, the Anathema becomes real.

Anathema are never permanent, but depending on the Beast's Satiation, they can be deadly. A Gorged or Slumbering Beast is too removed from her Horror to be affected by a new Anathema

from an attacking Hero, keeping her relatively safe. A Sated Beast, however, has a resting but nonetheless active Horror, leaving her inhuman enough for a new Anathema to take hold. If a Beast becomes Gorged while already under the influence of an Anathema, her Horror grows increasingly lethargic, and the effects of the Anathema become even more potent. The closer a Beast grows to Ravenous or Starving, the more alert the Horror becomes, and the more motivated it will be to fight off the Anathema's effects so that it can feed properly — in many cases, the only way for a Beast to permanently rid herself of an Anathema is to starve her Horror into action or feed it until it “sleeps off” the Anathema.

It's in the middle ground between resting and feeding that a Beast is in the most initial danger, and though Heroes don't have the language to put a name to it, they recognize it when they see it. The moment of weakness is part of the Anathema narrative, after all — the Hero believes that the Beast must let her guard down enough to expose a pre-existing weakness, but in reality, the Beast is letting her guard down to allow a weakness to take hold in the first place.

PICKING YOUR POISON

Your Storyteller will generally come up with Anathema when your character encounters Heroes ready to wield them. But if you need to choose an Anathema for your Beast, concentrate less on things your Beast would fear, and more on things a Hero would *think* your Beast would fear. Sometimes the two align, but often, the way a Beast perceives herself is far removed from the way she's viewed by those who vilify her. An Eshmaki might be perfectly comfortable in the sun until, based on the dreams of darkness she brings, a Hero decides she must have an aversion to light — suddenly, even the glow from a candle whites out her vision.

In addition to the belief of the Hero, Anathema prey on Beasts' sudden, oppressive awareness of them. The moment a Hero places an Anathema on a Beast, the Beast understands exactly how it works, and what it means for them. Beasts feel Anathema like a deep, uncomfortable twist in their gut, or a physical weight making it difficult for them to act in a way the Hero doesn't want them to. It's a spiritual restraint, as impossible to ignore as shackled wrists.

BROODS

“I don't know.” Tybalt shuffled his feet. “I don't feel like I belong there, not anymore. The Arrow — that's what it's called, the Adamantine Arrow — put all these new rules in place and now...” he trailed off.

“It's not fun anymore.” Greer nodded. “I see that.” He was picking apart his sandwich again. Tybalt wondered why he bothered making them, but the others kept buying bread. It was a weirdly appropriate metaphor for the group's dynamic.

“Maybe it's not supposed to be fun,” said Zee. She was looking out the window with binoculars. Tybalt thought she looked a little flushed, but knew better than to ask what she was looking at. “Maybe it's supposed to be work.”

“Yeah,” said Dory. “From everything you've said, that's more like a job. You go to them, you go to work. You want to hang out and have fun, you come to us.”

Tybalt smiled, and he could swear the room darkened a little. “Fair enough.”

The world is not a kind place for the villains of its stories.

From the moment they're Devoured, Beasts are hunted. They struggle to build trusting relationships when humans, by and large, buy into the narratives of Heroes. Even those few humans with whom Beasts can connect ideologically would never fully understand a Beast's life in the Dream. No human will ever feel the all-encompassing love of the Dark Mother; no human could fathom the depth of the Hunger and the drive to Feed. Human minds are limited in scope, and Beasts can rarely relate in any fulfilling way.

Beasts may no longer be human, but they keep the instincts of social animals. In a practical sense, they have enemies everywhere, and there is safety in numbers. Another drive, often more powerful, is to find a companion. There's no replacement for someone who knows exactly what a Beast means when she grumbles about her restless Horror, who laughs at her retelling of a nightmare that took an unexpected turn. Even her supernatural cousins can only understand so much. Beasts can only fully share themselves with other Beasts.

Just as they're attuned to threats, Beasts recognize potential allies on sight. When it comes to other Beasts, even sight is an afterthought — Beasts can sense one another before they ever meet by the ripples they leave in the Primordial Dream. A Beast always knows when another of their kind is nearby, and barring any pre-existing conflict, they usually seek each other out, if only to share news or warn one another of local dangers.

Some Beasts are content to pass one another in the night, but others form deeper bonds. These bonds transcend friendship; Beasts are siblings, all children of the same loving Mother, and the ties that bind them are for life.

FORGING BONDS

Once two Beasts become aware of each other, they feel a natural pull to interact. This stems mainly from their hyper-awareness of disturbances in the Primordial Dream — they're drawn to investigate anything that might threaten the relative safety of their Lair. Whether they realize it or not, Beasts keep an eye out for other Beasts as much as they do Heroes and other sources of danger.

Of course, Beasts who are aware of one another aren't guaranteed to get along. Some Beasts can't resist a fight, and some are just happier alone. But for those who find that they connect, their instinctual pull toward one another begins to strengthen and solidify. The longer they spend together, the more entwined they become, until it's difficult for them to imagine life apart.

Beasts have no good way to predict which of their siblings they'll really connect with. Some had similar lives before their Devourings, and connect over their human memories and motivations. Others have similar Horrors, and find satisfaction in the same hunting grounds. Still others find that their Legends mesh, and that they can help each other toward a common goal. Two Beasts could start a lasting bond over nothing more than



a clever conversation or a shared enemy in a fight, as long as each of them finds something in the other that they appreciate.

Broods are built from these connections, nurtured over time. Some broods click right away, falling into orbit as though they were always together; other broods must share space for months, even years, before they start to feel the necessary deep, familial affection for one another. Part of the process is simply getting to know each other, learning how to coexist as a unit, and making rituals and inside jokes, but the most transformative step in forming a brood takes place in the Primordial Dream, when the members' Lairs begin to intertwine.

MERGING LAIRS

To a Beast, merging Lairs feels like rewriting her genealogy and gaining a blood relative, like sharing all of her secrets with another person and knowing they'll keep every single one. It's not an entirely conscious process; if a Beast wants to deliber-

ately keep her Chambers separate, she can, but once she gives over to a bond, her Lair's boundaries begin to thin and bleed without much work from her. It's a profound experience, one that most Beasts will only have a handful of in their lifetimes.

When a brood Lair forms, it becomes greater than the sum of its parts, an amalgamation of each member of the brood, representative of their shared bond. The longer a brood lives together, the more unified their Lair becomes, until even they have trouble telling which part used to belong to each member.

Brood Lairs begin when Beasts begin building Burrows between one another's Chambers. A Burrow doesn't require the depth of connection found between broodmates, and a Beast can make Burrows to the Chambers of acquaintances or allies after only a short time in their company. However, Burrows are a necessary foundation of a brood Lair, and the closer Beasts grow, the more of their own Chambers they'll connect with Burrows, until their Lairs become a functionally shared space.

As a group of Beasts lives and hunts together, they inevitably begin to share the kind of spaces that lend themselves to creating Chambers, leading to the second and most binding stage of building a brood Lair — the creation of shared Chambers. Broodmates who hunt together can form Chambers from the same location at the same time, creating an overlapping space in the Primordial Dream that they can both control. A Beast can also create a Chamber to mirror a pre-existing one in a broodmate's Lair by hunting in, or researching, the location that broodmate used to create the original Chamber, and superimposing their own version of the Chamber onto the old one.

Shared Chambers are what cement the bonds of a brood. Anyone can Burrow, but sharing a Chamber requires trust and understanding that not every friendship can inspire. It's the difference between spending a night at someone's house and moving in with them; the latter implies cooperation and companionship, an agreement to share space as a means of deepening a relationship you already value more than most.

Over time, brood Lairs progress from patchwork accumulations of individual Lairs into cohesive networks with their own internal logic, maintained by the entire brood. Some members of the brood might keep spaces to themselves, and not all members will share every Chamber, but as more and more Chambers overlap, and each Beast leaves fingerprints all over the Lair, the brood creates a space that is just as unique to the group as an individual Lair is to its owner.

Brood Lairs are not always predictable, and draw just as much influence from the relationships that form them as they do from the contents of their component Chambers. The Burrow formed between a mountain Lair and an ocean Lair could look like a clean divide between rock and water, but if the owner of the mountain Lair has nurtured and watched over the owner of the ocean Lair, it might become a series of underground pools, kept safe under a towering cave ceiling. If the two have a combative relationship, the mountain might loom over the ocean, with waves crashing over and over against the rocks, wearing them down. When three or more Beasts come together to form a brood Lair, the possibilities are almost endless.

DISTANT RELATIVES

Beasts bond most easily with their own kind, but they feel an affinity for all of their Mother's children, no matter how far

their paths have diverged. It's not unheard of for a brood to include one or more Kin, usually those whose own territories overlap the brood's hunting grounds. Bonds between Beasts and other supernatural beings are not nearly as visceral and instinctive as those between two Beasts, but they can still form deep, lasting friendships, to the extent that the Beasts in the brood consider their cousins one of their own and share their hive with them.

Beasts go about adopting a Kin broodmate more carefully than they would one of their own. Beasts form brood bonds primarily on instinct, with intuitive merges of their Lairs in the Primordial Dream mirroring their developing friendships, but while another supernatural may be able to visit the Dream, he will have no Lair to open up to his brood. Without that esoteric undercurrent of trust, some Beasts find it difficult to know where they stand with their Kin.

The most common alternative is for the new Kin to open up his Lair in a broader sense. A werewolf might invite his new broodmates to join him on his hunts through their shared territory, learning how to hunt and fight beside them, until he trusts them enough to introduce them to the Totem he shared with his pack before the rest of his packmates were killed. A changeling might take her brood through the Hedge to a Goblin Market, or even invite them to court as her guests, until she feels safe enough to finally tell them what she remembers of her terrifying time in Arcadia.

A brood made up of only Beasts has a clear path toward cementing their bond, and most Beasts reflexively know when they've made that kind of a connection. With other Kin, the lines are blurrier, but the end feeling is more or less the same. There's nothing like the comfort and security of a bond, even when it comes in an unexpected package.

Though only Beasts have Lairs in the Primordial Dream, broods often discover that their hives begin to reflect their closest Kin, regardless. A brood with a werewolf in its midst might have a thick forest in a shared Chamber of its Lair, perfect for a night of hunting; a brood with a changeling might find that more and more of their Nightmares involve a nameless, faceless enemy, always a step behind, threatening to capture and consume. Beasts often cite the influence of these relationships on their Lairs as further proof that something of the Mother remains a part of their siblings. Whether or not those siblings buy into the idea is another matter entirely.



I used to hunt alone.

Becoming a monster was the best thing that ever happened to me. When the world grinds you down enough, you get a cocked-up idea of what you'd do if you were the one with the grinder. Least that was my excuse. Tell 19-year-old Maura she gets to be a fuckin' dragon and you may as well be crowning her Queen of the Goddamned Universe.

I loved the fear, and not just the prey's. I loved losing myself in the feast and picking dry blood from my nails the next day, like some glorious hammer hangover after an all-night rager. To hell with lessons and absent mothers. Been there, done that.

I staked out a little territory, some three-block stretch that smelled of piss and drowned cigarettes. Mostly it was an excuse to fuck up folks for taking a wrong turn. Sometimes, I'd scare them. Sometimes, I'd beat the shit out of them. Not proud of that, no, but my Horror never complained.

One night, I picked up a scent. Guy in a three-piece suit, maybe lost, maybe looking for a place to be sick. Maybe whatever. All I knew was, he was on my turf. That made him prey.

The flaw in my thinking should've been pretty clear when he stabbed me with a brass knife and his boys rushed me, but I didn't really get how fucked I was till one of them hacked my fingers off with a machete. See, they knew who the prey was. I managed to take a few chunks out of them, but I was only stalling the inevitable.

That's when Roy, Aitken, and Geileis here jump from the roof. Must've been tracking the creeps themselves, because they make damn short work of it. "Scared them off" is true enough, but that doesn't do it the poetry it deserves. This is art.

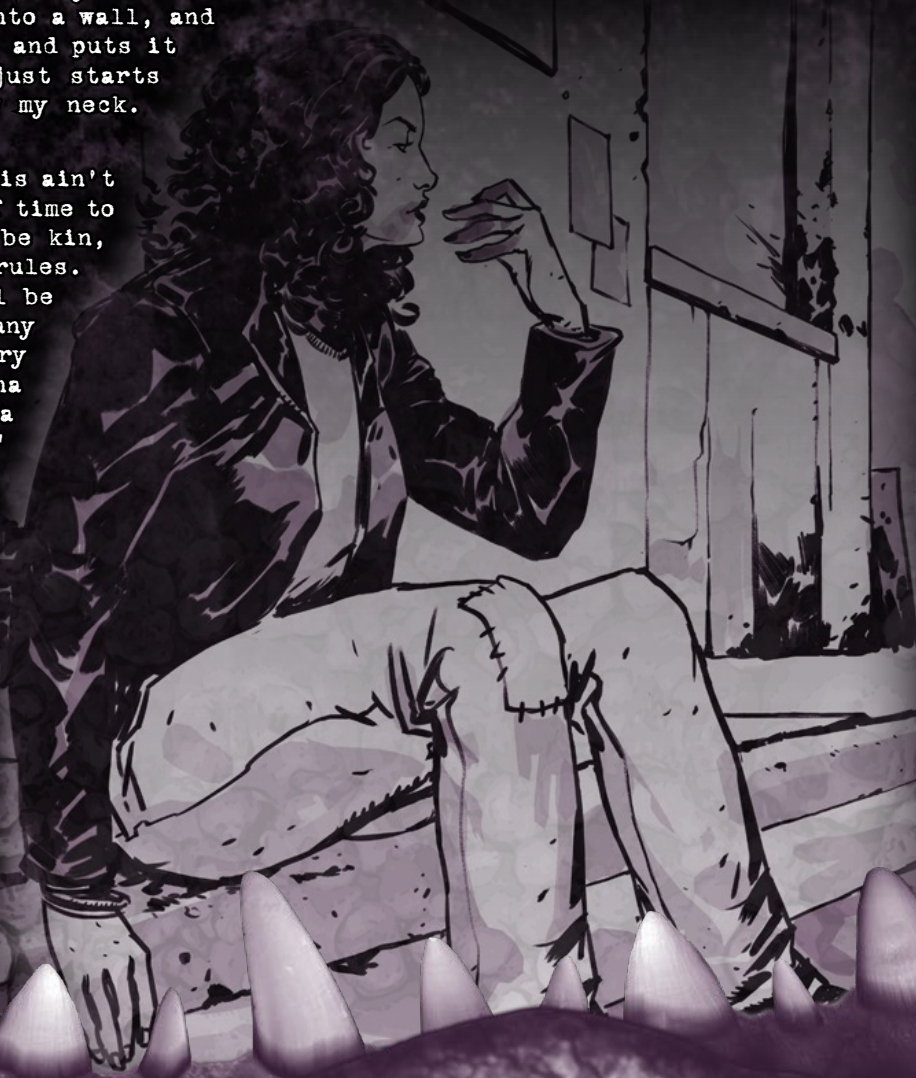
When all's said and done, they pick me up and dust me off, and I'm thinking I should say my thanks and make myself scarce - but that's when Roy throws me into a wall, and Aitken takes that big brass knife and puts it to my throat. And Geileis? She just starts chanting, and I can't feel below my neck. They weren't hunting Heroes.

"Listen, Maura," says Roy, "this ain't personal, but we gave you plenty of time to grow up and pick a side. You may be kin, but you're breaking the rules. My rules. That makes you dinner, and you'll be mine unless you quit curb stomping any poor fuck you like, and drawing every fool Hero for miles. So, we're gonna make you an offer, and you're gonna think real hard about the answer."

That's how I got a brood.
That's how I found a family.

Don't get me wrong. I was right about being a monster. I was even right to love it. I've hunted more with Roy's lot than I ever could as some lone wolf. Difference is, now my Hunger's more important than the next meal. The mistake isn't being a monster, see? It's being useless.

So, kid. Let's put you to good use.



CHAPTER TWO

FAMILIES &

HUNGERS

To Beasts, nothing is more important than blood: what runs through their veins, and what runs down their gullets. However strange their cravings or warped their Horrors, the Begotten know they aren't alone. Family is a bond forged on humanity's primal fears, and Hunger grants them a common tool to spread their Legends. These connections let them walk the world as kin.

This chapter examines the Families and Hungers in depth, expanding on what it means to belong to each. It also presents two new branches of the Dark Mother's brood, and two new appetites for Beasts to feed their Horrors:

Inguma: Youngest of the Begotten, the Outsiders alienate with fear of the other.

Talassii: Jailers and kidnappers, the Captors bear the weight of an ancient curse.

Hunger for Secrets: The Whispers sate by revealing lies and unearthing hard truths.

Hunger for Transgression: Enablers urge their victims into sin, glutting on moral hypocrisy.

Of all the things
you choose in life,
you don't get to choose what
your nightmares are. You don't
pick them; they pick you.

— John Irving

FAMILIES

The seven (known) Families of the Begotten are embodiments of humanity's fears, the deep and primal stuff of nightmares without name. Their write-ups in **Beast: The Primordial** provide a good jumping-off point, but it might be useful to delve a little further into their beliefs, mythologies, and likely progressions in a chronicle. What follows is a discussion of each of the Families with an eye toward playing Beast.

In the following sections, the Inheritance section discusses the new expressions of Inheritance (Divergence, Erasure, and Inversion) with regards to Family. Details on these Inheritances can be found in Chapter Five, starting on [p. 158](#).

PLAYING AN ANAKIM

Stay down, and stop yelling. No one is coming to save you; you called me here, remember? The more you struggle, the more this will hurt, and the less you will listen. You and I both know that you took something precious that should have been given to you. With each passing day, and each new declaration you make, you run all of this into the ground. Power means nothing if you cannot keep it, and if you cannot keep it, you are a waste to me, and what do we do with waste?

DREAMS

An Anakim's first dreams find her overwhelmed by an unstoppable force or event. She could be chafing under the yoke of an overbearing boss who screams orders in her face and tosses her hard work aside like useless waste, demanding that she do better. She could find herself trying to salvage price-

less personal artifacts from a much-loved home on the side of a volcano as it erupts, losing pictures and knick-knacks to lava with every step. She might throw herself screaming at the front of the protest line, while a wall of cops with riot shields backs the entire crowd off a cliff. She types furiously at a keyboard, the clock ticking away on a painfully close deadline, only to look up and discover a blank page.

Every time she tries to evade whatever overwhelms her, she fails. The harder she tries, the more profound her defeat becomes. Even if she knows what's coming, proactive measures fall short or even exacerbate her problems. Attempts to select a different path altogether have no effect; no matter where she turns, the very thing she wants to avoid follows, or heads her off at the pass. The threat looms over her, and nothing can keep it at bay.

Before the final nightmare, the dreamer chooses to fight back, throwing herself at the proverbial brick wall in the hopes that her will and strength alone are sufficient to break through. She may rebel against the overbearing boss or try to stop the riot police or prevent the volcanic eruption entirely, but nothing can break through. She is fighting against forces of nature, not fully prepared to discover that she can become a force of nature herself.

When the final nightmare comes, the dreamer, when offered the opportunity, stops fighting and assumes the greater, overwhelming power for herself. She outstrips the expectations of her boss, surpassing him and delivering piles of work for him to do. She pries open the riot shield defenses like a can opener, taking one for herself to push forward. She moves at the lava's pace, destroying the artifacts of fond memories with her own hands. The power consumes her, burning away her weakness and revealing her Horror.

After the Devouring, the brand-new Anakim immediately senses her own power in comparison to the people around her. To her, the rest of humanity are ants, completely overestimating their own worth. She considers it her calling to teach them their true place in the world, and showing them what true, earnest effort can gain for them.

MYTHICAL INSPIRATIONS

The most powerful creatures of legend inspire the Anakim. Those monstrous creatures capable of changing the entire world at a whim or killing gods must be Giants, or so Giants themselves claim.

The sharabha of Hindu myth frequently appears as a half-lion, half-bird creature with eight legs. The god Shiva assumed its avatar to vanquish Narasimha, the god of protection, when his bloodlust grew too great. However, the sharabha was already quite powerful in its own right, cited as killing lions and elephants on its own. Government seals and company logos in India feature the sharabha today, and the power it grants the sharabha to this day makes Giants in that part of world smile just a little too wide.

The Fomorians, frequently described as giants, were gods in their own right in Gaelic myth, representing destructive and evil forces in nature. Some depictions claim the Fomorians had

the body of a man and the head of a goat, or missing limbs or eyes. However, none of these stopped them from wreaking havoc on the Tuatha Dé Danann. The similarities between the Fomorians and the Norse jotnar are not lost on the Anakim.

For those Giants looking to fit the stereotype, they need look no further than the oni of Japanese lore. These giant creatures feature sharp claws, wild shocks of hair, brightly colored skin, extra limbs and eyes, and frequently carry a large iron club. The Japanese phrase “oni-ni-kanabō,” literally translating to “oni with a giant club,” has come to mean invincible or undefeatable, which suits Japanese Anakim just fine.

HORRORS

Anakim Horrors stick to consistent themes, which manifest themselves with perhaps the least variety out of any Family. They rely primarily on size and displays of power to intimidate and cow dreamers. Physically large and strong manifestations occur frequently among the Anakim, lending credence (and cause) to their nickname of “Giants.” Brutish creatures with powerful musculature are common among the Anakim, stalking their prey on two, four, or even more limbs. Natural armor and weaponry such as claws, fangs, tusks, and tough hides provide more variation, but very few of the Children doubt that they have encountered an Anakim when the Begotten before them is large, strong, and imposing. The Giant's Lair easily accommodates her size, even when others of smaller stature find them painfully confining.

More creative Anakim manifest themselves as forces of nature. A Giant could easily take the form of a menacing hurricane sweeping up sharp, dangerous objects that crush and maim. She could display herself as a bonfire, consuming everything in her wake and reaching out to clutch the dreamer close to her bosom. She could also move as a massive body of rolling rocks ready to crush anything that crosses her path. Water-based forms, however, are rare, as the Makara frequently enforce their claim to that particular element. Whatever form they choose, their Lairs feature their chosen force of nature prominently.

Those who judge the Anakim solely on their size find themselves even more surprised and terrified when the Giant is not actually a Giant in stature. Those few Anakim whose Horror possesses a smaller form than their gargantuan brethren and sistren rely on symbols of power to convey their overwhelming might. A wizened bog hag could easily be a Giant, using privilege of office or the threat of unseen power to intimidate. In these forms, however, some aspect of their appearance does not match the normal perception of the forms they take. For example, the bog hag may leave footprints that seek deeper into the soil than her scant body would suggest. Their Lairs reflect the symbols of power they choose, giving their already overwhelming sense of authority and power that much more weight. A lack of display of physical strength does not make these Anakim any less dangerous than their larger, stronger kin. They could overwhelm dreamers with terrifying speed or a refusal to stay down or even show signs of injury when attacked. These Anakim like to telegraph their displays of power, and if dreamers, Heroes, and other Children miss the warning signs, they have no one to blame but themselves.





KINSHIP

Giants frequently seek out supernatural creatures who are forces of nature in their own right, and those beings who dominate even those of their own kind find the lure of an Anakim's power feeding their own irresistible. However, they must strike a balance with those who they consider Kin, if only to avoid having to teach their Kin a lesson.

Kinship with vampires comes too easily to Giants. With the predatory games of status and jockeying for position inherent in both societies, the Kindred with an Anakim in their corner has no qualms about demonstrating their qualifications as apex predator. Family Dinner happens regularly, and when a little extra intimidation is in order, the Beast's Passing Resemblance lets him stand in as hired muscle.

If Kinship with vampires is easy for the Anakim, Kinship with werewolves is like breathing. The clash between the Forsaken and the Pure has kept many Giants sated since the war began. However, more than one brood has disbanded under violent terms due to having Kin on opposite sides of that war. When tensions are high among the werewolves near their hive, a brood would do well to consult with one another before establishing Kinship with any of them.

Mages, with their quest for power and mastery, may seem like a good fit with the Anakim at first, but many willworkers prefer to pursue mastery of self rather than mastery of others, making them an uneasy match for Giants. Even with the Obrimos and the Silver Ladder exerting their power in ways that make Anakim Horrors lick their collective chops, Giants prefer far more outwardly ambitious Kin. As a result, they adopt a disproportionate number of Seers of the Throne.

The sheer power of the Arisen draws in an Anakim more than anything else. Their deep, ancient roots and the magnitude of the magic that brought them forth is almost intoxicating. They did not have to cheat death, like the Sin-Eaters, but actively defied it with their own will. As a result, the Giant who approaches a Mummy for such a deep connection as Kinship does so with more respect than she might other creatures.

Rarer matches include changelings, Sin-Eaters, the Created, and psychics. While not impossible, the general temperaments of these individuals do not particularly appeal to the Anakim, and Kinship out of pity is not a Giant's style. Giants even bristle at the fickle natures of the Lost, finding the constant danger of losing potential Kin to the Gentry a tiresome complication.

INHERITANCE

The Anakim have a clear, concise view on how Inheritance leads Children back to the Dark Mother. Any path that does not lead to becoming the Beast Incarnate does not warrant the Giants' time or attention. However, in their dogged pursuit of the one true way, not even most Anakim make it to their vision of enlightenment.

Even with their deeply held belief of the superiority of the Incarnate, Mergers are painfully common among the Anakim. Giants become frustrated with the mewling masses, and with their own growing power, fail to see any further use for human-

ity. They see no need to waste the kindness of lessons on those who do not wish to learn, and simply glutting themselves on fears lacks finesse, even for the Family least known for such things. Most Anakim reach this point through lack of patience or compassion, either through not having either in the first place or exhausting their capacity for one or both. When Giants abandon Life, merging with the Horror is akin to slamming the door, never to return. If regret would even occur to a Beast in this state, the Anakim who Merges with her Horror would likely never feel it. If the Anakim has the same disgust for her own kind, Inversion can also occur, leaving the Begotten with yet another enemy to hunt them down.

The Retreat is shameful to young Anakim, running counter to their very nature. Many would rather Diverge, cutting the Horror loose before they lose that control they feel they need. To be the overwhelming force, one must not be overwhelmed in turn. Accepting such a defeat represents the ultimate failure in being a Giant. And yet, as time passes and no other options present themselves, the Anakim gain perspective. The older the Giant becomes, the more they perceive a cyclical nature to their Horrors. They grow to despise the idea of holding back the true force their Horror can bring to bear. When they realize their Horror cannot progress further with them, they shed weak, feeble flesh to give it another chance. Or, at least, that's what they believe they are doing. When the Horror is loosed to wander the Primordial Dream once more, no one can predict what the Horror will actually do.

The moment most Giants hear of Beasts who buck the narrative and become Incarnate, they know instinctively, deep in their hearts, that this path will lead directly to the Dark Mother. Doubt doesn't even enter their minds on the subject. What other outcome could She possibly want? To fully take power for oneself and become the true master of their fate immediately clicks for them. They don't even consider that one of the other paths might be the better option. Those rare few who stick it out and don't lose patience or hope become even more terrifying than they were before their Inheritance.

PLAYING AN ESHMAKI

You start to feel strange after too long without the light. I know – I've been here a long time. You're going to start losing track of where you end and the black begins. Our minds define the borders of our bodies through sight, sound, touch. What happens when the darkness takes those? When we're purged of all of the daily distractions that trick us into thinking we know who we are, what are we left with? Tell me what you decide. I've got all night.

DREAMS

The nascent Eshmaki dreams of pedestrian things. She dreams about friends, television shows, childhood memories; she has annoying half-awake dreams of getting up and brushing her teeth that make her late for work. The only special thing about her is that she dreams in third person – she watches herself from a slight distance, like an out-of-body experience.

Her dreams only become nightmares when she starts to realize she's not the only one observing.

She's not entirely conscious of the other watcher at first. She has moments of skin-prickling discomfort without a clear reason why, and she wakes up with her back to the wall. It's only when she starts to pay attention that she feels the presence hovering behind her. She can't put a name to it, but she knows better than to turn around. If she sees it, it has her.

One night, she tries hiding from it. The other events of her dream fade; she realizes quickly that the version of her she observes from a distance is not what the watcher cares about, and she leaves herself behind to find a way to get the watcher off her tail. But no matter how many times she ducks around corners, weaves into a crowd, even twists the fabric of her dream to reappear somewhere else entirely, her watcher follows. The more she tries to run, the closer it feels, until she wakes up with its breath on the back of her neck.

Her attempts at escape get more frantic. No matter how her dream starts, it ends with running, hiding, squeezing her eyes shut to keep from looking behind her. She begins to sleepwalk, even if she's never done so before in her life. She shuts herself in closets, lies down behind furniture, anywhere that satisfies her need to find a safe place. When she wakes up, it's to unfamiliar darkness, startling and disorienting.

As her final nightmare approaches, her watcher feels closer than ever before. No matter where she hides, she can feel it tucked in beside her, a constant presence sticking to her back. It feels heavy, like she's carrying it with her as she runs, or climbs, or crawls. For the first time, she's tempted to turn around — the thought goes against her every instinct, leaves her sweating and gasping in her bed, but a part of her wonders if whatever's following her could possibly be as bad as she's imagining. She wonders if the only way to escape it is to know what she's up against.

The night she finally looks behind her is the night she's Devoured. She's huddled somewhere, her watcher like a physical weight against her. She turns in increments, bracing herself for whatever she's about to see — and when her eyes meet those of her Horror, she realizes that here in the dark, with the scariest thing she can imagine, is the safest place she can possibly be.

MYTHICAL INSPIRATIONS

The dark edges its way into every mythology. With darkness comes confusion, obscurity; it hides the knowledge necessary to defend against danger. The most cunning monsters hunt under cover of night, which hides them from their prey until it's too late to escape — and the worst humans take lessons from monsters, too. Eshmaki take everything sinister about their domain and turn it into their strength. If they rule the darkness, they rule everything in it.

Most religions associate ghosts and spirits with nighttime. Anyone who knows anything about *real* ghosts can tell you they're perfectly capable of moving around during the day, but humans tend to associate death, and anything that comes after it, with darkness. After all, what's darker than the grave?

There are more tangible things lurking in the dark, too. Black Dogs litter the mythology of the British Isles, appearing with their enormous, glowing eyes to portend death. They're

vicious, benign, or somewhere in between, depending on who you ask. The Barghest, for example, stalked the countryside of Northern England, preying on lone travelers. But the Moddey Dhoo of the Isle of Man was said to lounge in front of the fire in the Peel Castle guardhouse for so long that the soldiers stationed there lost any fear they might once have had — it became commonplace, even welcome, a fragment of the unknown night made familiar.

Not all mythical obscurities are tied to the night. In Inuit mythology, Ijirait are shape-shifting creatures, best known for leading travelers astray and kidnapping children. Some believe Ijirait are born when hunters travel too far north and get lost somewhere between the world of the living and the world of the dead, never able to return to the lives they left behind. They exist in a space between this world and the next, never fully present in either; they can be seen from the corner of your eye, but when viewed directly, they vanish. When an Ijiraq makes its home, the area around it becomes impossible to navigate, even to someone who once knew it intimately. They are the quintessential shadow-dwellers, always watching, impossible to watch in return.

HORRORS

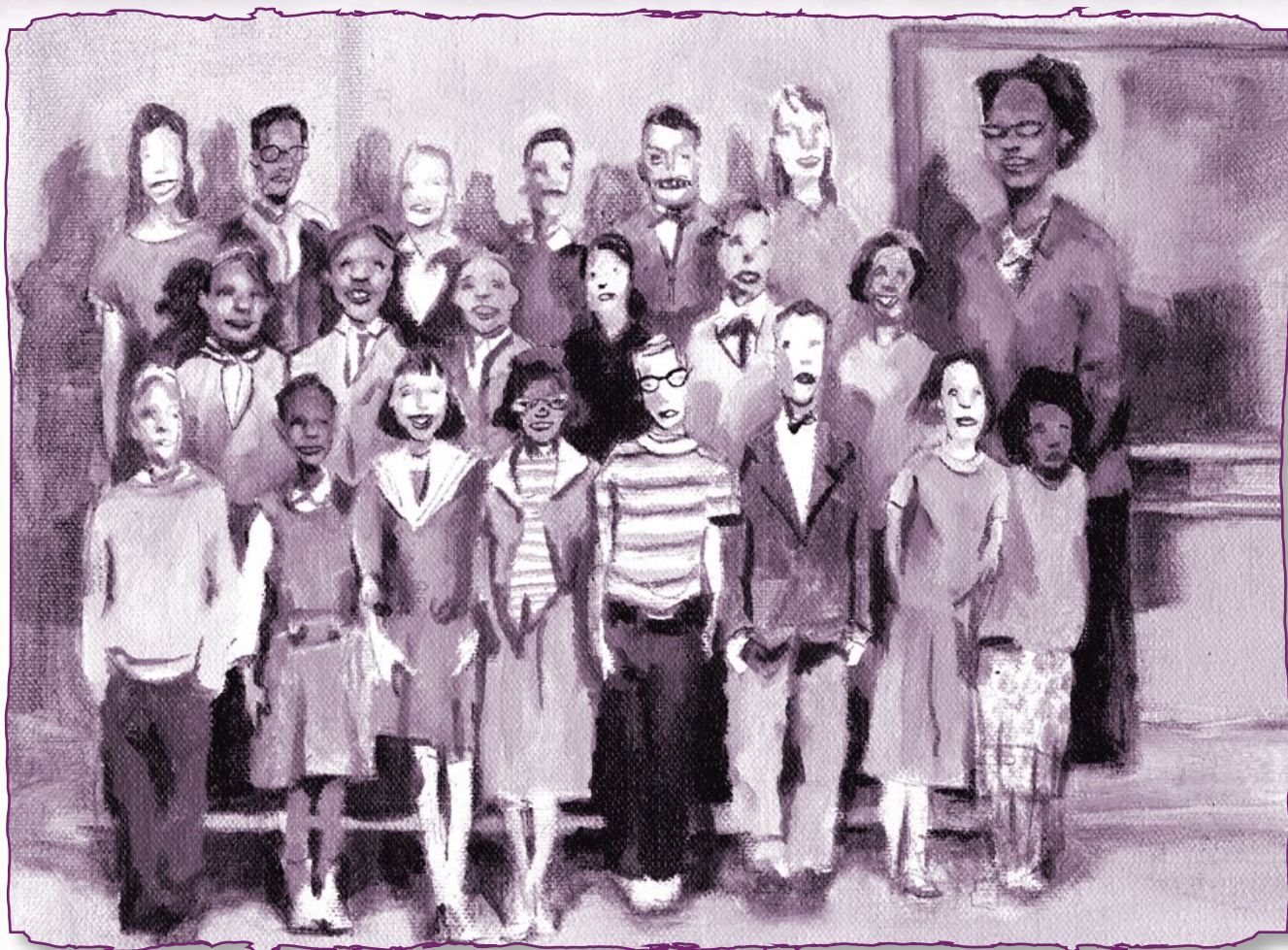
Other Families aim for flash and spectacle in their Horrors, but Eshmaki prefer subtlety. Humanoid Lurkers rarely have unsettling appearances, and they're difficult to pick out in a crowd. Still, an observant dreamer will notice that even the most unremarkable Eshmaki obsessively avoids drawing attention to herself. She stands in the back row of photos, she drifts seamlessly out of conversations, and she never makes eye contact. Once the dreamer is aware of her, though, and can feel her eyes on him, no matter how many times he tries to catch her staring and finds her looking away.

When an Eshmaki does have something physically *off* about her Horror, it's rarely something her prey would spot at a distance. Often, it's only clear if the dreamer already knows what he's looking for. Her eyes might glow in the night like those of a nocturnal animal, or her footsteps might be completely silent no matter her weight or terrain. She might grow translucent when she steps into the shadows, making her that much easier for a casual eye to gloss over. Even Eshmaki with the clear hallmarks of a predator can blend in when they need to; they can close their lips over their serrated fangs, hide their lethal claws in their jacket pockets.

Night hunters are popular Horrors for Eshmaki. Many draw inspiration from their local version of the cautionary don't-go-into-the-woods monster, whether it's a simple wolf or jaguar, or something more fantastical. They're often dark in color, like a melanistic animal, all the better for hunting in the shadows.

More than a few Lurkers eschew a physical form entirely. They are creeping shadows without a light to cast them, silhouettes on closed curtains coming together to form something more sinister than the sum of their parts. But their formlessness belies their power, and these Horrors are some of the most dangerous in any Family. They can invade any dream without





warning, creeping unnoticed toward their prey, perfectly innocuous until the moment they decide to demand the dreamer's full attention.

KINSHIP

Any creature that spends its time on the edges of the world has something in common with the Lurkers. Eshmaki are fond of vampires, and the sentiment is often mutual. More than any of their other supernatural cousins, Eshmaki feel that they and vampires were cut from the same cloth. They're slightly warier of the Uratha, with their natural tendency to lash out against the things that go bump in the night, but once a werewolf and an Eshmaki strike up a friendship, they're a formidable team.

Eshmaki have a natural rapport with changelings. The Lost depend on their ability to hide, to move through the world without leaving tracks, which means rubbing elbows with the Lurkers in quiet, out-of-the-way places. Eshmaki understand the fear that drives changelings to spend their lives out of sight — after all, they became who they are by embracing that fear and turning it into the source of their power. The Devouring is a far cry from returning to the captivity of the True Fae, and Eshmaki are happy to act as bigger, badder denizens of the night on behalf of their hunted Kin.

Sin-Eaters are simultaneously familiar and a mystery to Eshmaki. The Lurkers are well acquainted with the feeling of an

ally perched over their shoulders, but the *separateness* of a Sin-Eater and her geist is entirely foreign, and a Sin-Eater and geist with low Synergy are baffling. How could she stand not knowing her geist's every feeling as though it was her own? Once she met the watcher in the dark, how could she turn her back on it again?

INHERITANCE

To an Eshmaki, returning to her Dark Mother is like finally shutting her eyes after a long day. The darkness that falls is one of absolute warmth and peace, the kind she finds when she buries her face in the curve of a loved one's shoulder. While other Families imagine climactic reunions with their Mother, floods of new power from her breast, Lurkers imagine slipping out of their shoes, sitting down in a well-worn armchair, finally feeling as though they've come home. Eshmaki don't always actively pursue an Inheritance, but most live with the tacit understanding that regardless of what they do in the interim, their road will end at their Mother's door.

Mergers are common among the Lurkers. They are Devoured when they understand the safety brought by an alliance with the thing that goes bump in the night — a natural next step is to take it into their bodies and carry it with them wherever they go. While other families have traumatic physical changes, bones broken and insides gutted as their Horrors clear space for themselves, an Eshmaki Horror simply seeps into the spaces already there; it leeches in through the mouth,

slips into the veins, fills the infinitesimal gaps between cells until its Beast's body is clogged with it. She may not appear as immediately monstrous as other Families, but every move the Merged Eshmaki makes is the Horror curling her muscles.

For Eshmaki, Retreat is the ultimate insult to the darkness that nurtures them. The Lurker conquered her fear once, which led to her Devouring — to split with her Horror, she invites that fear back into her heart and spits on the gifts her Mother has given her. Still, Lurkers are known to Retreat deliberately from time to time, usually following some unshakeable trauma. Those who might make the choice to Retreat often choose, instead, to Diverge, believing that separating their Horror without fully severing their connection is tantamount to sending it out ahead of them into the black, hiding behind it as it once hid behind them. After all, with an untethered Horror loose in the dark, who's going to bother with the Beast it left in its wake?

The difference between a Merger and becoming Incarnate is the difference between hiding and waiting. A Beast who Merges tucks herself away, while an Eshmaki Incarnate drapes her darkness around her like a shroud and carries it on her shoulders like armor. Instead of being filled, she fills herself — she's learned everything she can from the monster under her bed, and she can do better. Eshmaki don't fear becoming Incarnate, per se, but they do approach it slowly and thoughtfully, lest they give themselves over too soon and lose themselves entirely. The light will always cast shadows, and Eshmaki have all the time in the world to take their place among them.

PLAYING AN INGUMA

You know, I have never stepped in the same airport twice. The people going forth to new destinations or back to old stomping grounds vary every time, even if the shops and the kiosks remain mostly intact and in the same place. Frequent travelers cling to that familiarity, and so I cling to them. Their stories of their homes intrigue me, and add yet another stop to my endless itinerary. Most don't recognize me when I come to their door. I am ever so glad that you do.

DREAMS

The Inguma dream of unfamiliar places before they realize their true selves through the Devouring. These strange locales bear at least some resemblance of civilized society: permanent structures with some sort of defined purpose, thoroughfares for foot or vehicle traffic, decorative artwork, and the like. Some areas even show more signs of decay and age than others or evidence of less investment.

The streets of these places start out devoid of life in the earliest dreams. The signs of habitation are apparent through trash in the streets, outdoor market stalls either waiting to be filled with merchandise or containing the rotting husks of old wares. The dreamer wanders these places alone, and going inside any building shows a similar, long-abandoned scene. No signs of the cause of such large-scale abandonment reveal themselves, but every now and again, some chilling, out-of-place feature pops up, like an ancient bloodstain on a wall or a sign defiled with claw marks.

With each subsequent dream, the cityscape gains some vigor: the market stalls fill, more trash litters the gutters, and

even if the dreamer cannot see them, sounds of life can be heard, either through chatter or music. Eventually, the dreamer encounters one sentient life form that recognizes him for what he is. The creature's eyes widen with terror and it flees as fast as it can. If the dreamer does not immediately give chase, he will the next time he sees a denizen of this city.

When the Devouring is imminent, the city is bustling with life, with local people going about their daily lives without a care in the world. The dreamer himself does not immediately register as a disturbance; to most, he is simply another face in the crowd. Those who venture too close may make eye contact and look startled. It is only when the dreamer looks down at himself that he realizes he has blood on his hands, or splinters under his fingernails. He realizes he caused the abandonment of the city, and time has gone backwards. The Horror whispers to him, offering him the power to manifest this fate that he cannot escape.

Occasionally, this pattern moves in reverse, with crowds and startled denizens, who all eventually flee from him. In each dream, the Horror makes the offer, and the dreamer refuses. By the time the city is completely empty, the dreamer realizes he has already accepted the Horror's offer, seeing the evidence of destruction on his own person.

Only the Inguma have such a uniformly structured path to the Devouring, perhaps due to their relative youth and origins in human society and its quest for order.

MYTHICAL INSPIRATIONS

Myths of creatures posing as human appear around the world. The vast majority of Beasts fall into this category by default, but none more closely than the Inguma. The Outsiders seek to exemplify some of these creatures, making their infiltration into larger communities as seamless as possible.

The aswang from Philippine myth frequently appear as creatures of pure evil, able to shapeshift at will. They can appear as normal humans during the day, but at night, they take alternate forms to feed, some even sporting a long proboscis to suck children from a mother's womb as she sleeps. The aswang's diet consists solely of unborn children or small children, and their habits bear several similarities to vampires. Some Inguma wonder if these similarities came from a deep Kinship or a vampire unwittingly adding to the Outsiders' mystique.

The ciguapa lives in the hills in Dominican lore, exclusively female creatures with brown or dark blue skin, backward-facing feet, and long, glossy hair that extends to cover their whole bodies. Tales claim that to look a ciguapa in the eye invites bewitchment, compensating for the limited sounds they can make, which fall between a chirp and a whine. They can appear as either beautiful or horrendous, luring men to the forest to have sex with them, then killing them. Only the light of the full moon and a black-and-white polydactylic dog can aid in tracking one down, an Anathema that many Inguma would kill for.

HORRORS

The Outsiders commonly embody humanoid (or at least bipedal) forms; all the better to stalk among humanity with. Many Inguma Horrors look blandly human, taking on a mix





of features and coloration that would make very few people bat an eyelash should the Outsider walk among them. These features can even shift and change, depending on the Inguma's locale. In these cases, some feature always stands out, such as eyes of an uncommon color or shape, striking facial features, chapped or cracked skin, jagged teeth, or monstrous limbs of unusual length or size.

The Inguma can also lack distinct features, such as a face or fingerprints. A Horror's entire head can be a blank canvas: no hair, no eyes, no discernible mouth until he opens it, revealing jagged teeth or a razor-sharp tongue. They can mold the stuff of their face at will to take on any visage they require, either through force of will or by manually sculpting their own flesh to the desired configuration. For a truly disorienting experience, an Inguma's Horror can have a face that changes continuously, with different features morphing into place in the span of hours, minutes, or even seconds, and of course, nothing is quite as horrifying to a dreamer than a monster who bears the dreamer's own face.

An Outsider's Horror can also have all of the organs and limbs necessary to comprise a complete human being, but arranged in a different way, such as hands where his feet should be or his eyes in his palms. In addition, an Inguma's body parts may have additional features that would not come standard on a human being, such as additional rows of teeth in his jaw or vagina dentata. An Inguma can manifest these features with Atavisms almost seamlessly, and those who cross him find out too late that the Outsider is, indeed, outside of their own understanding.

The Inguma's Horror may not even look like they have flesh at all, mirroring humanity through the highly reflective surface of his skin, or limbs of clay or steel or glass. When an Outsider's Horror takes on a less fleshy appearance, its components always appear manmade. This has caused more than a few confusing moments with the Unchained, who think the Begotten manifesting his Horror through Atavisms might be one of them. While they quickly figure out their error and move on, it has led Inguma to seek out demons more than any other Family.

KINSHIP

Vampires who maintain their aloofness even while feeding upon the masses make easy kin for Outsiders. These Kindred understand the Inguma all too well; they were born from humanity and prey upon those who come too close, but they are never truly part of it. While that disconnected attitude inhibits deep personal connections, especially with more secretive individuals, the Inguma and the Kindred make it work, and while they may not see each other for years at a time, they reunite like old friends.

The same sense of being wolves among sheep makes Kinship with werewolves not impossible. However, the connection with nature that most Uratha try to nurture runs counter to the Inguma on principle. Outsiders need other people and civilization to survive and thrive. The Pure, especially the Predator Kings, rarely attract an Inguma looking for connections; in fact,

some Outsiders actively plague the Pure's dreams in an attempt to teach them the value of humanity.

Inguma and Prometheans form Kinship frighteningly well. Both products of humanity, the Outsiders build friendships with the Created quickly, but as a Promethean comes closer to achieving their goal of becoming human, some Inguma grow jealous. The Created can potentially escape their sense of "otherness," but the Inguma thrive on it. While the Outsiders understand the deep desire of Prometheans to become human, they also remind the Created of the advantages of not fully crossing that threshold.

Psychics, mummies, and mages all provide smooth and easy Kinship for the Inguma, due to their inherently human nature. The magic and miracles they perform are all mostly rooted in that distinctly human experience, and the Inguma cling to that, feeding off it with relish. However, they still keep their distance, especially with these beings' endless curiosity and powerful methods of tracking the Outsider. These inquisitive types simply cannot help themselves from trying to solve the inherent mystery the Outsiders provide. Very rarely do the Inguma try to Hold the Door for these beings, as their Lairs provoke questions they do not wish to answer.

INHERITANCE

The Outsiders deviate far from other Families in their view of the Inheritance. Most Inguma don't even want to consider it. They are simply too engrossed in their current existence to try pursuing what they view as an endgame. To them, their story only began a scant few millennia ago. Still, it does happen, as more Outsiders pursue ways to mature like more ancient, deeply rooted Families.

To most Inguma, the Merger is a fate worse than death. As a product of civilized humanity, the concept of giving up one's life means giving up on the very thing that birthed the Outsider in the first place. With the spread of cities across the globe, the Inguma even enjoy a golden age where they feast like kings. However, some begin to view humanity as a crutch. They want to be monsters in their own right, without the need for a bustling metropolis. In attempting to emulate the deeper, more primal horrors of other Families, these Children distance themselves from those roots, and one rejection too far turns them irredeemably to this path.

Those Outsiders who cleave too closely to human society strive for Divergence or Erasure, but most end up walking the path to Retreat. Inguma arguably have a rougher time as a Beast than other Families because of their origins. Their very nature requires them to be around people, and this constantly reminds the Outsiders of how they lived before. Even with the sense of otherness that most Beasts encounter prior to the Devouring, the Inguma feel it more keenly after their Devouring. Even with embracing their nature, they still reminisce over simpler times. Cleaving the Horror from their lives seems an easy solution, through either separation or murder, but that simplicity only exists on paper, as the Horror fights back viciously for its right to exist and remain tied to the Outsider. When the frustration and longing become too great, an Inguma sates himself one last

time in as spectacular a fashion as he can muster and waits for what he considers the inevitable.

Many Inguma find the idea of becoming the Beast Incarnate daunting. For them, to completely rewrite their story involves divorcing themselves from the very society that made their existence possible. It forces them to reach deeper into themselves to find something even more terrifying and wise than they think they are capable of. It makes them consider what aspects of the nightmare they represent could go back further than the cities of humankind: the small villages, the smaller hunting and gathering parties, or sole, primitive men and women finding each other to form these increasingly larger groups. It requires shedding some of the cunning that the Inguma pride themselves on, and for most Outsiders, that cunning is all they have. Some try, but take it a step too far and lose themselves. Others don't try to take that path at all and lose themselves to their own loneliness. While the Incarnate path is a lonely road to walk, those Inguma who seek it liken it to their Devouring: At some point, they always come back to the city.

PLAYING A MAKARA

Many of my kin like to pretend that they have grown beyond the illustrations and notations to the old maps. Still, even with better cartography, the old shipping routes have not changed over many lifetimes. While the boats make the trips in less time, the potential for more bounty crashing to the deep has only increased. I just find a way onto a crew, whisper bad information here and there, and mutiny or interception by pirates just heaps more onto the pile. And it's all mine.

DREAMS

The dreamer who becomes a Makara dreams of some body of water, either salty or fresh. She may start out on the shore, looking out over a lake, an ocean, or a wide river. She could float on the water's surface, either in a boat or an inflatable tube or chair, without a care in the world. She could be sitting in her bathtub in her own home. Her connection to the body of water in question begins as tenuous and superficial, but she could submerge herself if she really wanted to in that moment.

The longing begins there. She wants to go deeper. Something in herself, or something in the water, compels her to step off the shore and go into the depths. If she stands on a shore, she wants to kick off her shoes and stick her toes in the shallows. If she floats along the surface, she wants to roll off the inner tube or relax her muscles. She wants to submerge herself into the tub completely, even if the water can't even cover her breasts or her knees.

Eventually, the longing becomes a need, and down she goes. She steps out into deeper water, up to her hips, then her waist, then she just dives in. She rolls off the inflatable lounge with a splash. She scoots forward to submerge her head, closing her eyes.

The water is dark and deep once she's in it. Even if she could see the bottom of the lake or the tub or the ocean floor before, she can't see it now. The water surrounds her completely, the pressure pulling her down, down, even deeper. A single pinpoint of light orients her to the surface.

She could fight it if she wants, swimming toward the light that might lead her back to the surface. In the earliest dreams, many Makara do fight it, waking up before they re-emerge, their lungs burning with the effort. However, the more the dream persists, the harder the fight to make it back to the world of air and light becomes, and the deeper she sinks, the temptation to swim down only grows.

When she turns away from the light, the water, or something lurking within it, pulls her down, pushing out the air that remains in her lungs, and everything goes black. The next thing she knows, she re-emerges, breaking the surface of the water as her true self, and the water stretches out to the horizon in all directions. This suits the brand-new Leviathan just fine.

MYTHICAL INSPIRATIONS

Aquatic monsters appear in nearly every culture, even those with limited access to water. The ubiquitous nature of these creatures leads some cocky Leviathans to argue that this widespread mythology makes them the most numerous Family out of all of the Dark Mother's Children. No one will ever be able to prove this claim one way or the other.

Lake monsters such as Nessie in Loch Ness, Nahuelito in Argentina, and Inkanyamba in South Africa prove that the deep waters Makara favor need not be salt water. These monsters are frequently reptilian or serpentine, and in some cases, locals blame their moods for seasonal storms. Others become the stuff of conspiracy theories and tourist traps. Tourist traps can and still kill, though, if patrons don't exercise appropriate caution. If they're lucky, they'll only drown.

The aspidochelone, a giant turtle, lured in sailors with the promise of safe harbor. Its massive back or shell (depending on whether the storyteller called it a giant turtle or whale) appeared as a rocky island when breaching the surface of the water. To hopeless sailors, this appeared as dry land, and they would immediately change course to gather supplies or simply relieve the monotony of endless ocean. Once the sailors made landfall, the aspidochelone submerged itself, drowning all who ventured upon its back. Its sweet smell also lured in fish for an easy meal, inspiring modern Leviathans to use scent to attract their own prey.

In Philippine mythology, the bakunawa was a sea serpent that devoured the seven moons created by the supreme being Bathala. In one story, the bakunawa ate all but one of the seven moons before Bathala banished it, and eclipses are the bakunawa trying to return home to the sea. When an eclipse occurred, villagers banged pots and pans to disturb the bakunawa enough to make it regurgitate the moon. The Makara take particular pride in this myth, since the moon also affects tidal patterns.

HORRORS

Leviathan Horrors all have at least some aquatic aspect. The deepest oceans teem with multitudes of unobserved life forms, and the Makara instinctively know of some of these creatures, which leads to a young Leviathan marveling at features she never thought possible when she sees her own Horror for the





first time. When mankind does discover new species in the ocean, the Makara smile with shark teeth at the revelation of secrets they instinctively knew all along. Even more horrifying iterations of these creatures swim in Leviathan Lairs, which invariably include at least one body of water that the Makara can completely submerge herself in. If her guests are lucky or she feels charitable, a speck of dry land might present itself, if only as a symbol of false hope.

Many Makara Horrors take on characteristics of sea life mixed with human features to emphasize that they are more than yet another unknown species of fish or shark or cephalopod. A Horror could resemble a beautiful woman from the waist up, but possess tentacles instead of legs and webbed fingers on otherwise human-looking hands, to say nothing of the needle teeth of an angler fish. Another Horror could remain bipedal, but possess chitinous armor and bone-crushing claws. Yet another could appear as an electric eel throwing off sparks with every sinuous turn, but possess a human face. The juxtaposition of recognizable features creates an alien, yet relatable, form capable of luring dreamers into the deep or driving them there as they flee in terror.

Other Makara take a more animalistic approach, aggregating the most fearsome features of various species into their forms. These Leviathans care little for presenting something relatable; their predation takes a more direct approach. Some younger, more scientifically minded Makara chafe at their brethren and sistren with Horrors mixing tentacles and scales and shark fins, which earns them sound mockery. Accuracy to actual sea life takes a back seat to having the capability to enact appropriate lessons to errant dreamers and feast on their fear.

Still others take the form of water itself, using the crushing, all-eroding nature of the Family's chosen element for their own purposes. Roaring tsunami, crashing rapids, and viscous, constricting fluids can all provide power to the Leviathan's Horror, wearing away the resolve of dreamers. The Anakim embody the only other forces of nature that could rival them, and those Giants whose Horrors take watery forms to that end soon discover how protective these Leviathans can be over their claim. This protectiveness forms the basis of a low, rumbling rivalry that has lasted almost as long as both Families.

KINSHIP

Mages, with their endless adaptability and elevated methods of thought, intrigue the Makara to almost no end. The possibilities their magic can invoke are endless, and their discussions of the Abyss immediately catch the Leviathan's attention. Their curiosity makes it easy for the Makara to lure them in, and the additional power only spurs them both on. However, too much curiosity can strain relations.

The Arisen appeal to the Makara much the same as they do to the Anakim: ancient, powerful creatures with access to magics thought lost to the world. The Makara tend to have better luck with some of the Arisen than the Anakim, however, if only due to lack of ego. While the Arisen are immortal, they are still human to their core. Letting them think they are older and wiser sometimes smooths over any potential bumps in the relationship.

The Lost hold special charm to the Makara. Leviathans cannot ignore the siren call of the high of Glamour and emotions that powerful changelings pursue. The innate cruelty of the Fairest makes any Makara with a seductive bent shiver with delight, especially when it comes time to feed. Some Leviathans specifically seek out water-based Elementals, which can cause remarkable confusion and upset should the Elemental think that the Makara may be a servant of their former Keeper.

The Makara guard psychics that become their Kin with jealous care. While many of their victims dream deep, those with sight beyond sight and other powers of the mind dream even deeper. That sort of profound mental acuity draws in a Leviathan, in the hopes that such talents grow stronger. Some even hope their pet psychics will Awaken so they can draw from the power of Atlantean magic as well. However, those hopes don't always pan out, to the fault of no one.

INHERITANCE

The Inheritance calls all Makara back to the depths in which they were Devoured. They treat it as a return to their roots, playing out their self-revelation one more time to determine how they wish to approach their journey forward. The Leviathans come from the deep, and to the deep they always return. However, now that place exists in the Primordial Dream, sometimes even in the Makara's own Lair. "The deep" rarely means the exact same location for any two Leviathans; the vastness of such a concept provides plenty of room for all.

Leviathans see the Merger as swimming down into the deep, farther down than they ever swim in the Devouring, until all sense of direction is lost. The noise of the world and the stubbornness of its people becomes too much for the Leviathan, and her lessons prove too subtle to the ones who need it most, even when baring the full might of her Horror. If man requires a true monster to truly learn, the Makara reasons, it is her duty to provide them that monster. As the savage nature of her Horror takes hold, that reasoning slips away in the face of what she becomes next: the source of the warnings on old maps declaring "here be dragons."

The Makara have their own term for the Retreat: "coming up for air." Leviathans see those who meet their death after sating their Horrors, when they do so deliberately, decide that the silence of deep waters is as overwhelming to them as the noise of mankind is to those who Merge with their Horrors. Instead of swimming down into the deep, they swim up for the surface, which is always within sight, but never within reach. The Horror still slumbers down below, and the Leviathan swims up to where the Horror cannot follow. Instead, the Makara gasps like a fish out of water. She floats along the surface, unable to sink back down. Remaining in this state can also lead to Divergence, but one can only float or tread water so long. Sometimes, if the severing of Beast and Horror is deliberate, she might see dry land. Once she touches it, the Horror is free to swim the Primordial Dream on its own.

To become Incarnate, to the Makara, is more than simply swimming the middle ground. It involves tempting a proper adversary to come to her, defeating him, and following him

to his own turf, on land, and defeating him yet again. These Leviathans find “the deep” wherever they are, either in deep thought, profound experience, or other, more drastic means. They can even find refuge in the desert, turning vast swaths of sand into a surrogate ocean where unwary travelers disappear without a trace. They do not live in the deep. They contain its vastness within themselves. Frighteningly, the only difference between becoming Incarnate and undergoing Inversion is the identity of the adversary; an Incarnate Makara defeats a Hero, while an Inverted Makara defeats another Begotten.

PLAYING A NAMTARU

It amazes me how removing a piece of flesh no bigger than a dime or a subcutaneous lump of silicone can become the basis for a person's self-worth. The world tells people they must be young, symmetrical, and with fat deposits in exact locations to give them just the right amount of curvature. They don't think about the swelling, the scars, and all the complications that could disfigure them for life when they take such sculpture out of the hands of nature. "Make me perfect," they beg. They don't realize perfection may cost them the lives they had before.

DREAMS

The dreams start out superficial in nature. The dreamer may walk through a world where everything and everyone around him is blindingly beautiful, and even his modest good looks earn him stares of disgust. Conversely, he could be surrounded by horrifying creatures who look at him in awe or terror. He may find himself yearning for something or someone he considers unattainable, with no way to pursue the object of his desire.

The subsequent dreams go deeper. He reaches out to the people he encounters. Some run. Others flinch, but allow contact. Still others appear too stunned to prevent contact, dumbstruck at the idea that he would even notice them. The object of his desire appears close enough to touch, and, if it is a person, she notices him. A brief glimpse into these people's eyes renders an imperfect and indistinguishable reflection, but the dreamer immediately notices that something about what he sees there is not right.

As the final nightmare approaches, he grows bolder. He takes more liberties with the people around him, initiating more physical contact, but each gesture contains a bit more malice. Hugs are a little too tight and linger a little too long. What would be a gentle nudge to encourage someone to get out of his way turns into a shove. He finally makes his move to grasp that thing he has wanted, or expresses his desire to the person who has earned his fixation. All of his advances come up against uneasiness, if not outright terror.

By the final nightmare itself, he notices that he himself feels different. He sees spots on the backs of his hands that don't go away no matter how hard he scrubs at them. He looks in a mirror or a pond or a selfie and sees his face as little more than wreckage of what he remembers his face to look like. And yet, in that wreckage, he sees power. He may even believe the damage is reversible, but at the cost of what he has already gained.

When he chooses power, he is Devoured. All the people who viewed him in awe before recoil in fear. Those who feared him before flee at the very sight of him. The object of his affection rebuffs him and pays for her insolence at his hands one way or another. The thing he has sought to possess crumbles or dissolves in his hands, destroyed by his very touch. And he likes it.

MYTHICAL INSPIRATIONS

If anyone can countermand the Makara's claim of superior numbers, it is the Namtaru. As most, if not all, monsters of myth have some sort of terrifying disfigurement, the Gorgons could claim higher prolificacy.

The pennangalan in Malaysia appears as a normal woman by day. Some variations of the myth claim she is a beautiful woman or an old woman reclaiming her youth through black magic. Through violating some sort of taboo (or in one tale, simply snapping her head back too fast when startled), her head detaches from her body, with her entrails glittering behind her like fireflies as she flies through the air. Due to having to shrink her entrails to put them back in her body or due to the ritual bath at the time of her creation, the pennangalan usually smells strongly of vinegar.

The sea goddess Ceto birthed the Gorgons of Greek mythology, bringing forward the possibility of close ties between the Makara and the Namtaru. M'lori tradition has its own deity birthed from the sea who is devoted to ugly things, which further cements that claim. Punga, the son of the sea god Tangaroa, is the ancestor of sharks, lizards, and rays, and all hideous things on earth. Tangaroa named this son after the anchor stone of his canoe, perhaps with cruel intentions. The Gorgons would gladly show him the true nature of cruel intentions.

Korean lore features several types of goblins, or dokkaebi. Inanimate objects in nature can transform into dokkaebi, who then terrorize victims or teach them much-needed lessons. Different kinds of dokkaebi vary from mere mischief-makers and dumb farmers to formidable warriors, wrestlers, and downright evil beings, but all bear visages that even a mother would be hard-pressed to love. However, those who truly live virtuously have nothing to fear from the dokkaebi. More ethical Namtaru at least try to live by this standard.

HORRORS

All manner of creatures that mankind considers repulsive can inspire the Namtaru's Horror. The Gorgons take the most terrifying features from reptiles, insects, and other natural predators. Chittering mandibles pair with fangs dripping with venom. Scales and carapaces coat them like armor, and the husks of shed exoskeleton litter the Namtaru's Lair, making traversing its Chambers that much more treacherous. The claws on their feet scrape the ground as if walking on a chalkboard. Their eyes are multitudinous, clustered in a single spot, or extend from stalks out of their sockets. Their bodies may consist of a symbiotic humanoid-shaped mass of writhing maggots, scuttling cockroaches, or a bolus of snakes. More insect-like Gorgons have Lairs resembling ant farms or beehives, especially if they share these Lairs with their brood.

The Gorgons also call upon the powers of disease, poison, injury, and infection to shape themselves. Patches of skin underneath shells or scales appear eaten away by chemical burns, blisters, and necrotic decay. When hair grows on them, it is thin, coarse, and greasy. Warts, boils, and blisters blossom in clusters, leaving one uncertain where the growths end and healthy skin begins. Where the lack of an organ would do more to horrify, only a gaping hole remains where that organ should be. Fluids of sickly colors and acrid stench leak from their orifices, burning those who touch its viscous puddles. They may even host insects or other parasites in their deteriorating flesh.

The Gorgons' Horror does not merely go skin deep, either. What skin they do have is leathery or membranous, stretched over limbs and sinew, or sagging and gray where it should be taut and pink. Their voices croak or grind like crushed gravel. Their joints bend at unnatural angles for the general form they take, either on two feet, four feet, or more. Their jaws distend and dislocate to stretch wide enough to swallow a full-grown man whole. Their sharp vertebrae penetrate their skin, forming ridges of bone along their spines.

No matter what amalgam of features a Namtaru may possess, no alien beauty arises from gazing upon him. He may revel in his hideousness, seeing it as a rejection of the normal human he thought he was. He may despair at his Horror, calling it broken and deformed, but never to incite pity. Those who would offer him such pity make easy prey.

KINSHIP

The Namtaru love vampires, especially Nosferatu. Their methods are inherently violent, and if the victims of those who seduce their prey had any idea of what they actually experience at the hands of their lovers, they would view the entire world in fear. That makes the Gorgons giddy with joy. Most Haunts dispense with such niceties of beauty or subtlety, which suits the Namtaru just fine. Other Kindred who also indulge in cruelty, either for the sake of cruelty or in the guise of scientific research, draw in Namtaru who wish to call them Kin. Most Beasts feed well with vampires as a rule. With the Namtaru and Kindred as kin, the world becomes a rich, red, wet, terrified, delicious buffet.

The Lost also provide the Gorgons opportunities to feast on the terror of those around them, especially around courts that focus on fear. Those Namtaru who still hold to the idea that their nightmares should teach lessons try to guide those Lost they call Kin to do the same, but with the fickleness of changelings, they don't always succeed, sometimes to their shame. For those Gorgons who listen more closely to the aching hunger of their Horrors, the Lost's tendency to spur emotion for the sake of emotion becomes less of a concern. When exhibiting their Horrors, they fit in remarkably well among the Lost, especially Darklings.

The Gorgons take a quasi-protective stance with the Created, much like their younger siblings, the Inguma. When



a human recoils from a Promethean, the experience tugs on a common thread on the Devouring, and Gorgons thrill to experience that again. However, the Namtaru tend not to encourage Prometheans to seek out their end goal of becoming merely human. They simply don't understand why the Created would give up the power they possess to become something the Gorgons view as lesser.

INHERITANCE

The Namtaru rarely seek out the Inheritance as an active pursuit. Those few Gorgons who do seek it out want to Erase what they are, killing that which makes them terrible in the hope that they will find some redemption and earning the scorn of fellow Beasts, who revel in their nature as one of the Begotten. This resentment frequently pushes a Namtaru seeking Erasure into Inversion instead, taking her self-hatred out on those who mocked her. These few prove the exception to the rule: Gorgons take the celebration of their heritage to a higher level, frequently going out of their way for more opportunities to actively express their true nature. However, a Namtaru can (and does) easily burn out if he takes his monstrosity to an extreme, leading to coming to a premature Inheritance, even if he has a long-term plan for the end of his own story.

If Anakim come to the Merger more than any other Family, the Namtaru take a close second as they rail against the shallowness and cruelty of humanity being even greater than their own. With how society prizes beauty and associates it with all things good in the world, anything less than humanity's Photoshopped ideal must somehow be corrupt. For some Gorgons, this simply weighs too heavily on them, especially if they use their powers to teach lessons of looking deeper than someone's appearance or how infirmity through disease or disability does not make a person any less worthy of respect. When a Gorgon vows to show the world what true horror looks like, he falls into the trap he tried so hard to prevent others from falling into. They frequently become the monsters under the bed, or the unspeakable atrocities living in the sewers.

Some Gorgons, when faced with the same frustration of superficial appearance equating to value judgments, grow tired of fighting against it. In addition, the vast amount of far less superficial ugliness in the world overwhelms him, and man's inhumanity to man outstrips anything he could possibly accomplish. If he even wants to compete, he must sate his Horror into slumber every time. Keeping up becomes too much of an effort and draws too much danger. Many Namtaru experience the Retreat by accident in their endeavor to maintain the same pace and stay relevant.

The path to the Namtaru Incarnate comes from a firmer place of self-esteem and security in his identity. This Gorgon knows full well he does not have to compete with humanity's atrocities to be truly horrific, as the atrocities of monsters of legend come from the fevered imagination of human dreams. The hypocrisy that drives many of his Family to the Merger may be frustrating, but proving that those who seek out ugly monsters end up more terrifying in their actions plays to the narrative all too well. He does not need to be truly noble; he

simply needs to appear nobler than those who seek to kill him. True horror, like true beauty, comes from within.

PLAYING-A TALASSII

No, I don't want your money, and please, for the love of God, keep your clothes on. I don't want that, either. With her final breath, a single Hero just like you wiped out our entire identity, tainting every single one of us with the unspeakable crimes of her personal foes. Violation has never been part of the lesson we teach, though. I will keep you here, for a time, and when I let you go, you will tell your band, or whatever you call them, the truth of what you learned here. You will fix what your predecessors have broken.

DREAMS

The earliest dreams for a would-be Talassii start with power differentials severely balanced against her. She may find herself a prisoner, or somehow bound, unable to escape her current predicament, no matter how much she may fight against it. In the midst of her struggles, someone comes to her, possibly from a blind spot, and she knows instinctively that this figure put her in her current plight. However, without fail, she wakes up before the identity of her captor becomes clear.

In subsequent dreams, the path to escape becomes a little easier each time. The key to a cell door may be just out of reach, with more implements appearing to create a tool that can reach the key. The bonds that hold her might loosen as she struggles, or simply be poorly tied or constructed. The place where she is held may change around her, shifting from a blank, unfamiliar place to a local haunt, or even her own home. Just as her moment of freedom is imminent, though, her captor comes again, and with each subsequent glimpse, she gains the feeling of familiarity, like she knows who her captor is. The dream still ends before she can know the truth, though.

When the final nightmare comes, she has the upper hand. She is in her own home. The bonds tear or break when she tries to free herself. The key is in the lock of the cell door, and only requires her to reach through the bars and turn it. However, this time, her captor is closer, and she must move quickly, or all hope of freedom is lost. At the moment where she breaks out of her predicament, her captor is there. She can see herself in the creature's face as her own Horror stands in front of her. The choice she faces is clear: Get back into imprisonment, fight and run for her freedom, or join forces with her captor to never be imprisoned again.

Several Beasts in more ancient Families quickly notice that dreamers who become Talassii have far more agency in their Devouring than others. This gives more than a few of them pause, as they feel it offers too much opportunity for something to go wrong, such as a Hero sensing the disturbance before the Devouring is complete.

MYTHICAL INSPIRATIONS

Nearly every culture around the world has some variation of the bogeyman, a monster that kidnaps people who misbehave in some fashion. Most of these myths feature children as the creature's primary targets, or specifically call out one particular





bad behavior, such as not eating one's vegetables or staying out too late at night. The *tonton macoute*, or "Uncle Gunnysack" from Haitian folklore, inspired the name of a Haitian military special ops unit who specialized in such abductions. The Captors do not disclose how many of their number filled those ranks.

In Romania, the capcaun has a penchant for snatching up children and women, preferably princesses. With the head of a dog (possibly more than one) and eyes at the nape of its neck, taking one by surprise proves difficult at best. The capcaun can also shapeshift at will, and frequently puts its captives on its head. However, with the zmeu in the area as well, the capcaun has stiff competition for the local princess population. The zmeu kidnaps women with the intent to marry its captives, while the capcaun prefers to simply eat them instead.

HORRORS

When it comes to capturing victims, the appearance of a Horror matters precious little to the Talassii. In the modern world, a kidnapper could look like anyone, and cunning and planning do more for ensuring the catch and the imprisonment go smoothly. The Talassii cares first and foremost about getting the job done. Physical might factors in for overpowering those who try to run, but cunning captures more quickly. A terrifying visage may cow a foe already in her clutches, but eerie beauty can lure them in and keep them docile. Horrors among the Captors vary wildly to the point of other Families claiming a Talassii as one of their own on sight, unaware of her true Family's reclusive history. For some Captors, this works just as well, given the stigma left on their Family name.

A human-like appearance to a Talassii's Horror can lure her victims into a sense of complacency, or give them something they can relate to. In this case, much like the Inguma, some feature always looks out of place, such as fur, scales, or outsized limbs. Intimidating size and strength frequently help cow captives into obedience, but burly Captors do not rely solely on their physicality alone to be effective, as Giants do it far better. They may also take a page from the Anakim, using symbols and displays of power to keep prisoners in line. A Talassii could also look entirely alien, making those who require her lessons work that much harder to attempt to discern her motives.

The Talassii's Lair factors into their predation more prevalently than any other Family. The lack of a safe space for the victim plays heavily into the nightmare they represent, and the struggle from their victim's attempts at escape do more to feed them than their appearance. However, the flavor of a Captor's Lair also ties into her Horror more deeply than most, as it adds credibility to the lessons the Talassii can teach through imprisonment.

One common trait occurs among nearly all Talassii: No matter how their Horrors appear, they exude an air of menace. It starts out as a low-grade feeling of discomfort, which a victim can easily dismiss in most cases. However, when a Talassii manifests his Horror through Atavisms or spends enough time with a victim to manifest his Birthright, the aura of malicious intent comes to its full fruition, contributing to any terror or weakness the victim experiences. The Captor's actual intent in such manifestations

matters little, even in self-defense; any given victim immediately assumes that the Captor is out to get him, personally.

KINSHIP

Talassii are even more selective about who they establish Kinship with than other Beasts. More predatory supernatural creatures feed into the parts of the Captor's nature she fights against the hardest. However, those creatures also provide the best opportunities to feed. As a result, Talassii try to reach out to those supernatural beings who are mostly human. However, their advances can come on too strong, making these naturally paranoid individuals that much more uncomfortable. Due to the ancient Anathema that tainted the Captors, mages and psychics get strong enough mystical impressions from the Captors to keep their distance, even if that impression is wildly inaccurate.

The Lost make excellent Kin for Talassii, thought the changeling may not have the same rosy outlook on the relationship. The trauma from the changeling's imprisonment in Arcadia never fully goes away, and it draws in Captors like the smell of fresh-baked cookies. Those Captors who know of the Lost and their experiences frame it as a relationship of protection, where they keep the Gentry and the Huntsmen at bay. That close tie to the terror Talassii represent even attracts them to fetches from time to time.

Vampires also make powerful Kin for the Captors, but more ethical Talassii actively avoid Kinship with them. Kindred can easily keep their thralls captive with well-placed words and a sip or two of vitae. However, the vampire and the Captor feed into each other almost too well, prompting both to greater acts of depravity to strengthen their bond. As many Kindred use sex as a tool to feed, especially with the sensation of the Kiss, it comes too close to the stigma so many Talassii work against.

Talassii must also exercise caution when establishing Kinship with werewolves. The Forsaken work especially hard to keep their tempers in check, and the rigid discipline this requires can help Captors counterbalance the worst impulses of their Horrors. The Pure also have this discipline, but in some tribes, like the Predator Kings, the focus leads the Captor in the exact sort of behavior she wishes to discourage in herself.

Kinship with the Created seems odd on the surface; very little seems to tie the Talassii and the Created together. However, these two tend to form strong bonds when they do come together, if only out of the desire for a deep emotional connection. For both Prometheans and Talassii, this is difficult, and even among each other, this relationship can have fits and starts. Once they hit their stride, however, this Kinship can become one of the purest friendships both of them can ever have, and they will fight to the death to defend it.

INHERITANCE

Out of all the Families under the Dark Mother, the Talassii arguably have the least impetus to continue their story for any longer than it has to go. Their curse puts them at a disadvantage among Beasts, many supernatural creatures, and any mortals who see their Atavisms. Captors pursue Erasure or Divergence more than any other Family, rejecting the twisting of their

Birthright at a Hero's hands. A return to normality would only make the individual Talassii's life better, but those who kill their own Horror care little for the rest of their Family. Truly stubborn Captors who strive to fight against their Family's curse reach for the Incarnate Inheritance, as stories among the Children assert that the Anathema on the Talassii can, in fact, be broken if enough of them flip the script. Such a destiny is more easily spoken or imagined than actually achieved, but that never stops a Captor from trying. However, every failure sets the Family that much further back.

To further compound the issue, the frustration the Talassii curse causes feeds into itself all too easily. Finally, the Captor snaps, letting her Horror do its worst. It feels so easy and natural to do it, and she keeps doing it, over and over again. She slips into the poisoned narrative, and when she realizes how far she has come, her anger pushes her the rest of the way through the Merger. Whether that anger stems from falling victim to the stigma or from trying to fight what feels so good to her now matters little. She becomes the predator the world expects to see.

The path to a Talassii's Retreat starts very similarly to the Merger. However, instead of snapping and giving in through a fit of passion or rage, the Captor simply gives up on trying to convince anyone of her true nature. Her descent is more resigned, and while the knowledge that she cannot break the cycle on her own weighs heavy, she opts not to give her Horror what it wants multiple times. She commits herself to one deliberate act in support of the Anathema's story, fully throwing herself into it. But it brings her no joy. She knows it will bring Heroes, and she hopes for swift mercy. She does not want to live with that stain, and maybe her Horror can purge itself of that poison without her.

The Talassii Incarnate arguably becomes the most horrific of the lot. Instead of trying to rail against the Anathema laid on her Family, she starts to use it to her advantage. She captures her victims with relish, and even as they struggle, she wins them over. She shows them her side of the story, that she's not really that bad, but simply drawn that way in the annals of history. When she releases her captives (which most Talassii would never dream to do), they tell her side of the story, even as they long to return to her, and will even romanticize their capture. In places where the Myth stays strong, people wish for abduction in the hopes that they will experience such joy for themselves.

PLAYING AN UGALLU

They keep their heads down. They've done it for so long. Were they born bowing, or did someone bend them? Does the thought of lifting their gazes even occur to them, anymore? I can see the crowns of their heads, thinning hair and natural roots that they hide with combers and bottles of bleach. They wear their bodies like shrouds, anything to mask the truth of themselves. Would they know how to meet my eyes, if I gave them the chance?

DREAMS

The dreamer who becomes an Ugallu starts by dreaming of safety. He is at the foot of a mountain, surrounded by traveling companions. The sun is warm, but the trees are thick with

shade. He and his friends follow a clear trail up through the forest, and although the slope starts a burn in his thighs, he's enjoying himself. If there are dangers above him, he can't see them, and as far as he knows, they can't see him.

As his dreams continue, the path he follows grows less worn, until he's picking his own way over rocky ground. His friends start to pick up the pace and disappear ahead of him, until he can barely see them. He knows they're still there; he finds little traces of them, overturned stones and scuffs in the dirt. The trees are thinner, here, more and more space between their trunks, and he starts to see patches of blue sky, solid and noon-bright.

He sees the first shape above him, soon. It's small, a speck in the distance, but he can watch it circle around in long, slow loops. If it disappears behind the mountain, it always reappears on the other side, too indistinct to identify but no less unsettling for it. He tells himself it's a bird, because what else would be up here?

He tells himself that until he first sees it dive for something, somewhere up ahead of him. He tells himself that until he finds the first body.

Whatever this thing is, it's picking off his friends ahead of him, one by one. As the trees keep thinning, he keeps finding them, like explorers preserved in the thin air of Mount Everest. They have claw marks in their bellies, or bites out of their throats, or their eyes picked out of their faces. By the time he finds all of them, it's too high up for trees to grow, nothing separating him from the featureless sky over his head.

The first few times he reaches this point, the dreamer turns around and heads down the mountain. But he always wakes up before he reaches the bottom, and when he dreams next, he finds himself back at the highest point he ever reached, staring up at the peak, pulled inexorably upward. And the *thing* is still circling, around and around, never close enough to strike. Just watching.

When he's close to his Devouring, he gives up going down, and throws himself into climbing. He's faced with sheer cliff faces and impossible inclines, and he bloodies his hands scaling them, but he never falls. The mountain peak looms closer, and the air gets thinner. If he looks down, he can see the forest a mile below him, warm and green under the sun, but it doesn't look safe anymore. It just looks small.

In his final dream, the dreamer staggers to the summit of the mountain. It's a breathtaking view, but he's not paying attention to that. He's looking up at the dark shape above him, looping in tighter and tighter circles. It's coming for him, and he knows it, but there's no point in climbing down. No matter how far he goes, the sky will stretch over him, and his Horror will wait there. Better to let it carry him away now – when it finally dives for him and snatches him off the rock, he opens his arms to it, and watches the world spiral away below them.

MYTHICAL INSPIRATIONS

The world is littered with tales of cosmic birds. Ugallu aren't the only ones fascinated with the thought of a creature far above them, all-seeing and all-knowing; humans bring these birds into their stories, vast and wise. From the Arabic Roc





to the Jewish Ziz, birds blot out the sun — it confirms for the Raptors that their image of their Mother as the great Mama Crow is not so far from the truth.

Iranian mythology has the Simurgh, a creature old enough to have witnessed the destruction of the world many times over. She is drawn as a peacock with the face of a dog or a human, mammal enough to suckle her young but bird enough to fly between the earth and the sky, a messenger between them. She is large enough to carry a whale in her claws, but she is a benevolent creature, said to purify the land and bring fertile crops.

Of course, not all great birds are kind. The Minokawa of the Philippines is a dragon-bird the size of an island, or bigger. It has razor-sharp feathers and metal claws, and it's said to be the source of eclipses, so massive that it can completely blot out the sun. It lives somewhere outside the world — above the sky, or outside of it, some place beyond human understanding. Stories tell of it swallowing the moon, striking fear into the hearts of the humans below, who believed that once it was finished with the heavens, it would come for them.

HORRORS

Most Ugallu Horrors are built for speed and flight. Sprawling, feathered wings, thick membranes for gliding, light bones to let them drift with the wind — the Raptors draw their inspiration from the myriad adaptations that allow animals to defy gravity. No flying animal is more noble or desirable than another; anything that leaves the ground is rising toward the sky and the Mother, and Ugallu model themselves after birds, insects, even gliding mammals. Though some take the form of animals, most cherry-pick traits they like and create something distantly resembling a human.

But human bodies aren't built to support functional wings, and humanoid Horrors contort into bizarre shapes to accommodate. They're broad-shouldered, thick with muscle in the torso, with thin limbs, narrow waists, hollow bones, like a person stuffed into the mold of a bird. They have long, many-jointed hands and feet for perching, or gangly limbs with folds of skin that let them drift from one high place to another. Some eschew arms, or even legs, in favor of a body dedicated entirely to powering their wings.

Flight isn't the only thing Ugallu value in their Horrors. They are watchers, made to observe from a distance until the time is right to strike. They might have the enormous, glassy eyes of a bird of prey, with the telescopic sight of a vulture or the night vision of an owl. Their eyes might sit on the sides of their heads, giving them a wider range of vision at the price of distance — not that distance matters much when they're hovering at the ceiling of the world.

Not every Raptor jumps to flight with his Horror. Some opt for a more figurative idea of exposure. These Horrors might cover themselves in eyes, extra on their faces or their backs, hidden in their hands or under their clothes, always focused on their prey. They might multiply themselves, a dozen identical figures watching from every angle, around every corner. Some even reflect their prey in some way, whether physically or psychologically, reminding the dreamers they hunt that they've been observed long enough to be mimicked, even replaced in the events of their own dreams.

KINSHIP

The Raptors don't form friendships quickly, but once they connect with one of their cousins, it's a powerful bond. They shield their vampires, hunt with their werewolves. Mummies fascinate them with their gradual quest for knowledge, and they help them piece clues together however they can. Likewise, Prometheans on their quest for humanity are just looking for their own brand of wisdom, and Ugallu can offer the perspective that comes with distance.

Mages intrigue Ugallu. They can understand the constant search for knowledge, and the power that knowledge brings. Raptors find a natural equilibrium in their Kinship with the Awakened; a Mage needs a grounding presence to temper her growing power, and an Ugallu needs a link to the earth to keep him from slipping away from the realities of life on the dirt before he's ready. They meet one another on the ground, share the odd human moments that remind them of the people they used to be before they woke up, or fell too deeply asleep.

Ugallu enjoy the company of changelings, particularly those with the gift of flight. They appreciate anyone who can perch next to them at dizzying heights and feel at home. They're drawn to Beasts of the changeling variety, especially Steepscramblers and Windwings, who hold the animal instincts they developed in Arcadia. An Ugallu offers his Changeling the comfort of knowing that if a True Fae tracks her down, he'll see it coming a mile away.

Perhaps the only supernatural beings that Ugallu actively avoid are Sin-Eaters. Ugallu are instinctively put off by the claustrophobia of the world of the dead. There's no sky in the Underworld.

INHERITANCE

Where Makara dive down, Ugallu rise up. Their Mother waits for them beyond the skies, higher than any Beast has flown before, and only the strongest Ugallu gains the strength of wing to reach her. When he joins his Mother, a Beast finally understands the perspective that has helped her guide him through his life,

and he taps into a deep, ancestral knowledge that he would never have been ready for prior to his Inheritance. He looks down on the world from her side and knows it as intimately as she does.

Of all the families, Ugallu are by far the most prone to Retreat. To many Ugallu, an Unfettered Horror is a thing of beauty, a kite with its string cut, left to spiral wild in the wind. They believe Retreat is among the greatest gifts a Beast can give his Horror, and that in gratitude, the Horror will carry a part of its Beast with it into the skies. An Ugallu approaching Retreat is rarely bothered by the gamble he takes in leaving his Horror to its own devices. He trusts his Horror's instinct the way he trusts his Mother's wisdom.

In a similar vein, the Raptors prefer not to Merge if they can avoid it. Binding their Horrors to their bodies usually means landlocking them, confining them to a form not built for the flight they crave. Those Ugallu who do Merge try to find ways to ensure that they will keep access to the skies, but as the Horror takes over and they begin to lose their higher brain functions, even the best-laid plans go to waste, leaving them tethered to the ground. A few Ugallu see the Merge as a positive, believing that by bringing their Horrors to the earth, they're allowing them to view the world from a new angle and helping them learn a new way to navigate it; those Beasts are, however, very much in the minority.

Most Ugallu view whatever tableau spreads out below them as the unknowable will of their Mother, a mystery that will become clear to them the more they can understand, but those who fly to the heights of wisdom and don't like what they see often land Inverted. Perspective can lead to disillusionment, even anger, at the state of the world permitted by the Mother, and Inverted Ugallu believe it is their duty to use their unique knowledge to right Her wrongs. They often view their estranged siblings as unenlightened, not malicious, and tend to lead with conversation rather than with violence; whether their audiences listen is another story.

Becoming Incarnate means returning to the Dark Mother's flock. An Ugallu Incarnate loses whatever attachment he may still have had to the ground. He no longer needs to rest between flights, and his wings carry him ever higher, until he can hardly see the things he used to find so important. His final ties to the earth are undone, and he becomes the dark thing he dreamed of so many nightmares ago, with wisdom that can only come from perfect detachment.

A CARNIVOROUS DIET

A Beast has Hunger in her heart for as long as she lives, and she's always aware at some level of how full her tank is, how restless her Horror is, and how long she might be able to go before she needs to do something about it. Different levels of Satiety carry their own strengths and weaknesses, and a wise Beast sets up circumstances to favor her changing capabilities at different Hunger Conditions. She can dance back and forth from Gorged to Starving without ever missing a Beat.



But that doesn't tell you or your Storyteller what to *do* with Hunger in a story. Put simply, it's a way to keep Beasts from becoming complacent and to put them in situations that are meaningful. In a story, the major elements must thematically cohere. So, what does your Beast's Hunger say about her, or about her Horror? A Collector who likes jewelry might have a particular taste for stealing wedding rings, and a Nemesis who especially wants to punish adulterers might do so by snatching those rings. The two are feeding the same way, but to sate different Hungers, and for thematically distinct reasons.

Before selecting your Beast's Hunger, think carefully about whether you've arrived at something you want to spend time on in play. Is it going to provide the right level of challenge? Does your character have the necessary skills to keep herself fed? Stealing things and fighting people are time-honored activities for characters in roleplaying games. If your character needs to hurt people, make sure she has Brawl or the like. If it's enough to just scare them, don't forget Intimidation. If you want to be able to uncover people's darkest secrets, make sure you have Investigation and the right Atavisms.

Further, how would an uninvolved and possibly only semi-informed mortal describe your character's Horror? An amorphous monster in the swamp that steals gold may as well come off a random Beast generator. Answer the why. Figure out how the elements fit together. Come up with specifics. A hideous Ravager who strikes at the prettiest people in the community has thematic resonance. One who strikes only at people who won beauty competitions (or were elected Prom Queen, or put on a magazine cover) has the makings of a Legend.

Lastly, are your character and her Horror the same person, or not? Some Beasts view their Horror as their true spiritual self. Their Hunger isn't something inflicted on them from outside, it's as natural to them as the literal hunger that tells them when it's time to nourish their body. Others view themselves as a person who happens to have an unpleasant roommate where her soul should be. For those Beasts, fulfilling their Hunger might be a frightful and grudging duty. When the howling and pounding on the trapdoor in the back of her mind gets too loud, she throws down some scraps and prays it stays quiet for a while.

CHANGING HUNGER

Occasionally, a player may have an epiphany and realize his character would be more fun for him and everyone else if his character's Hunger was different. How big of a deal this is depends on the change and the group. If the character's new Hunger is really for the same thing, but merely *expressed* differently, then it may be enough to change the entry on his sheet and pretend it was that way all along. For example, the player of a Ravager who liked to wreck people's cars might realize, two sessions in, that his character actually makes more sense as a Predator. He wants the chase, the pursuit, not to simply flip a car parked in someone's driveway.

It's also possible that a player simply finds that her character's Hunger isn't as much fun as she thought it would be. It might be too difficult to fulfill, or not challenging *enough*, or she might find that it's too personally uncomfortable for

someone at the table. If a player truly wants to *change* her character's Hunger, then a more serious discussion is warranted. What's changing, and why? How will the new Hunger play out in game? If a player can give good answers, think about what would mark the transition. Raising Lair by a dot is a good excuse for all kinds of metaphysical changes. Changing the layout of the Lair by collapsing one chamber and adding a dramatically different one might do the job. If the character has recently become an urban legend, then the effect of hundreds of whispered campfire stories might propagate to her Horror through the Primordial Dream, and compel it to more closely reflect the beliefs that people hold it. A Hero who afflicts the Beast with an Anathema might well inflict an alteration on the Horror's metaphysical nature.

Note, all of these can work forward or backward. A player who wants to change her character's Hunger should work with the Storyteller to develop a justification. It's also possible that one of these in-game events might inspire the player to ask if she can make the change as a way of memorializing it. Characters should accumulate scars over time, after all. Scars are cool.

HUNGER MECHANICS

It's strongly recommended that you make a cheat sheet that lists all the Satiety Conditions, with room for a counter (any bead or coin will work) to track your status as you gain and lose Satiety during the game. A handy visual reference helps you keep track of where you are in the game, and if everybody has one it lets the Storyteller know at a glance who may want to have a scene to feed in the near future.

Let's consider each of the Satiety conditions in turn, and what you should be doing in each of them. A Beast's current Satiety isn't just a roleplaying guide for the character and her Horror. It's also a useful mechanical subsystem that you can use to gain Experiences. You *want* to be changing Satiety Conditions often, because resolving a Condition grants you a Beat.

WHEN YOU'RE RAVENOUS

There's no getting around it: Being Ravenous is *not good*. You can't use Nightmares. Regaining Willpower is complicated. You take damage every day, and you can't heal it without help. Further, normal, low-intensity feasts won't grant you any Satiety at all. If you get to this state, you need a plan. And, if you were smart, you made it before you got here. So, what do you do?

First, go berserk. Hit up one or more opportunities for low-rent feeding, if you can get away with them. You don't need grand schemes. You just need to smash the nacho machine at the local convenience store, steal all the coins from a fountain, or run over someone's dog. Why do you do this? One, it's good roleplaying your character's desperation. Two, you get a Beat every time you have a Feast with Satiety potential too low to help you.

Second, don't go to sleep. For one thing, it puts you closer to taking unhealable lethal damage. For another, your Horror is going to start rampaging around and potentially spawning Heroes. If you have the Relentless Hunter Atavism, then you're good to go. For everyone else, caffeine is easy to come by. If you

manage to pick up and resolve the Fatigued Condition, at least you get another Beat out of it.

Finally, you commit that big score to get yourself into a better Satiety Condition. You need to build up factors until you're going to roll at least eight dice. The easiest way to get there is to kill somebody, for +4, but study the chart on p. 108 of **Beast: The Primordial** for other clues. Alternately, if a Hero's been getting you down, just kill them. That automatically raises you to Satiety 1.

WHEN YOU'RE STARVING

First, whatever you do, don't drop to Ravenous. This is the Condition at which you want to engage in big meals. Your goal, if you can manage it and if the dice like you, is to jump straight past Sated and up to Gorged. Even a feeding with the maximum pool of 10 dice only nets you an average of 3 or 4 Satiety, so Sated is your most likely end point. Your Nightmares are less likely to succeed at this level, so you need to rely on Atavisms and your own mundane competence. Hopefully, your character has some training in Skills useful for hunting down a meal. You can gain one or more Beats at this level by hurting someone you care about in pursuit of Satiety, or by taking irrational risks. Remember that you, the player, can carefully plan some good spontaneous risks for your character to take. Hopefully you hatched those plans while the situation was less desperate, because you need to deal with this Condition fairly quickly.

WHEN YOU'RE SATED

You don't really *want* to be Sated. It's the time when Heroes can hurt you the most. You don't get the High Satiety bonuses for Nightmares, nor do you get the Low Satiety bonuses for Atavisms. The only upside is that it's easy to get rid of, and it's easy to gain Beats. First, decide whether you're going up (to Gorged) or down (to Starving.) If you're going down, it's easy. Just spent Satiety on things you don't really need to. You'll get a Beat every time you use it to do something you could accomplish via mundane means. Just make sure you have a plan for how you're going to feed once you're Starving.

If you're going up, first make sure that your Satiety is 5 or lower. Five is the magic number at which it's safe to feed. If you reach 10 Satiety, then you go into the Slumbering Condition, and that's *bad*, probably even worse than Ravenous. Five Satiety is safe because in order to reach 10, you have to roll an exceptional success. When you roll an exceptional success, you can choose to gain less Satiety than you otherwise would, and can thus stop short of Slumbering. If you have 6 Satiety, be sure and waste a point before your feast commences.

WHEN YOU'RE GORGED

First off, don't feed. Any attempt to gain Satiety when you are already at 7, 8, or 9 has a high risk of putting you into Slumbering. Your Nightmares work fantastically well at this level, so if there's anyone you want to use a Nightmare on, this is the time. Secondly, you have an easy way to gain Beats. Just fail at something that you should really be trying to succeed at! Don't just milk the system for Beats without taking any real

risk or accepting consequences. Milk the system, sure, but also drive the story.

Overall, this is a good time to fill up your rolodex. There's no pressure on you, so track down Heroes, or make sure they can't track you down. Investigate or set up opportunities to feed that you'll need later, when your belly isn't so full. Make friends with other supernatural beings. You're at greater risk of mind- or emotion-affecting powers they might use on you, but that's potentially fun, too.

Remember, any time you need to be at a lower-Satiety condition, it's easy to make that happen. Set off any Nightmare you have and spend as many Satiety as you need on it. A few Satiety spent on Behold, My True Form! (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 134) should be enough to drop a single enemy combatant in one hit and open up the low-Satiety version of your Atavisms at the same time.

WHEN YOU'RE SLUMBERING

Spend some time in contemplation. You still have no Integrity equivalent, so you may continue to be a Nietzschean monster, beyond good and evil. However, you might also choose to have your character attempt to live a normal life for a while. This is a chance to answer an important question: Is your character a monster because of their Horror and their Hunger? Or would she find human moral conventions an intolerable prison even without the touch of the supernatural about her?

The mechanical picture is rather less rosy. Your character remains a normal human until you take extreme measures. Outside of the context of some highly unusual chronicles, you presumably do not want this. You can choose for your character to be nearly killed, she can brave her own Lair as a mortal to bop her Horror on the nose, or she can collapse a Chamber at great cost in Satiety. You only have about a two percent chance of falling all the way to Ravenous, but even if the odds were worse this would still be the safest option. Your character could also attempt to convince one of her brood to brave her Lair and smack her Horror awake instead of doing it herself, but you should discuss that option with your Storyteller before you bet all the marbles on it.

HUNGER PACING

Presuming that the players at a given table are a relatively conservative group, they hopefully won't need to feed more than once every session or two. However, for an average-sized group of four or five players, that's still rather a lot of table time devoted to nothing but keeping Satiety up. The players should discuss with their Storyteller before the chronicle begins what percentage of table time they want to devote to feeding. The easiest answer is to keep it relatively low. At the start of every story, each player might describe one major feeding their character attempts. The Storyteller should take it easy on them, and only require dice rolls to set up the feeding if the scenario described pushes the boundaries of what the character can be expected to accomplish. Failed rolls result in something that comes back to haunt the character later, rather than failure to feed outright. Then simply let them roll to feed.



After this one “freebie” feeding, the Storyteller is entitled to keep the pressure on, and require the players to justify further feedings in-game. Limiting each player to one attempt to feed per game session may also be appropriate. Clever players will find ways for more than one of them to feed at the same time, in order to share in both the spotlight and the spoils. Hunger is supposed to be a goad to drive the characters into dangerous and interesting situations, but if it’s too oppressive they’ll never get to think about anything else. Since there’s so much else to see and do in the Chronicles of Darkness, it would be a shame if they were too busy tormenting the humans to get around to it.

SETTING THE TABLE

Your character’s Hunger shouldn’t be seen as merely a shortage of points. It’s a drive that comes from your character’s innermost self, and it can be an expression of her relationship with the world and what the Dark Mother wants from her. It’s more than a need, it’s a *motivation*. When you sit down to create your character, or tune her up after her first couple of chapters, you want to understand why she does what she does as well as why it matters. She needs to make as much sense as any good horror-movie antagonist, even if that sense is purely irrational dream logic. The following section will help you make her Hunger memorable, and tie her story together.

COLLECTORS

In the back of your mind you remember phrases like rock in a hard place and other platitudes that could help define this clusterfuck, but you know that context – that sweat where the gun’s pressed into your temple – won’t get you out of this one. You always thought cops were hypocrites, but this is out of a crook’s worst nightmare. Everything you ever stole. That’s the price of freedom. The site of every stash, and the keys to every safe. Every goddamn nickel you ever ripped off goes to her or she’ll blow your brains out...and she’ll still take everything. She doesn’t seem surprised when you say yes. “I don’t want to see you around here anymore,” she says, and you wonder if you didn’t get off easy. That’s why you run.

DREAMS

The dreams are treasure hunts at first. The sleeper follows breadcrumb trails and maps through dark forests and frigid mountain heights, but the reward is always just out of reach. The chest is rusted shut, or the dream collapses right atop the hill where X marks the spot.

Eventually, she realizes she’s not the only one on a treasure hunt. The tools of her adventure start to disappear. Maps and pickaxes and even clothes vanish into the aether, and her frustration is equal only to her fear. She never sees it happen, but she always feels that hot nausea of loss. She tries to run, to store her things deep in the woods and hills, but the more she struggles, the more she loses. The sum of her life comes away bit by ragged bit.

Slowly, the landscape shifts. No more fairytale adventures, just urban desolation, and the horror of skewed familiarity. The thief takes her friends and family, and any other kindly face she might’ve run to. She wanders empty streets as it saps the very color from her dreams, until she’s only a shadow on a white void.

That’s when she fights back. She *takes* back. She reimagines the world over the void, and pillages it. She won’t be held back by her connections – she’ll take what others have and grow more powerful for it. She tracks her tormentor to its Lair, filled with fragments of her life. She’s stronger than it now...but instead of slaying it, she comes to understand its lesson. As they come together, they burn the remainders of her humanity, and look upon a new world ripe for plunder.

MYTHICAL INSPIRATIONS

The monster-as-thief is almost universal in mythology. In the Pacific Northwest and parts of East Asia, the raven god is respected as a wise trickster, and in some stories he helped create the world through his thievery. In Japan, the Tengu kidnaps babies, or helps recover them, depending on the myth. Modern urban legends and schoolyard lore speak of monsters who hide in homes, stealing things to vex or frighten residents.

NEW CONDITION: CRAVING

Instead of the system presented on p. 108 of **Beast: The Primordial**, the Storyteller can choose to inflict the following Condition when a player chooses a dramatic failure on a feeding roll. The Storyteller (or the player, if they’re sufficiently masochistic) selects a meal that the Horror truly desires. It should be specific, thematic, and reasonably difficult to achieve. A Nemesis might suddenly realize that their Horror only has eyes for a disgraced politician they saw on the news last night and whose offenses fit within their purview. A Tyrant might find that their Horror dangles visions of the arrogant muscle men at a bodybuilding competition before them every time they close their eyes. A Predator catches the scent of a beloved family member and finds it delicious.

System: Attempts to feed via any means other than what your Horror is Craving are at -2 Satiety potential (not -2 to the dice pool.)

Beat: Any time you feed in a way that doesn’t resolve the Craving, and gain no Satiety.

Resolution: Your character fulfills the craving in a way satisfactory to their Horror. In addition to granting a Beat as normal, the feeding that resolves this Condition always grant at least one Satiety, regardless of the results of the roll.

Deep beneath the ground, the fucanglong pores over its riches. The “hidden treasure dragon” of China hoards the wealth of both humanity and the earth. Processed gems pile up against veins of ore that thread throughout its Lair, and it devours any miners who stray too close. When the Celestial Bureaucracy demands an accounting of its wealth, it bursts from the ground, forming new volcanoes in its fiery wake.

In Iceland, the Lagarfljót Worm haunts the lake that bears its name. Once upon a time, a little girl put a little dragon in a little wooden box with a little gold ring, hoping her wealth would grow and grow. But as the gold swelled in size, so did the little dragon, and in fear the girl tossed the box in the lake. The worm never did stop growing, though, and neither did its hoard. Even the men who came to slay it could only tie it down to the rocks along the lakebed. Today, tourists watch for the serpent to breach the surface, and Heroes dive in search of lost treasure.

Azeban isn't a malicious Collector, but he's among the most annoying. The raccoon spirit of Wobanakik mostly uses his trickery to con people out of their food, but he also likes to teach lessons about greed and pride. His conceited behavior often makes him the butt of his own morals, but Beasts say the little creature is more self-aware than he lets on. After all, by the time people scorn him, his belly's been long full.

HORRORS

Dragons reclining on golden heaps are a trope for a reason, but Collector Horrors can be as varied as their hoards, and are

often defined by them. A Giant who steals the kills of fellow hunters is a great hyena, feeding off carrion dotting the grasslands of his Lair. A Raptor who collects paintings is a bird made from living light and color, shifting her form as art styles come in and out of fashion. Some are less specific, especially if they hunt concepts rather than objects: An Eshmaki Collector is a black hole, stalking its Lair and devouring anything that gets in its way. Indeed, Collector Horrors often consume, even when they're not hunting. Parts of the Lair slough off to be gathered, or they dream up their own treasures to protect.

Collector Lairs are no less defined by the hoard. Not all Beasts store their loot in the Primordial Dream, but the Lair has a sympathy with the physical collection. A Talassii who kidnaps pets from abusive homes has ghostly dogs and cats wandering her Burrows, who nestle up to the Horror for warmth and protection. A Namtaru who robs banks finds his Lair fluctuates depending on his finances, becoming more luxurious or rundown with the state of his wealth.

KINSHIP

Collectors are utilitarian about Kinship, treating relationships with their cousins like business arrangements. Begotten who hoard supernatural artifacts almost always have contacts in occult subcultures: They form partnerships with Awakened tomb raiders, vampiric lore keepers, changeling librarians, and stranger archivists still.

Apart from Beasts, few supernatural beings hoard as mages do. Their libraries hold objects of incredible power,





so Collectors wanting an in with the Wise need to bring a special offer to the table. Beasts have a natural rapport with supernatural creatures that some mages struggle to develop, and social Collectors might use that Kinship as a means to access Mysteries. A mage may have trouble getting close to a vampire's mandragora garden, but a Beast can pose as a friendly Kindred with little effort. In cases where both sides are willing to work in the long term, Collectors and mages form true partnerships. One Guardians of the Veil caucus uses a Beast to retrieve artifacts from unwitting Sleepers, spreading Nightmares to ensure people never dig into the occult again.

While rare, Prometheans do have a kind of economy. The Created treasure the journals and mementos of their fellow pilgrims, and they especially prize Athanors, alchemical furnaces filled with mystic knowledge and powerful visions. Jovian Athanors — those that embody the worst parts of the Pilgrimage — are unique vessels of alienation, and potential weapons. An occultist with Azothic items in her hoard might seek out a Promethean to make a deal, with the Beast trading relics for favors and the Created passing the objects on to other Prometheans. With globalization and the internet, this isn't as niche as it once might've been. Despite their scarcity, Prometheans do get online, and their networks can be useful to Collectors looking to expand their palates.

Mummies, unlike Beasts and mages, collect in service to gods, sending Sekhem-infused objects back to their masters in Duat. The Arisen are secretive at the best of times, and Collectors who inquire too much about their relics will draw suspicion, justified or not. The Judges have their tithe, and the Deathless will protect it. Collectors work best with mummies when they're willing to integrate with their long-term agendas. Mummies spend the majority of their time dead in their tombs, and a Collector could act as a kind of repo service during these periods, negating the need to wake the creature over every minor relic. Being longer lived than humans, a high-Lair Beast can provide a mummy with continuity between sleeps, and an ally less inhibited by the dictates of Duat.

INHERITANCE

Collectors see Inheritance as a prize. Through cunning, they can steal it right from the Dark Mother's maw, or the claws of their siblings. But Beasts who think this way too often end up disappointed. Greed blinds them to the holistic nature of the Dark Mother's gift, and they end up losing a race they've run against themselves. Collectors who take care in their approach almost always strive for the Incarnate Inheritance. Those who Merge are devoured by their avarice, and those who Retreat take no more solace from their hoards.

To become Incarnate, the Collector transcends petty thefts for criminal empires. His networks are notorious throughout his nation, or globally if he's truly ambitious. Whatever he wants, he takes, and every authority that might stop him looks the other way or supports him in fear of reprisal. When he takes his mantle, his Myth is All-Consuming, for nothing escapes his want. If he ascends the hive, it means he's taken everything his rivals have to offer, and even other Collectors pay him dues.

If he turns the tables on a Hero, he leads her to give up the possession she values above all. The most renowned Incarnate steal the Hero's very attachment to the hunt.

As she edges closer to the Merger, the Collector loses all interests except hoarding, spending days and nights ensconced in stolen glory, and plotting ways to expand it. In the end, all she has is her collection as friends and broods fall away in favor of *more*. Eventually, the weight of the hoard gets too much for the Lair, and it collapses under the Beast's greed. These Rampant are the gold-thieving dragons of mythology and fantasy novels, misers who obsess over every bauble in their stashes. Paranoid, they rarely leave their nests, but when they do the world had best lock up. Where once they collected finery, now they snatch anything that shines, or anyone who stands in the way of the next acquisition.

Hungering for the Hoard easily becomes a hollow pursuit. The Beast numbs to materialism, and his collection becomes a symbol of pointless consumption. Some Collectors would rather die than be poster children for greed, and choose to Unfetter their Horrors as a warning to others. Impact is more important than intent, though; the Primordial Dream isn't exactly brimming with stuff for Horrors to steal, and many Unfettered Collectors starve or fall to greater predators. Successful ones learn to suffice on more ephemeral tastes, stealing dreams or memories from human victims, but truly powerful Unfettered drag their prey out of the material world, adding them to hoards of human corpses.

Collectors who choose Divergence want to have their cake and eat it, too. Arguably, those who Hunger for the Hoard have the least visceral Hunger, and Divided Collectors can indulge their urge without the need to spread fear. Perhaps the Beast and her Horror hammer out a cautious business deal, with the Beast as demand and the Horror as supply.

FEEDING-PREFERENCE

Theft is the easiest way to sate Collectors, but it's a stereotype that all, or even most, of them operate outside the law. A Collector can feed just by outbidding rivals at an auction, provided her opponents have a big enough stake in the competition. She might also feed by getting the better end of a deal, financially or emotionally. She can manipulate these outcomes fine legally, just so long as the other party feels a bit screwed. Of course, the Horror doesn't particularly care how clever the Beast is at gaming systems. Horrors prefer outright robbery, as it causes the most anguish.

As for content, it isn't necessary for the hoard to be expensive. Collectors often go for emotional resonance over aesthetic and value, though that has wiggle room, as many people tie their identities too closely to their wealth, or in the material trappings of their lives. More primal Collectors eschew inanimate hoards altogether, and collect human beings — their victims are those who think they can have ownership over people in the first place. Depending on the Beast's Legend (or Life), this can be altruistic or exceedingly selfish. A Competitive Collector seduces men with steady partners, just for the challenge; a Kindly Collector shepherds people out of debt, or rescues victims of abuse.

METAPHYSICAL HOARDS?

As described on p. 109 of **Beast: The Primordial**, the hoard is meant to be physical. However, if your character makes more sense as a conceptual Collector, it doesn't hurt this Hunger's themes to loosen that constraint. Under this assumption, Collectors don't necessarily have to feed on objects: A sleazy comedian steals jokes; a patent troll snatches up intellectual property.

Collectors have to be mindful of their feeding. Ripping off a pusher for his drug money may seem open and shut, or just, but the Beast bears responsibility for his fate when his suppliers come around with pliers and baseball bats. Like those who Hunger for Ruin, Collectors and their dirty deals can have a ripple effect on their victims' lives. Unlike Ravagers, it's often unintentional.

ENABLERS

The back of her pickup brims with all the stuff that dreams are made on. Luck, health, fame – her potions are guaranteed or your money back. Townsfolk flock to her medicine show to hear her speak of lives she's changed, and lives she's yet to. Old crones on walkers dance after one sweet drop of her elixirs, as old men spit and call her witch. She happily agrees.

When night falls and the old men run out of bile, she takes in special clients. Some are desperate and heartbroken, or weighted by their guilt. Some are just selfish. "I can bring them back," she says, and speaks of lives that could be. But she has her fee, and she never bends on that: Spit on the Cross and praise the Devil; leave your love and burn happiness to ash. They balk and beg, but never stop to question their desires, only that they deserve a better deal. In the end, they always take it. As the dead rise, she hits the road, satisfied that no, in fact, not one is righteous.

DREAMS

All his life he dreams of excess. It's the little things at first: hints of lust for people he wouldn't even glance at, vices he'd never indulge, acts of rebellion against authorities both real and imagined. If he has faith, it's tested in bacchanals with imps and daevas. His dreams become a sandbox where his id comes out to play...but for all the indulgence, it never really feels good. Shame lingers in his waking hours, and he can barely keep eye contact with the secret stars of his fantasies.

As time goes by, the excess mounts. Familiar places turn to orgies and riots. He fucks and steals and kills, and where his id once played, it rules his sleep. His days are spent in pained repentance, and the gnawing fear that debauchery is all he really wants deep down.

He starts to see the chains that hold him to his morality, and they try to pull him back. His dreams become tortured extremes between total depravity and total guilt. Maenads dance

as priests shout curses, but at the breaking point, he sees his path. Whether under the guidance of a Beast, or through his own strength of will, he sees his "id" for what it really is, and he breaks the chains that keep him from it. As the Horror takes his soul, the maenads kneel and the priests flee his fangs. Yes, he'll be the sinner, but the sins won't master him.

MYTHICAL INSPIRATIONS

The Enablers are inexorably tied to Christian lore. Temptation is stock and trade of the Devil himself, and tales of Lucifer's dealings are masterclasses in transgression. Outside Abrahamic religion, fairy tales are replete with Enabler characters. In Germany, Rumpelstiltskin wove hay into gold for the price of a firstborn child. In China, the Qing Fish Demon used the Monkey King's own lusts to trap the Hero in his dreams.

Desire is death and death is desire, and the Mara is both. The great demon tempts pious victims so they'll come to know the true nature of suffering, and Begotten lore claims he almost lured Siddhartha off the road to Nirvana. His fangs gleam with the riches his prey could have, but his eyes shine with the blistering colds and bright infernos of Neraka. His lovely daughters are materialism made flesh, tempters of the Buddhas and the siddhas, and any other holy man who grows content in his virtue.

The sirens sing for him. Only him. Nothing else matters as they beckon the sailor from their nests upon the cliffs. Not wives, nor gods, nor quests. He wants nothing more than to be wrapped in their soft wings, and they're eager to oblige...right until his body breaks against the rocks. The sailor's lesson isn't that he deserved to die; the sirens would've indulged his passions if he'd had the strength to scale their Lair. As he sinks beneath the waves, they want him to see that his values were no more solid than the sea air, and that's what got him killed.

When a black hen's egg is incubated in the warmth of a human armpit, the bizarre lidérc is born. Transforming into its victim's dead beloved, the creature seduces its way into his life, feasting on his blood while he sleeps as the price of sharing his bed. Even if the victim starts to question this arrangement, the lidérc knows many ways to tempt. It dutifully hoards gold for its lover, enriching him as it sucks him dry.

HORRORS

Enabler Horrors are said to be beautiful, but this is reductive. Many are, but these tempters are usually only as attractive as the prey needs them to be. A Namtaru is a suppurating orb of black ichor because the people it hunts want ugliness. An Inguma has no fixed form, morphing into people and objects her victims think they need. Shapeshifting Horrors are common among the Enablers, and some tailor their forms to fit each victim, or exist as featureless shells that appear differently in each viewer's mind. However they shift, the outline is typically humanoid, lulling victims with a false familiarity. Less fluid forms might symbolize the lesson the Beast teaches: A Talassii, who shows fundamentalists how to think for themselves, appears as a holy figure bound and impaled by religious symbols.

Just as the Horror entices, so does the Lair. Lost paintings,

ON ENABLERS - JEFF HASTED, MAKARA NEMESIS

We teach people not to cross a line. They get people to throw up on it. There's a...balance in that, I guess, but our siblings have a habit of getting all self-righteous about the punishments their victims earn. They rail against our lessons, but they never seem to grasp that their prey are violating codes we defined. We make the rules. They just break them.

dredged from the collective unconscious, hang in the halls of the giant's keep; extinct flowers lure victims through the troll's labyrinthine garden; and hypnotic music plays from the Heart of the dragon's palace. Often, Enabler Lairs have collapsible entrances — once the intruder's in, seduced by pleasant appearances, he finds his exit blocked. The paintings fade, the flowers wilt, and the musician is one who doesn't care for listeners.

KINSHIP

Enablers get along with their cousins depending on how many taboos the other monsters have. A Promethean might appreciate lessons on human depravity, but a werewolf sees them as violations of all the Moon holds sacred. Most supernatural beings carry some scrap of human morality, so Enablers must be careful not to make assumptions.

Enablers and vampires are a match made in Hell. Where Beasts toil to seduce their victims, vampires are undead heroin. When Enablers and Kindred meet, a vicious cycle starts. The wet-dream Nightmares they spawn draw countless thralls, shedding inhibitions for just a taste of the rapture they keep on tap. Kindred aren't known for their trusting natures, though. The vampire may come to see the Enabler as a threat to her power, just in time for the Beast to realize what useless parasitism the leech visits on their victims. Whether it ends in blood, tears, or make-up sex hinges on how utterly dependent they've grown on each other.

More cerebral Enablers are drawn to mages. The Awakened have tools to break ascetics, turning lead to gold, rewriting emotion, and raining hellfire on whoever displeases them. Kinship with the Wise offers whole toolboxes of transgression. Mages are also rather given to crossing lines themselves, and an Enabler with a good puzzle can lead a mage into all kinds of hubris, or portray *herself* as a Mystery to solve. Perhaps the mage learns more than he bargained for, but comes out better for it...or maybe he doesn't, and falls for the Enabler's own plans for his magic.

Changelings understand transgression all too well. The True Fae twist their victims into mockeries, forcing changelings to transgress against human morality as playthings and hunting dogs, or slaves to any manner of grotesque desire. Enablers must respect these traumas if they want Kinship, and thoughtful Beasts find that harvesting Glamour for them makes a good ice breaker. Enablers are experts in emotional manipulation — sin so often leads to guilt, joy, dread, and anger all at once. With a few well-placed Nightmares, the Lost may reconsider their stance on deals with the devil.

INHERITANCE

Transgression might be the Hunger that desires Inheritance the least. Shame and guilt are products of human morality, and Enablers are just as invested in social mores as their victims, if in a twisted way. Inheritance means disposing of that comfort, and it's a step that only a few are willing to take. When they do try to attain Inheritance, Enablers usually choose Incarnate, surpassing mortal ethics and making up their own. Rampant Enablers take the opposite tack, embodying sin rather than transcending it, and the Unfettered finally tire of humanity's constant hypocrisy.

The everyman's transgressions only go so far. To take the Incarnate mantle, the Enabler must humble whole religions and paragons of belief. The Beast becomes the irresistible object, and her victims twist their souls to please her. Even Heroes break their vows and repent their ways for her. Her Lair calls out to the hive, tempting other Begotten to forsake their Hungers for the pleasures of Transgression. When she achieves her Myth (the Priestess of All Sins; the Breaker of Wills) she redefines the rules. Right and wrong shift with her whim, but her followers will always beg to sin again.

Enablers who Merge fall victim to their own temptations. They become incapable of enticing without participating, and eventually destroy their Lairs to escape the bonds of the Mother's legacy — lessons and broods and Kinship can be so *confining*. Rampant Enablers have an animal cunning, but without a human conscience to hold them back, their schemes become hammers on human resolve. Some are golden idols of seduction, only capable of blazing glory on their victims: One who once tempted the faithful orchestrates church orgies. Others are single-minded terrors, haunting humans until they give in to whatever awful behaviors suit their Hunger: One who once broke friendships now demands the slaughter of family.

Enablers who get fed up with human frailty initiate the Retreat. Beasts with strong convictions before the Devouring might never be comfortable with causing others to violate their beliefs, but many just come to reject the world's debasement, seeing their successes as proof that the righteous man does not exist. In death, they leave the Horror as a parting shot on the world's false piety. Unfettered Enablers cause revels in their wakes. Inhibitions fall away in their territories, bringing whole communities to ecstatic madness. Legend has it that the Dancing Plague of Strasbourg was caused by an Unfettered Enabler, feeding off the chaos people left as they abandoned their lives.

ENABLER SATIETY

An Enabler sates by leading her victims to violate their beliefs. This can be any religion or philosophy, or even loyalty to other people. The degree of importance the victim places on this code determines Satiety potential. To satisfy the Horror, the Enabler must be responsible for her prey's transgression, whether through suggestion, bargaining, or intimidation, but she cannot force him to transgress. The moment of shock comes when the victim feels the gravity of what he's done.

High Satiety: The Enabler must cause her victim to fundamentally transgress his beliefs. Getting a religious leader excommunicated would apply, as would causing a pacifist to commit murder, or convincing a changeling to sell a fellow courtier to a Huntsman.

Moderate Satiety: The transgression is enough to cause the victim shame, or invite rebuke from her peers: seducing someone into cheating on their wife, convincing a teetotaler to binge drink, or blackmailing a fundamentalist into breaking a commandment. The transgression needn't ruin the prey's life, but it should be at odds with their self-image.

Low Satiety: The bar for transgression is minimal at this level, as long as the victim feels a little guilty: urging someone into breaking her fast at Ramadan, pressuring a dutiful child to break his curfew, or even tricking friends into trash talking one another.

The Divergence is attractive to these Beasts, as it provides a way to develop their Hungers beyond the Horror's whims. As noted, the Enablers are more invested in human concerns than other Beasts, and becoming Divided means they can tempt their victims exactly as they like, without having to placate the Horror's alien desires. However, that also leaves their newly independent shadow selves to take up even uglier extremes, so an Enabler ought to be sure her conscience can handle that tradeoff.

FEEDING PREFERENCE

Enablers are unique among Beasts in that their victims have to scare themselves a bit. They give their prey just enough rope to hang themselves, and specifically can't force them to transgress, or use *too* much trickery to accomplish it. The Horror can be surprisingly exact on that point, and a few Beasts won't allow themselves to lie to their victims at all. Enablers take it as a point of pride when they can walk their marks on the road to perdition with total honesty.

Enablers generally come in two flavors: those who tempt, and those who pressure, but these methods aren't mutually exclusive. In desperate times charmers can turn the screws with the best of them, and pushers can muddle through the soft sell. These styles are often linked to particular Families: Anakim, Namtaru, and Talassii prefer the pressure method, whereas Eshmaki, Inguma, Makara, and Ugallu are notorious as vamps and con artists.

Traditionally, Enablers limit their prey to specific peoples (theists, atheists, radicals, conservatives), but some just target those they find cloyingly moral. Once they've chosen their victims, their Legends influence the tone of the feeding. Where Spiteful Enablers want their victims to wallow in shame, Soothing Enablers soften the blow, and butter them up for further excess.

Transgression is hard on human souls. Moral character is a keystone of identity. Without care, Enablers can cause breaking points in their prey, and truly shattering ones at that. Enablers who teach lessons strive to avoid this level of damage, but it may be inevitable if the victim puts too much of himself in his

ideals — which may be the point of the lesson in the first place. Horrors take petty delight in watching values crumble, and sate all the better if it costs a victim a part of himself. Careful Enablers mitigate harm by choosing subjects with strong resolve, who won't fall to pieces over single slip-ups, but some are too jaded to care, or disdain the idea that they should have mercy on hypocrites. Lessons be damned. Let the sinners suffer for their sins.

NEMESSES

In this job, she has to be dispassionate. She's got a strong stomach and a stronger will, and when she loads a body onto her truck, she's got no room for compassion.

Tonight, she's a raw nerve. This body could be her brother, or any of her cousins. She has a front-row seat to every gouge the killer left as she zips up the body bag. She feeds on fear, and even she won't sleep tonight. She knows the police are less than useless; no chance of a solve, and no one to care. Her neighborhood's just another place where empathy goes to die.

But she has ways of smelling guilt the cops don't have.

She's going to find him, and she's going to hurt him. She's going to punish him, and show him what happens to people who hunt the innocent. No, it won't help anything. It won't change the environment that spawned him, or the people who looked the other way. She may just rest easier, though.

DREAMS

He lets the bastards get him down. The venue is never the same, but its purpose is clear: a courtroom, the principal's office, his parents' shadows — he never quite knows what he did wrong, but his protests don't matter. The punishment's a foregone conclusion, and try as he might, he just can't wrest his protests into a wakeup call, even when he knows it's all a dream.

His waking hours get smaller and pettier. He resents the shit that other people get away with, the things he can't even

think about in his dreams. Every mistake gets thrown back in his face when it hits the pillow. They lock him up for the dates he can't get, and they beat him for the grades he falls short on. As he gets older, the venue shifts: The courtroom's a prison, the office becomes an inquisition, and the shadows aren't really people anymore. The implements of punishment go from accusations and verdicts to more violent tortures. Hot pokers brand records of his crimes, and whips slash shame through his soul.

One night, he meets another, someone who suffered the same way he does. He understands. He sees the punishments for what they are: the limbs of a great Horror, pushing him to his breaking point. He takes revenge. He turns the creature's tools against it, and the more he hurts it, the more it becomes a part of him. His triumph is becoming his tormentor, but, more than that, the joy he finds in the rush of vengeance.

MYTHICAL INSPIRATIONS

The Sphinx is revered by Nemesis. She ruled the road to Thebes, devouring all who failed to solve her famous riddle, but in spite of her violent punishment, she was said to be an honest monster. Oedipus wasn't the first to answer correctly, only the most notorious. In arrogance over his victory, he slew her, never wondering why she posed her question in the first place. Nemesis believe the Sphinx served the kings of Thebes, using her riddle as a shibboleth to reveal enemies of the city-state. Considering Oedipus's legacy, they may well be right.

Lei Gong takes revenge on the unrighteous. With a hammer in one hand and a chisel in the other, his great leather wings take him wherever sinners lurk. Once human himself, Lei Gong was transformed when he ate divine fruit, and now he uses his tools to strike down people and spirits who would act out of accordance with the will of Heaven. Those who pray for him to punish their enemies had best be careful, lest their own indiscretions catch his attention.

Ammit stands guard at the entrance of the Egyptian Underworld. Her punishment is simple, but brutal: The crocodile-hippo-lion thing swallows impure souls

whole, and their bodies are cast into a lake of fire. Many Beasts identify this creature with the Dark Mother, and some Nemesis will take variations on Ammit's name in tribute to their progenitor. A few emulate her gory punishment, devouring the hearts of truly heinous mortals.

HORRORS

Nemesis Horrors wield symbols of authority and law, or at least parodies of them. An Inguma carries a broken fasces, embodying the terror of faceless despotism. A Namtaru takes the form of Yama, lord of the underworld and god of justice, with royal regalia sewn into his deep blue skin. In the West especially, sightless Horrors are common, with blindfolds wrapped over their eyes, or blank flesh where the sockets should be. Nemesis Horrors can also be influenced by the societies of their local dreamscapes, particularly whatever people fear most about authority. An Anakim growing up in



the Soviet Union might've taken the form of a blood-red bear, targeting dissidents who spoke out against the state.

Nemesis Lairs share in this social symbiosis. A Makara dwells in a flooded courthouse, with drowned corpses occupying the jury box and judge's bench, screeching verdicts down at interlopers. A Talassii's Lair is a penitentiary, with animate chains that tangle intruders, and guards who repeat each prisoner's crimes by rote. Some Lairs go beyond secular fears and ascend to the religious. Gehinnom, Tartarus, Yomi — afterlives are often places of divine punishment, and Beasts with hellish Lairs can exploit religious fears to maximize Satiety and lessons. They may even trick prey into believing they've had near-death experiences, scaring them straight with the fear of eternal damnation.

KINSHIP

Nemeses are experts on the customs of their cousins. Knowing what passes for a crime among other monsters means fewer mistakes when establishing Kinship, and a foot in the door when the time comes to build on it.

Werewolves obsess over territory: what its bounds are, who can hunt it, and who can enter it at all. The Hunters in Darkness and Iron Masters have this obsession built into their very ethos, so Nemeses who want Kinship with Uratha are well-served in knowing the letter of the law when it comes to territory. Nemeses might serve packs as border guardians, to scare off unwary travelers and other interlopers. Beasts are especially useful in that they have an inbuilt way of breaking into other realms, and can protect Uratha territories on both sides of the Gauntlet. A Nemesis can glut just *thinking* about the byzantine politics of the Shadow.

Changeling customs are complex by necessity. Nemeses find it very pragmatic — making courtiers follow certain narratives to keep the Gentry at bay — and can even help in maintaining these rules. Some changeling courts have no qualms about using fear as a form of control, and Beasts make fearsome enforcers. But punishment and moral “lessons” are tools of the Others, and changelings might see Nemeses as the same kind of abusers. For true Kinship with the Lost, Nemeses must learn restraint and, perhaps, real justice.

In the Underworld, law is hard, fast, and merciless. Sin-Eaters spend lifetimes with ghosts, studying the customs of Dead Dominions that lie beyond the Rivers of Death. Nemeses, especially those with a morbid bent, find this research illustrative. These Beasts worship the Kerberoi, dread guardians of these kingdoms, for their efficient brutality and unyielding sense of order, no matter how nonsensical. The Bound are no strangers to punishing the dead, either. Many Sin-Eaters police ghosts, making sure their business doesn't interfere with that of the living. Nemeses develop strange Nightmares based on the punishment of ghostly indiscretions.

INHERITANCE

Based on their Hunger, Nemeses have a unique view on the Dark Mother's legacy: The Merger and the Retreat are punishments for failing to follow her path, traps for spoiled Children who either miss the forest for the trees, or reject the gift of the Devouring. It's difficult for Nemeses to see the Dark Mother as

anything but a disciplinarian, but she does reward merit from time to time. Incarnate Nemeses, then, are those who think they can impress her, whether by perfecting their punishments, or expanding them beyond mortal concerns. Rampant Nemeses drown in trivialities and arcane rules, and Unfettered lose sight of what little justification they had in the first place.

Becoming Incarnate is awkward for Nemeses. Their stringent outlooks hide the broader path they have to take. Some start by looking to the Dark Mother's legacy — rather than following human codes, they punish other Children in her name. One disciplines Beasts who overfeed, and takes the Myth of the Ascetic Master. Another punishes those who *underfeed*, and takes the Myth of the Indulgent Warden. Yet another hunts those who fail to deal with Heroes, and takes the Myth of the Faithful Militant. Other Nemeses ignore their siblings all together, and focus their efforts on the Beast slayers themselves. Sometimes, turning the tables on a Hero means forgiveness. Rather than killing her enemy, the Beast punishes his ego by letting him go, and moves on to greater stories.

The soon-to-be Rampant Nemesis filters every action in black or white, and he has absolute certainty about which is which. Mercy is a distant echo — the scale of the crime is unimportant, only that it must be rebuked. By that point, he usually only has one violent punishment anymore, and he repeats it to the point of mania. His understanding of morality and justice are so far off the human baseline that the only real choice is to Merge. What little conscience he has left breaks apart with the Lair. Rampant Nemeses are the stuff of playground urban legends: *Don't walk in the woods after midnight or the rougarou will drink your blood*. These creatures are notoriously smallminded, enforcing pointless rules with disproportionate vigor.

The Retreat is the likeliest path Nemeses take for Inheritance, especially if they burn out trying to become Incarnate. Comprehending a transcendental idea of justice can become deeply inane in the face of the Horror's desires, especially if the Beast's lessons get lost in the shock of feeding. She starts to question what gives *her* a right punish people, or realizes she never had one at all. The other Hungers at least get a concrete return on Satiety. Influence, prey, wealth, pleasure, leverage...even mindless destruction is more rewarding than being a rules stickler. A Beast who comes to think this way realizes her Horror will always be better judge of these things, and she sets it free. Unfettered Nemeses create territories with obscure codes that shift with their whims, feeding on anyone unfortunate enough to break them in their dreams.

While rarer than these Inheritances, Nemeses pursue the Inversion (p. 161) more than any other Beasts. An Inverted Nemesis has an unwavering sense of justice, able to enter her prey's mindset with little effort. To these “heroes,” Beasts, more than any other supernatural being, are sinners worthy of punishment.

FEEDING-PREFERENCE

Nemeses are notorious for their unfairness, and frequently that's the point of their lessons. *Life's not fair* isn't the most original moral, but it can be effective in the right hands. That said,





many Nemeses prefer their Hunger to have a more utilitarian outlet; just as they can be cruel heralds of injustice, Nemeses can be protectors. These Beasts defend chosen groups of people, punishing those who would harm the weak, or bullies who prey on certain cultures and subcultures. Nemeses who are less interested in social justice protect concepts: Lawyers help lock criminals up, protecting the rule of law; scholars preserve knowledge, attacking liars and censors.

What the Nemesis punishes isn't as important as the punishment itself, but it can guide her hunting methods. Cautious Beasts choose what to punish based on how easily they can hide their true motives, or if they can create contexts. A Beast who punishes rudeness creates social stigma through the grapevine, rather than attacking her victims publicly. Defining this Hunger doesn't have to be as cut and dry as holding people to codes of conduct, though. Nemeses might be harbingers of poetic justice, punishing misers by stealing their wealth, or humiliating bigots by revealing their views to the public. Horrors are usually indifferent to the victim's worthiness; they can be as petty or important as a Beast likes, since Satiety is tied to the extent of the punishment, not the crime. Prey selection, then, depends on the Legend. A Jealous Nemesis takes her anger out on her social betters, those she thinks haven't earned their positions; an Impartial Nemesis revenges on people who abuse their authority.

The Hunger for Punishment is the easiest to translate into lessons. By definition, punishments amend behavior, but Nemeses who take that seriously (rather than reveling in cruelty) often find themselves at odds with their Horrors. A Horror doesn't really care about fairness. The spirit of the rule is irrelevant, just as long as the Beast enforces the letter. If that means targeting innocents, so be it. A Horror might not be satisfied unless the punishment is specifically unjust. Nemeses can mitigate harm to their victims by keeping their Satiety in the middle — in spite of the danger of Anathema, some Beasts never punish too harshly, even if they still target people who don't really deserve it.

PREDATORS

Difference between you and me? Clarity. We're both hunters, I grant you that. Sure, you like shooting my kind with a 12 gauge so you can string their teeth into...would you call a bolo...? Forget it. Suffice it to say, you get your rocks off killing me and mine. I respect that. You do you. Stop yelling. There. So, clarity. I live for the hunt, but I'm a monster for chrissake. The Big Bad Wolf ain't a real repentant type. Conversely, you're a dude who thinks he's Rambo. See? Clarity! I like to think I hunt worse folks than you do...but let's not get bogged down on the moral calculus. Neither of us is gonna win on that one. Hey, see that cliff? Think you can climb it? Jesus, shut up, you're gonna wake my wife. Look, I respect you enough as a fellow hunter that I'm not gonna kill you. But first, I've gotta make this what my kind call a teachable moment.

DREAMS

Many Predators speak of being hunted before the Devouring. Their minds wander in daydreams and idle distractions, when

suddenly they feel it — a chill in their spines and a breath on the back of their necks. Sometimes it claws up their legs.

When their attentions wane, the feeling only brushes them, but in sleep, it takes form. It's rarely as simple as running through the woods, monster snapping at her heels, but the dreamer knows she's being pursued. Maybe it's a stalker, following her through distorted city blocks. Maybe it's a clock on a wall, looming over a test she didn't study for and ticking toward her fate. Anxiety is a wolf that watches from the corner of her eye, and waits for her to blink. The harder she tries to escape, the closer it gets. She doesn't want to stay still, but she can't really move — either way, she's playing its game. She can challenge it directly, and try to beat it back, but every time she gets up close to strike, the dream ends.

Sleep becomes a chore. She tries pills and coffee and speed, anything to help her clutch a few more lucid seconds of alone time, but when sheer inertia takes her, she's on the run again. She's prey, and that's what prey does. But that's not what she wants to be. One night, she realizes what side of the chase she should be on, and what the creature's tried to tell her all her life. Instead of fighting it, she makes it her friend. She embraces her pursuer, and as it eats her alive they become one. In the Lair where once she fled, she finally feels alone, and ready to stalk her own prey.

MYTHICAL INSPIRATIONS

Kawakos are creatures of decorum. Though the river tiger of Japan hunts our flesh, he also demands our respect. If a traveler offers him the appropriate politesse, he'll give her no trouble. The water bowl that rests upon his head drains as he bows, and if the traveler refills it he'll be in her debt. Humans who *don't* show him respect are fair game, and few legends speak of any mercy if he has a victim in mind. He may drag the traveler's horse into the river to deprive her of escape, or lure her in himself, and drown her beneath the rapids.

The Wendigo haunts North America's coldest reaches. Gaunt and gray with a heart of ice, the cannibal spirit isn't frightening merely for its Hunger; it's the nature of things for monsters to prey on humans. Rather, the Algonquin fear the wendigo because it can be anyone. Pushed to starvation in the dead of winter, men and women transform into the creature, devouring loved ones and profaning their bodies. Some believe the wendigo is an Unfettered Beast, one that's found a way to claim bodies and feed in the material realm. Others say the same tainted Horror has passed among Beasts for centuries, blazing out quickly and surviving each host's death. Whatever the truth, Predators see the wendigo as a cautionary tale — that even a Beast can turn on its family.

Jasy Jatere has a complicated mythology. The Guaraní people say his heritage is cursed, being the child of an evil spirit and a mortal woman, but his Legend gets muddled beyond those origins. Called lord of the siesta, he steals into sleeping villages, searching for children who refuse to nap. Childlike himself, he approves of their disobedience, wishing to play with them until the grownups wake. However, other stories speak of a more sinister agenda. They tell of scooped-out eyes

THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY

Sometimes, very brave — or very naïve — Predators ally with Heroes, looking to hunt their fellow Beasts with an expert partner. While not exactly capable of Kinship, Heroes do have a rightful place in the Primordial Dream's ecology, but the rarity of these arrangements is matched only by the violence of their falling out. Once their mutual prey is dead, it's only a matter of time before the Hero (or the Beast) sees a chance for another trophy.

and druggings, and feeding bodies to a cannibal brother. Many Predators believe Jasy is Divergent (p. 158), with the Beast side protecting children from its Horror's vile designs.

HORRORS

Predator Horrors are the most overt of all Beasts. They need little subtlety on the hunt, and even quiet stalkers can have awe-inspiring forms. Anakim have some of the most iconic: dragons, goblins, trolls, and other members of the medieval bestiary make up their ranks. Even the detached Inguma take a vicious edge, as faceless, titanic soldiers, or whole armies. More often than other Hungers, Predators take a chimeric look, amalgamating powerful animals into apex terrors. Some Beasts believe creatures like the griffin, manticore, and gajasimha were Predators with powerful Legends (or Myths) who spread fear into the very fabrics of their civilizations.

Conversely, where their Horrors are august and brutal, Predator Lairs are unassuming. Frightening, perhaps, but Predators find that “less is more” serves their purposes best. It's easier for prey to get lost in bending tunnels when they have no landmarks to guide them. A Predator who hunts the corporate world rules over an endless maze of cubicles, with walls tall enough that her victims can't see what lurks beyond. More sadistic predators don't bother with walls or blind corners at all, hunting open cityscapes and savannas where victims have nowhere to run.

KINSHIP

The Predators have an awkward relationship with their Kin. Vampires hunt to survive and procreate, and werewolves kill for the sacred Moon, but Predators feed for the sheer satisfaction. Many supernatural beings see these Beasts as the logical extremes of their own hunting urges, and prefer not to hold up that particular mirror.

Naïve Predators think of vampires as younger siblings — just as deadly, but less sophisticated. Kindred have little patience for presumptions, but respectful Predators can teach vampires how to refine their hunts. Blood is a finite resource, but fear is self-perpetuating. Predators teach Kindred to become nodes of fear to better control their herds. Even Nosferatu can learn new ways to wield their Nightmares. Curiously, though, vampiric influence can sometimes soften Predators. Watching Kindred feed is enough to sate the Horror, and a Predator with misgivings about her Hunger might use that as a stopgap. This is true of all Beasts, but violent Predators suffer harsher consequences than their siblings do. Watching a vampire hunt is as good as methadone.

Werewolves afford special respect from the Predators. Uratha are scions of the greatest god of the hunt, and as progeni-

tor monsters go, the Dark Mother's Legend is perhaps surpassed only by *Urfarah*. Spiritual Predators believe these divinities were one and the same, and hold the Uratha as their closest cousins, or at least evolutionary descendants of some Incarnate, lupine Beast. Regardless of mythology, Predators who bond with werewolves find themselves partaking in a much more focused hunt. The *Siskur-Dah* is both a spiritual undertaking and an essential aspect of Uratha physiology. On the Sacred Hunt, Predators expand their Hungers beyond Satiety, and put their drives to a holy purpose. But this kind of mixed pack isn't limited to the Moon tribes. The Pure can wield a Predator's terror-tinged Resonance as a ward (or a cage) for the humans in their territories.

Hunters with supernatural abilities share a bit of Kinship with the Begotten, and among Beasts, Predators are more willing to get in bed with the enemy. Similarity to Heroes notwithstanding, hunters make useful allies, with abilities and tactics purpose-built for taking down powerful prey. A Beast wanting to contribute to society more directly than teaching lessons could take up a quasi-Vigil, “ethically” feeding and riding the night of more dangerous monsters. Hunters of the Lucifuge claim they hunt to cleanse themselves of a demonic family shame, and a religious Predator might find that good-works ethic attractive. Other Beasts just like to turn a profit. Rumors sometimes surface of a Cheiron Group VP who keeps a Predator on her secret payroll. Supposedly, he uses Kinship to trick other monsters into becoming grist for the company's experiments. Of course, rumors *also* speak of a Hero employed by Cheiron, and not just under the table...

INHERITANCE

The Predators don't have much use for Inheritance. Many think they understand the Begotten condition far better than their siblings. In their eyes, the Hunger for Prey is the most pure form of the Dark Mother's legacy. They have enough answers in the here and now, and they can all be found in flesh, blood, and fear, not fairy tales of transcendence. That being said, Predators with vision take the Incarnate path. Those who Merge — by far the most common — give in to their bloodlust, and those who Retreat look for a desperate compromise.

The Incarnate Inheritance is the hardest for Predators to attain. It means rethinking the hunt in a wider context, which is difficult considering how narrow their Hunger can be. Many Predators think the way forward is through mass slaughter, but this only puts quantity over quality. The road to Incarnation opens by redefining the hunt, and the prey. Some Predators defy expectations. They forge Myths based on compassion and



conservation rather than instinct. Others choose more potent prey: Rampant Beasts, ancient Heroes, werewolf packs, or entire supernatural subcultures. The whole hive becomes their hunting grounds, and those who wish to feed must prove their worth or die at their claws.

Most Predators choose the Merger, if they do decide to pursue Inheritance. The Rampant Predator is the apotheosis of the hunt. Humanity lost its killer instinct long ago, and these Begotten discard their mortal halves as dead weight dragging down their true heritage. They look upon the confines of their Lairs and see a cage. With the Merger, Predators don't so much destroy their Lairs as devour them, using them as sustenance to fuel their transformations. Despite their fealty to the hunt as the highest pursuit, Rampant Predators burn out fast. Whatever subtleties their Hungers had get swallowed with their Lairs. They make prime targets for Heroes, or broods that don't want carnivores poaching their territories.

Unfettered Predators are rare. Initiating the Retreat often means submitting to another hunter, and Predators who decide to end their Legends prefer to die by their own claws out of pride. Others just want a quiet suicide to end the cycle of violence. Beasts who choose the Retreat do so because they see no other path. Remaining as they are becomes untenable, the Merger means becoming a true monster, and Incarnation eludes them. They release the Horror so it can go on to greater hunts, unbound by human limitations, but confined to a realm where it can do less direct harm. Indeed, Unfettered Predators usually hunt others of their kind, or break into Lairs to feast on Horrors.

Inquisitive Predators discover the stranger Inheritances. Those who want to take a harder road, one where the hunt is all and survival is at a premium, seek Erasure. With the Horror Eliminated, the Beast becomes a Predator of her own kind, forced to feed on their flesh lest she fall back to the sleep of humanity. Predators with a sense of fatalism and a thirst for challenge see this outcome as a way to experience real stakes on the hunt, rather than dominating fragile humans. For similar reasons, bitterer Predators choose Inversion.

FEEDING-PREFERENCE

Predators aren't all slashers stalking teenagers through the woods. The boardroom Predator is no less a monster than the survivalist, but a corporate raider has a problem his murderous sibling doesn't, in that business people generally don't shank their rivals at the end of hostile takeovers. Killing isn't required for Predators to feed, but the Horror won't be sated unless the Beast does harm. Some Predators eschew violence by trading in their talons for barbed words, publically humiliating their prey: One Anakim manages political campaigns, notorious for negative ads and the crushing defeats he deals on his candidate's rivals. Physically inclined, but ultimately pacifist Beasts define this Hunger through competition, feeding by triumphing over their victims: A Makara Predator is a world-class swimmer, whose wake can choke (but never drowns) her rivals.

Horrors don't have to be satisfied with races and name-calling, though. Many demand blood no matter how much their Beasts prefer chess matches over beatings. Of all the

Hungers, Predators struggle the most with their souls, but those who refuse to become mindless killers can find balance if they channel their urges into lessons. An Inguma becomes a doctor because she genuinely wants to help people, but she also hunts hypochondriacs and fakers in her spare time. She never really hurts them, but they think twice before they waste a doctor's time again. If a Predator truly can't bear to harm humans, but needs to sate a bloodlust, she can hunt animals and keep her Satiety very low. The Horror does its best to make her life miserable, of course.

Predators with more amiable Legends might look for consenting prey, who get a thrill from being pursued. A few adrenaline junkies like to be stalked and roughed up, and a Mindful Beast could feed and make good money. Not all Predators have that level of self-control, though. A Deceptive Beast takes the same scenario and flips it on her prey, opening a Primordial Pathway to take him for a ride he never dreamed of.

RAVAGERS

The world quakes before him, sending the helpless masses running in fear. Their screams are discordant music to his ears, but the fear isn't what he's listening for. The sound he's looking for comes from even deeper within, comes once the fear passes and the shock has worn off. What he's looking for is anguish. He wants to see their faces pull and twist as they claw their hollowed cheeks, haunted by the experience but more so by the loss. The screams rise in a crescendo that swallows him, tearing him apart with an agony so perfect he almost doesn't realize he, too, is being destroyed. He has never felt so whole.

DREAMS

Ravagers are tormented with nightmares of loss and insecurity. The Horrors lurking beneath their skin long to uproot and displace, defying concepts like comfort and stability. The scenes a Ravager witnesses shift rapidly, sending him tumbling headlong through disaster after disaster, each moment flickering by just as he can grasp what he's seeing. Even the structure of his dream robs him of a stable footing, the rapid-fire imagery enough to slowly drive him mad. He fears sleep, terrified of the horrific scenarios his mind conjures. It isn't until his body can no longer fight back its biological need for sleep that he succumbs, left defenseless as his awareness abandons him and delivers him to the hungry maw of the Horror waiting introduce itself through his Devouring. His Hunger for Ruin becomes apparent when he finally accepts himself for the Beast he is, and from that moment on, he doesn't suffer with them in his dreams. He watches as they lose everything they've built and fought for, happy to remain in the shadows and soak up their despair.

MYTHICAL INSPIRATIONS

The manticore prides herself on her combination of powerful and deadly creatures, the terrible beauty of her requisite parts just as apparent as the exquisite danger. The roar of the lion that rumbles in her chest robs her victims of comfort, and the poison in her scorpion's tail spreads unease amongst them,

turning friends and families against each other until anything resembling trust is gone.

On the Polynesian islands dotted across the Pacific, the blare of a conch shell is the only warning that the night marchers are coming. Nothing can stop them now that their procession has begun, and anything that stands in their way won't be there for long. Villages cower in the wake of their passage, a swath of their abandoned homes now just a field of debris, marking where the marchers passed through. It's time to rebuild again, piling the fragments of wood to make a pyre for those who didn't leave in time.

The kappa doesn't always need to go to extremes, though he has no objection to doing so. He enjoys swinging wildly back and forth in the severity of his feeding, one day lurking in a favorite haunt to make sure the community will never feel safe there, the next leaving a corpse in the center of town, covered in bites that look suspiciously human. He doesn't particularly care for or crave the taste, but he knows the shock and fear that will rip through the town is worth a few mouthfuls.

HORRORS

Ravagers are built to destroy, and withstand the destruction they wreak. The Horrors that Hunger for Ruin are tailored to the variety they enjoy most, and value function over form. A Ravager that relishes destroying buildings and physical property is layered in heavy slabs of muscle, rough-hewn and solid as a boulder. One that prefers infiltration and destroying a community's sense of security is lean and wiry, capable of slipping in and out of places unnoticed and hiding easily in plain sight. Often, Ravagers are a horrific mashup of any number of different but useful features: wickedly curved claws meant to leave signs of their passage, poisonous barbs or appendages that ooze and drip vile and viscous fluids, and glittering, razor-sharp scales can all appear on the same Horror. As Ravagers enjoy taking in the effects of their actions more than actually perpetrating them, it's not uncommon to see Horrors with exaggerated sensory organs. Multiple glittering eyes that face in all directions, catlike ears that prick to the sounds of terror and anguish, or a snakelike tongue that allows them to taste their prey's fear allow the Ravager to enjoy their meal to the fullest.

Ravager Lairs rob intruders of their energy and conviction. The environment itself saps the life out of any who visit the Lair, while the Horror lounges comfortably and waits for its meal. Traits that isolate individuals or disorient them make up the bulk of a Ravager's Lairs, as well as effects that torment their targets or drive them to madness. They grind and crush, providing no place to hide from the carnage. They hold the voices of your loved ones, whispering how much they despise you. Nothing is the same when you look at it twice, and no matter how many ventured here with you, you will always feel alone. Horrors in these Lairs enjoy harrying their prey indirectly over confronting them outright...at least, not until the very last moment.

KINSHIP

Ravagers tend not to have preferences with the creatures they associate with, as anyone with particularly destructive

tendencies will do. Partners in crime can come from nearly anywhere for these Beasts, but usually turn up among those outcast from their own supernatural community. Ravagers are excellent resources in enacting revenge, as they live to tear property apart and break the bonds connecting the closest of friends and lovers.

While it's a subtle disturbance and may not be enough to satisfy a more violent Beast, Prometheans as a whole spread discord simply by interacting with the mortal world. Their uncontrollable spreading of the Wasteland wherever they roam makes a Ravager's job easier, but often denies him a hearty meal, offering instead something meager. It's easy enough for Ravagers to stir the pot when a Promethean is around, but they walk a thin line; bringing too much attention to the unnatural member of society may expose them and bring the community together as they attempt to drive the intruder out. Of course, if the Beast doesn't particularly care for the Promethean, she may be perfectly content to orchestrate the destruction of the Promethean's life, driving her to lash out with her Torment or finding ways to keep her in one place, simply to see what happens when things go too far. Upsetting the delicate balance of a Promethean's life is a simple task, but the sheer scale of the consequences means a satisfying meal for the Beast.

When looking for others who like to smash, break, and destroy, Ravagers are always in good company among werewolves. Though a pack may be wary of a Beast at first, they quickly learn how difficult it can be to drive one out of their territory, finding it easier to either arrange a truce or work together. Werewolves often try to rationalize Beasts along the lines they are familiar with, but pinning the Beast and her Horror down on the lines of spirits proves a subject of debate. Regardless of how she is classified by them, any Beast willing to play along with the werewolves' designs finds plenty of opportunity for satisfying her hunger in the most visceral ways. The violent and reclusive nature of werewolves means she rarely has to hide her Hunger from them, instead highlighting it as a strength.

Of course, in a tight-knit group like a pack, some of the heartiest meals can come from disturbing the close bonds among its members. Often the last thing a Ravager can accomplish before she chooses to move on, the implosion of a werewolf pack, or even just the ousting of one of its members, is no small task. This is the kind of plot the Beast seeds over months or years; it's in her best interest to flee shortly after she accomplishes her goal. While satisfying, meddling with the dynamics of a werewolf pack is incredibly dangerous. If her attempt fails and her treachery is brought to light, she can count on the entire pack turning against her in an effort to bring her down. While winning the fight would also provide a substantial meal for her Horror, a pack of werewolves looking to wipe her out stands a good chance of succeeding.

INHERITANCE

Ravagers have a love-hate relationship with Inheritance. It can be difficult for them to attain, as building goes in direct opposition to their Hunger, but nonetheless incredibly satisfying. The forethought required to achieve Inheritance as a Ravager requires a





lifetime of dedication and careful planning, painstakingly marking the steps forward and back to achieve whatever goal it is that the Beast desires. All the while, the Horror paces and balks, wanting little more than destruction, and requiring a strong hand to act as its guide. A Ravager Incarnate may not be able to remain in one place for long, but he knows wherever he treads, disaster and desolation lie in his wake. Merging is most natural for these Beasts, destroying the safety and comfort of their own Lairs, uniting their Horrors with their own bodies and minds to lay waste until the end of time (or their abrupt end at the hand of an enemy). Intentional Retreat comes when a Beast feels she is no longer able to fulfill her Horror's desires, and wishes to let the creature roam free. Inversion arrives when the Beast's destructive tendencies turn inward, and he seeks to repent for all he's done.

Ravagers that seek the status of Incarnate can quickly become pariahs if they're not careful in their pursuits. If the Beast is found out as the source of the discord she sows, not only does it rob her of her meal, it can unite her prey against her and lose her a hunting ground. When seeking this fate, Beasts cherry pick Chambers that are far-flung, creating Lairs that span countries and continents, spreading their destruction as much as they can and preventing them from ruining their own opportunities before they begin. It can be the most difficult Inheritance for Ravagers in particular to reach, due to the precision it takes to get there, but those that manage it are unstoppable forces of destruction.

While a Ravager Incarnate may break down the bond that holds a community together, a Ravager Rampant will simply destroy the entire neighborhood down to the foundations. The unholy Merger of Beast and Horror no longer cares for the subtlety of tearing apart the bonds among a family, preferring to destroy the house they live in and watch them cower without shelter. Once attaining this Inheritance, the Beast targets only those things he can physically rend apart. This may lead to further, unintended destruction — someone on the verge of getting back together with an ex finds her car has been totaled after her girlfriend borrowed it, and breaks the relationship off for good — but the direct shock of finding something precious completely destroyed is all the Beast seeks once Merged. The sacrifice of the Lair to attain this state is almost poetic, as the Beast must destroy her home in the Primordial Dream to fully invite her Horror into herself.

There is no solace where an Unfettered Ravager roams. The very earth is poisoned with discord, and the Bright Dream plagued with isolation and animosity. A Beast that has offered her Horror free roam or fallen while it Slumbered knows that the place she makes her last stand will never again be home to comfort or security, that no meaningful relationships will be fostered there, and any attempts to build up the land will only end in tragedy. These Horrors that seek to destroy don't have much interest in plumbing the depths of the Primordial Dream, unless there is promise of something it can ruin nearby; with the dreams of mortals so close, they prefer to continue chipping away at the facade of safety in human society and leave them naked and bare again in the face of all their fears.

The Inverted Ravager doesn't necessarily seek to make amends. He knows what he has done, and he knows that his

brothers and sister are out there still. He is grimly determined to end as much of it as he can, turning his Horror's old appetite against it and everything like it. He will not rest until he is made to, and he will take everyone who comes for him down if he can. Let the Heroes take care of the Begotten; he aims to leave a scar on the face of the Dark Mother herself.

FEEDING PREFERENCE

Two things narrow down a Ravager's feeding preference: what emotion the Horror is looking to elicit, and how to further her Legend. A Beast with the Insidious Legend needs to find widespread but subtle ways to unsettle a community to feed at higher Satiety, sowing seeds that come to fruition all at once, while one with the Brutal Legend may benefit more from immediate and shocking revelations. Each has advantages and challenges; if the former is too subtle or too obvious, she risks never getting her meal, or not getting nearly enough out of it, while the latter must find ways to continually escalate the events he orchestrates to get anything at all.

Consider also the character's Family when choosing a preference, and how her Nightmares and Atavisms may color her desires. The same Legend can mean entirely separate things to different Families, and can result in widely differing tastes. A Relentless Namtaru might rot things from the inside out, spreading an unstoppable infestation that causes its prey to flee, while a Makara instead pounds away with the steadfast regularity of the ocean tide, eroding the edges first and penning victims in. They both have their moments of satisfaction — the realization that the very foundation they built on is destroyed and everything else will follow for the Namtaru, and that there is no escape and no way to avoid their fate for the Makara — but the methods of getting there and the emotions they draw out are different.

Ravagers often lead solitary lives, due to their feeding habits. Creating close relationships with others is often just a means to an end, creating a bond specifically to break it off and watch the target crumble. The path of destruction Ravagers leave in their wake means they rarely set down roots or linger. If they do, the unfortunate settlement they choose becomes little more than a stage for their Horror's desires. The numbers of "accidents" rise, violent crime increases, any camaraderie between neighbors dissolves as the Beast sates herself, and when there is nothing left, she moves on. Not always a trail of shuttered windows and broken-down buildings, more insidious Ravagers will leave a trail of broken hearts and abandoned engagement rings, or start-up businesses shuttered in a year, awash in broken dreams. So long as the bottom drops out beneath his target and all she ever wanted is shattered, a Ravager will feed.

TYRANTS

They kneel at her feet, whispering and whimpering, refusing to meet her gaze. She can feel herself towering above them, forcing them down with her presence alone. No one dares defy her here, or even raises their voice above the quietest murmur. This is how she wants it. Everything bends to her will, the very fabric of reality reshaping itself if it displeases her.

In the space of a breath, every gaze in the room shifts. The weight of 100 pairs of eyes fall on her, judging, mocking, and she

crumbles beneath them. She is naked and exposed, brought to heel without a word. She wakes in a cold sweat, sobbing and humiliated without knowing why.

DREAMS

Tyrants suffer from dreams of insecurity. Their Horrors Hunger for Power, and balk in the face of uncertainty or inferiority. A Beast hosting such a Horror experiences nightmares that linger uncomfortably long on situations where she is lesser: the echoing laughter of a crowd of tormenters, a boot driving her face into the dirt as she tries in vain to stand, a voice whispering to her from the dark that she is nothing and her efforts are meaningless. Her dreams are one long sequence of subjugation in every form imaginable, weighing on her even as she wakes, to the point where lying down at night makes her ashamed. Succumbing to sleep is just one more way of giving in. When she acknowledges that these things only happen if she lets them, she comes into her heritage, welcoming her Horror on equal terms and turning the tide. The laughter dies, drowned out by her own insane cackle; the ankle above the boot snaps as she finally gets a good grip; the words meant to weaken her reveal their own insecurities, and she mounts her own attack. All bend before her as she claims her rightful place in the pecking order.

MYTHICAL INSPIRATIONS

The djinn and ifrits of Arabian and Islamic culture have long reveled in granting wishes on their own terms, either exploiting an ill-chosen turn of phrase or deliberately misinterpreting the requests presented to them to exert their will. The exact moment their prey realizes they will never truly have what they want is always the most satisfying, though refusing to entertain the following arguments and demands makes a close second. The best is when they attempt to fix their wish with more wishes.

The sphinx is well-known for her habits of withholding crucial pieces of information or hoarding important artifacts, forcing those that seek them to answer impossible riddles or perform bizarre and specific tasks to earn their prize. She enjoys having them are her mercy, holding what they want just out of their reach. Those that fail to answer her questions properly or complete the challenge she has given them are dealt with, subjugated with extreme prejudice.

The roc rules from on high, demanding tribute from those that dwell below them, and occasionally flying low enough to cast its shadow on their otherwise-peaceful lives. He makes sure they never forget that they are only safe as long as he is satisfied, and if they do not give him what he wants, he will simply take it. They paint wings over their beds to protect themselves from him, and he allows them this habit; it ensures they will never forget that he rules them all.

HORRORS

Tyrants can occupy almost any form, as there are any number of ways to exert power over another. Some are more obvious — an Anakim Tyrant tends to have the sheer physical mass it requires to beat another into submission. Other families

might not have features the directly relate to their Hunger, but that offer advantages instead. Most Tyrants have tall, towering Horrors, and exude a presence that precedes them as they approach. This could be a physical pressure that their prey feels, a unique sound or scent that announces them, or an aura of dread that comes over a crowd just before their tormenter appears. The features a Tyrant Horror has are imperious ones, designed to make those that view it feel inferior. Piercing eyes, elongated and inescapable limbs, and heavy musculature all fit for something that Hungers for Power, depending on the particulars of the Horror's feeding habits.

Tyrant's Lairs seek to break down those that enter them wrongly. Their Traits specialize in demoralizing their quarry and forcing them to confront situations that they can do nothing about. A particularly mischievous Tyrant may even grant a few limited immunities to a single member of a group that enters, forcing the individual to watch their friends suffer while they are unaffected, and can do nothing to help. The Traits Tyrants favor are pervasive and unavoidable, tapping into the most primal fears that cripple humanity. The weather is likely oppressive and a number of Tyrant Lairs are lit poorly, if they have any light at all. Most also interfere with technology, leaving intruders without a way of contacting anyone else. A number of Tyrants also elect to make their Lairs inescapable in one way or another, cutting off all chances of reaching the outside world in any way. Alone and helpless, the trapped prey is easily overpowered.

KINSHIP

A Beast that Hungers for Power is by necessity a social creature. Some Tyrants enjoy collecting a crew of friends and followers, positioning themselves as both ringleader and mastermind and orchestrating the workings of their group, while others associate more distantly and reluctantly, preferring to be an unreachable and intimidating figure. While a Tyrant doesn't need close relationships to control in order to feed, some prefer the ease of having a group of dedicated servants at their beck and call, easy fodder to be subdued and cowed into submission whenever the Horror begins to clamor for sustenance.

When associating with supernatural beings outside of the Families of the Begotten, Tyrants gravitate in a few directions. Easiest and most convenient for a Tyrant to attach themselves to is a vampire, as their never-ending squabbles and political games are a constant exchange of power. Whether she mills about the outskirts of their community and waits for the opportune moment to tip the scale or bonds closely enough with an individual to immerse herself in the community using Passing Resemblance, a Tyrant finds herself at home and in good company in the cutthroat world of the Kindred. Finding the right companion might be a tricky task, as vampires have a tendency to be a secretive and distrustful of outsiders, but if a Beast manages to gain the trust of a vampire, she may never have to worry about her next meal again.

Tenuous as relations with vampires may be, tensions rise even higher with mages. Tyrants either adore or despise being in the presence of the Awakened, as they have the power to shape the world according to their will. While this might mean





they can aid the Beast in reaching her goal, a mage can also easily hinder a Beast using the same power. Additionally, if a Beast is enlisting the help of a mage, she is tacitly handing over some of her own power and relying on the mage to aid her in the exact way she requests. As such, most Tyrants won't trust another with any crucial tasks. Hinging their machinations on the actions of another goes directly against their habits, but working alongside someone with such versatile talent as mages is sometimes worth the discomfort.

INHERITANCE

Tyrants that seek Inheritance do so with single-minded zeal. Nothing is so satisfying to those that Hunger for Power as reaching a higher state or status, and Inheritance is the embodiment of all the Beast is. To become Incarnate is the ideal goal for Tyrants, preserving her sense of self and furthering her reach, and Merger is an option for those with baser desires, who are willing to lose their humanity in the pursuit of their Hunger, yet retain their physical presence. Retreat for a Tyrant is a tricky thing; while some might consider it intolerable to sacrifice themselves that their Horror and its Hunger may continue on its own, others may find relief in freeing themselves from the force dominating their lives — even if they must die to do so.

Attaining that status of Incarnate appeals most to Tyrants, but to achieve such a level of notoriety and control takes decades of dedication and effort. To a Tyrant, the process becomes a series of logical steps: acquire Chambers, grow her Lair, become the Apex, spread her Legend. She pursues her goal with surgical precision, striking where she knows the effects will be widespread and deeply impactful, and often communes with her Horror to understand its desires more fully. One day, if all goes well, she will never have to part with it again.

A Rampant Tyrant has come to realize that the Primordial Dream is not the proper stage for his Hunger, and instead seeks to inflict it on others in a more visceral, physical sense. His Lair has marked his triumphs in the past, but he knows that having hunting grounds will be better. He feels more whole in his Lair and Merged with his Horror, and he knows its power and the nightmares it causes when he hasn't fed. The nightmares aren't enough anymore, and instead he draws his Horror from its home and into himself. He knows its full power, and now the waking world will, as well.

The Retreat is sweet relief, a Beast unshackling herself from the tyranny of the Horror that shares her soul, or a final act of defiance, desperately attempting to best a superior foe and reassert herself. Either way, the Horror goes free as the Beast expires. An Unfettered Tyrant dominates the dreamscape around it, no longer bound by the whims and desires of the human body to which it was tied. It is truly the master of its own fate now, and seeks to bring all those it can find to heel. It stalks the Primordial Dream and devours at will, inflicting entire communities with nightmares of helplessness. Over time, those that inhabit its hunting ground grow quiet and weak, bent to the horrific images in their head and the overwhelming sense that they are never alone, and always being judged.

If Retreat is one step too far for the Beast, he has the opportunity to try for Divergence, separating himself from his Horror and leaving

both weakened, but alive. Particularly attractive to those Beasts of quieter, less-aggressive dispositions, it allows them to divorce themselves from the yoke of such an oppressive force as their Horror without having to sacrifice something or pledge themselves to someone else in exchange. Tyrants are unlikely to ever return to their Lair again, for fear of retribution by their oppressive Horrors. Though they know the Horror will not kill them, such a stand in the face of a creature that demands submission will surely inspire some form of revenge.

If separation is not enough and the Beast wants to be free of her Horror once and for all, Erasure is a difficult but promising option. Frequently, the Beast views whatever power will help her replace her soul as the lesser of two evils. Whether or not this proves true once the Erasure is done holds no bearing on what the Beast has sworn, and she risks shackling herself to something far worse than her Horror, but at the very least, the maddening compulsion from the creature is gone if all goes well. Tyrants that seek Erasure want nothing more to be alone in their heads, without another voice issuing demands.

FEEDING-PREFERENCE

Tyrants have some of the most varied options for feeding. Exerting power over a situation or an individual can be done in any number of ways and to vastly varying degrees, also making it one of the most precise ways to feed in the hands of the right Beast. Different methods work better for different Beasts — resorting to physical violence to subdue someone might be an Eshmaki's last resort when Satiety is low, or the only way an Anakim's Horror can be satisfied if it's more than Sated.

Common Legends among Tyrants are those that denote their desire for power. Legends along the lines of Majestic and Authoritative are well-suited to social Beasts, who prefer to deal in erecting power structures that seat themselves at the top, while Punishing or Dominant might be better suited to Beasts that prefer to get up close and personal, besting their prey with physical prowess. Feeding at higher Satiety is more difficult for either of these preferences; merely shutting someone down in a conversation or intimidating him enough to back out of a fight is unlikely to be enough to satisfy a Sated Horror. To gain anything from it, the Beast may have to ensure others witness the occurrence and are also affected by it, or that her actions are severe enough that her victim avoids her entirely from that moment onward.

The Beast's Family also colors exactly how her Horror enjoys feeding and what will satisfy it most. It's the lens through which her Legend is viewed, and further narrows down her preferred hunting style. A Dominant Ugallu fits well in the role of an overbearing leader, the kind to make sure those that serve under him are constantly aware of his watchful presence and fear the repercussions of failing him; a Dominant Talassii, on the other hand, enjoys trapping her victims in circumstances they cannot hope to escape, and forcing them to acknowledge that their fate is no longer in their hands. The anxiety and paranoia caused by the Ugallu is nothing like the vulnerability and despair inflicted by the Talassii, allowing them each their unique preferences within the theme of their Legend.

Among Tyrants are those most and least comfortable with feeding their Horror. Social Tyrants generally have less issue with feeding, especially if they exist in particularly cutthroat fields of work or have acquaintances that are also willing to ruthlessly pursue their ideals. More violent Beasts may have a harder time stomaching the acts they must commit to sate their Horror, refusing to partake in acts that will truly satisfy it; others are glad for the excuse to finally release urges they've been feeling all their lives. It's very possible for a Beast to find a line of work that will allow her to feed without disturbing her conscience; those more squeamish about their Horror's tastes might gravitate toward positions where they already have a position of power over others, and can find easy meals.

WHISPERS

The wisdom of crowds is anonymity, but he can name every face for every secret. A stuttered breath, a fast heart, a twitching brow... they're all stories for his amusement. That smirk steals from the till. That frown hurt the one it most desires. That scar kills. Information is his weapon, and he wields it like a club. Blunt-force truth. The crowd does well to give him space, but that won't stop him for long. The more they move away, the more he knows. Distance only gives him a better view of their tapestries, and whole lives fray as he pulls out the strands. A brave few think they have nothing to hide, but an open book is so much easier to read. He shows them with the pages he rips out, and tells them all the things they didn't want to know about themselves. The crowd will give him his due, or else he'll tell them everything.

DREAMS

She has nightmares of things she couldn't know. The Dark Dream gives her echoes of the secrets she'd learn if she would only listen. She sees crimes that haven't been committed, and lies yet unsaid, a helpless camera bearing witness in gray scanlines. She sweats through restless nights, caught in anxiety loops, wondering if it's real or all paranoid delusion. She avoids those closest to her for fear of letting on, and in sleep-deprived delirium, she blurts out all the things she shouldn't say. When they hurt her for it — when they scream for her silence and scald her with their words — she realizes the dream isn't over.

The nightmare lurches from black-and-white observation to Technicolor participation. She sees herself in all the roles. She's the cheater and the cheated, the liar and the deceived. They beg her not to tell, threatening her with all her own secrets and lies, inking them into her skin and forcing her body to bare them before the world.

That's when she learns the final secret. Maybe another dreamer shows her, or maybe she comes to it herself, but in the patterns of her hidden Legend, she sees what she really is. She is the All-Seeing Eye. She is everywhere. The tattoos drain from her skin, washing over the prey, and as the Horror rises from the ink, all the liars come to know the pain of truth. They prostrate themselves with confession, and beg for mercy as she eats their secrets whole.

MYTHICAL INSPIRATIONS

The Whisper archetype isn't quite as common in mythology as the other Hungers; like the Inguma, the Hunger for Secrets

stems from a relatively modern fear (privacy invasion), although the Ugallu might argue that point. When they do appear in legends, Whispers are often servants, helping to feed the Hungers of other monsters, or acting in the name of higher powers.

The twin ravens Huginn and Muninn cross the globe from dawn to dusk, stealing any morsel of gossip in the name of Allfather Odin. Neither god nor jotunn is safe from their black eyes, and the flutter of their wings means it's far too late to hide from the lord of Valhalla. Huginn feasts on thoughts as they form, taking words from lips to the Raven-God's ear. Muninn scavenges memories and hidden things, picking corpses of the past to add to his master's wisdom.

The xiezhi was an impartial monster. Carrying the bulk of a lion and a cow, and the horn of a unicorn, in the legendary courts of China it sifted the guilty from the innocent with only a glance, revealing lies with a *whack* from its long horn. A most efficient creature, the xiezhi was revered by the bureaucrats, and became an emblem of their authority. The Beast served the needs of the state, and only fed when duty called, sated by the fear of those who dared deceive the law. It did not punish, though. It left that to the courts.

Krampus sees when you've been bad. All year round, his coal-black fur hides him in the dark, and he spies what people do when they think they're all alone. Some say he only preys on children, but adults are far more delicious liars. When *Krampusnacht* comes, his lumps of coal and birch switches remind victims that good behavior isn't seasonal, and that they should always keep an eye toward the shadows.

HORRORS

Whispers have especially symbolic or conceptual Horrors, depending on their Families. Rather than a spider, a Talassii Whisper appears as a living web, with dewdrops filled with secrets dangling on the strands. An Anakim takes the form of a quicksilver cyclops, and its victims see their lies reflected in the mirror soldered to its head in place of an eye. Eyes are a common motif among Whispers — a few are covered in so many eyes they're little else. In the same vein, modern fears give some Beasts more technological forms, with cameras and scanners instead of eyes, and screens that play their victims' private lives on repeat. This symbolism can be more primal, too. Whispers take forms akin to birds and bats, and other things that observe from on high, sometimes even among Families that aren't associated with flight. A Makara Whisper is a great pelican, hiding stolen lore in its distended beak.

It's hard to hide in a Whisper's Lair. Sightlines go on for miles, and light moves with frightening purpose. Ugallu Whispers glide over endless flat plains, where nothing escapes their gazes. Eshmaki stalk pitch-black forests where the only illumination shines off intruders, whose bodies glow brighter the more they have to hide. The Lair might be yet another set of eyes, or made up of mirrored walls and floors lined with reflecting pools. Like their Horrors, Whisper Lairs can be quite symbolic. A Namtaru Lairs in a great theater with no exits, where dream logic compels victims to reenact their secrets for the pleasure of the Horror, a hostile audience out of an actor's worst nightmare.

WHISPER SATIETY

A Whisper feeds by revealing that she knows her prey's secrets. It's not necessary to publicize them, but sometimes that can be more satisfying. How a Beast gathers this information is immaterial: Whispers can be sleuths, secret agents, reporters, gossips, or any combination thereof, but the Horror won't be sated unless the victim knows the jig is up. The bigger the lie, the greater the Satiety. The moment of shock comes when the prey realizes her secret isn't safe anymore.

High Satiety: The Beast must find and reveal a powerful secret about her victim. Unveiling a massive conspiracy, unmasking a serial killer, or outing a demon's Cover would all apply. Many of the lies that come as second nature to supernatural beings qualify at this level.

Moderate Satiety: The Beast's victims must have put some effort into covering up their secrets. Exposing a local political scandal would count, as would confirming rumors of a celebrity's affair, or revealing the membership roll of a violent cult.

Low Satiety: At this level of Satiety, any minor mystery or white lie will do: cracking an email password, publishing a writer's awkward juvenilia, or confronting an employee who called in sick to take a spa day.

KINSHIP

Whispers are notorious for feeding on their cousins. Supernatural beings have the best secrets in the world, and sometimes it's difficult for Whispers to resist snooping into their Kin's affairs. So many creatures dedicate their lives to maintaining some façade or another, and the Whispers take that as a challenge.

Vampires are common targets for Whispers. They have a relatively large population, and their society is built around maintaining the Masquerade, one of the greatest secrets in history (if not the best kept). Cracking the Masquerade — observing a feeding gone wrong, or a Revenant rising from a secret grave — can keep a Whisper sated for months (or it can get her killed). A Beast caught nosing around vampire secrets is likely a dead one. Whispers with sense hire themselves out to Kindred patrons, to spy on rivals in the All Night Society and to gain protection from frenzied payback.

Unlike their bloodsucking cousins, mummies don't particularly care about keeping secrets from mortals. It's the secrets Arisen keep from themselves that attract Beasts. Mummy memories trade well among Whispers, and more than a few take up archeology just to learn Arisen biographies. Lost Irem holds many secrets its last scions aren't privy to. However, Whispers must be careful not to be too flippant: The Deathless are given to great wrath if provoked, and in biblical proportions. A Whisper ingratiates himself with a mummy by providing the lost histories of her enemies, or practical information like tomb sites and cult memberships. He might even join the creature's cult, serving as an oracle or informer among her followers.

Demons and Whispers enjoy a professional rivalry, or so the Whispers like to brag, but the relationship is a bit more one-sided as far as the Unchained see things. Demons are unsurpassed as spies in the supernatural world, and the Whispers covet their ability to embody any role that serves their missions. However, the strange antipathy between the Dark Mother's Children and the God-Machine's constructs can make it margin-

ally safer for Beasts to spy on Infrastructure and angels; some Beasts try to outdo the fallen by serving as information brokers of the Machine's activities, spying on places and people who would be risky for demons to observe. Gnostic Whispers find demons to be fascinating secrets in their own right. Helping one uncover her Cipher won't really provide Satiety, but it might lead to a more holistic worldview. Unraveling her Cover, on the other hand...

INHERITANCE

The Dark Mother's greatest secret is Inheritance. Not many Beasts care *why* she allows her Children to transcend, only that she does. Not so the Whispers. When a Whisper takes the road to Inheritance, he not only learns the method, he deconstructs it. He spends years in study, collecting rumors of other ascended Begotten and the mechanics of their apotheoses. Whispers almost always seek the Incarnate Inheritance, to master the flow of information they've spent their lives observing. They don't often choose to become Rampant, as mindless Hunger makes a poor fit for the subtlety of secrets, and the few Unfettered Whispers are those who can't stand the racket anymore.

To become Incarnate, the Whisper builds a police state. Her agents are everywhere and know everything, and even other Whispers entreat her for mere fragments of her wisdom. She doesn't suffice on regular secrets anymore. No more dull affairs or petty crimes. Her victims are conspiracies and power players, both mundane and occult. The rest of the supernatural community tries to stop her, seeing the existential threat she represents as she rips open Masquerades, Covers, and Lies, but she knows their moves and countermoves before they've thought them up. When her work is complete, she and her Lair become an eye over the city, the Myth of Panopticon, where nothing remains hidden for long.

Rampant Whispers are rare, but those who do initiate the Merger are nightmares for a modern age. Privacy is a commodity, and monsters unchained from the necessity of cloak-and-dagger games can instill paranoia that spies only dream of.

These Beasts are fairytale terrors, hiding under beds and living in closets, tormenting their victims with the violating fear of a hidden observer. Particularly paranoid Beasts exchange rumors of Rampant Whispers who take on virtual forms, Lairing inside computers as virus-like AIs, feeding with cryptic emails and fractured screen caps.

One can know too much. After uncovering too many dirty secrets, Whispers can get jaded, incapable of trusting anyone or anything. Humans, Heroes, Beasts — all live lies, and Whispers who can't deal with that fact release their Horrors to disabuse the world of its self-delusions. An Unfettered Whisper is barely more than one, a ghost who haunts the Primordial Dream in search of any unclaimed secret it can find. Their territories take a deathly silence and a colorless tone; memories sap away if visitors stay too long, as if the very idea of information were being devoured. Those unlucky enough to become lost in these places find their lives leech away, until even their identities are husks.

Of the more arcane Inheritances, the Whispers prefer Erasure. Not every Beast awakens to the ugly side of the world and wants to die. A few would prefer to go back to sleep. Initiating this process is difficult, as it requires spies to become assassins, but if the Whisper succeeds, she can go into her new-found mortality with a wider knowledge of the world's creeping terrors...and a certainty that she wants nothing to do with them.

FEEDING PREFERENCE

Secrets are inherently subjective things, and what seems like a deep, dark lie to one Beast is old news to another. Whisper Horrors can be esoteric in the extreme, some wanting only supernatural secrets, while others prefer lies that harm people *other* than

their immediate victims when revealed. A few Horrors distinguish between lies of omission and lies of commission, feeding only on prey who actively hide the truth. Once a Whisper feeds, it isn't necessary to reveal the secret any further. While a few do, many actively destroy evidence, either as a show of good faith to their victims, or to be sure other Beasts won't learn the same thing.

The signature fear of a Whisper's Family often influences the secrets she hunts. Eshmaki solve shady mysteries and Talassii dig up blackmail fodder. Namtaru lust for creepy secrets where Ugallu revel in humiliating ones. Family also impacts investigatory methods — favored Atavisms can guide a Whisper's stalking, and it doesn't always have to be variations on skulking around for clues. A Makara with Alien Allure doesn't need to go dumpster diving when she can seduce her victim's friends for leads. Legend refines the method even further. A Detached Inguma tracks her victims from as far away as possible, and only gets her hands dirty when she has absolute proof. An Ironic Anakim strikes when his victim's sure she got away with something.

Whispers like to claim they have the most benign Hunger, and while they likely do the least material damage in the long run, many secrets are inherently traumatic, even to Beasts. Some Horrors want vile, disgusting secrets, and Whispers who were squeamish as humans may find that difficult to live on. A Beast can only shoot so many photos of underground sex parties before she gets sick of it. Whispers who have Horrors with repulsive tastes take breaks, or feed from milder sources to prevent burnout and guilt. Guilt is never far off when it comes to the Hunger for Secrets, and it's a fact Whispers struggle with. Telling a murderer you know his crimes is one thing, but how to turn him in without revealing your own double life?



INGUMA

NIGHTMARES OF THE OTHER



"Fall in!" the sergeant cries, and the recruits form a nice, neat line, standing straight and tall. Men and women in the same uniform, all ready to fight the good fight, make her heart swell with pride. As she strides along the line of recruits, one looks unfamiliar. Brown hair, brown eyes, nothing to write home about. She checks her roster and his name patch. Smith, J. Figures.

She barks out the orders for PT and sends them out on the run, two by two. J. Smith takes up the rear, alone. Last she checked, her platoon had an even number of members, but transfer paperwork gets lost all the time. Surely nothing is out of the ordinary. Still, why is the whole platoon running faster?

The Inguma are the youngest Family, only coming into existence with the first cities of humanity. They represent the fear of the outsider, the foreigner, the stranger in the crowd. While not outwardly monstrous, Inguma are somehow not like everyone else, and thus more difficult to understand or influence, which leads to fear. The Outsiders spring directly from humanity's tendency to treat anyone who deviates from the cultural norm as a *thing*, somehow less than human. As demagogues demonized those who fell outside their civilized orthodoxy, they turned this dehumanization into something far more terrifying. When a woman clutches her purse tighter as she walks through a "bad" neighborhood or a new neighbor moves in and vehemently keeps to himself, the Inguma follow shortly after.

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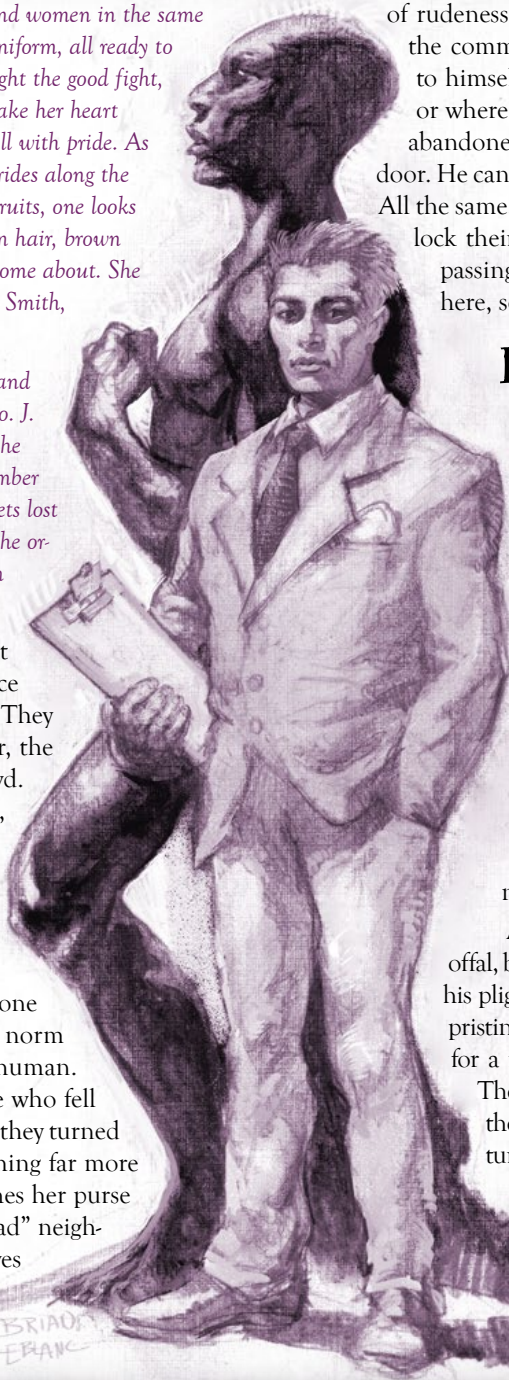
An Outsider projects a sense of wrongness wherever he goes. He may look like he does not belong at all, flouting common dress or custom with little concern about the perception of rudeness. He may look like a respectable member of the community and avoid attracting undue attention to himself, but no one immediately knows who he is or where he comes from. An Inguma could live in an abandoned shack just outside of town or the house next door. He can easily drive a Prius or a van with no windows. All the same, mothers hide their children and grown men lock their doors, glaring through the windows at his passing. Deep down, they know that because he is here, something terrible is about to happen.

LIVES

"Enjoy your flight," she says to countless passengers a day, helping them scan boarding pass after boarding pass. For so many, hers is the last face they see in the airport proper. Every now and again, as she hands the boarding pass back, a passenger has a flash of a thought, barely formed and unbidden: "This might be the last person I ever see on the ground." That passenger trudges down the jetway, clutching his carry-on that much tighter, and the smile she gives the next passenger is just a little wider.

All he wants is a little change. He reeks of his own offal, but his clothes and the cardboard sign describing his plight ("Disabled Homeless Vet, Please Help") are pristine. The upturned hat at his feet yields enough for a meal just from the morning commute crowd. The tech hipsters try to ignore him, terrified at the thought that one bad business decision could turn them into him. The bankers, on the other hand, toss him a quarter for luck before a big meeting.

He has watched her for the past half hour as she nursed that Long Island, looked at the



door, checked her phone, then looked at the door again. Classic stand-up situation. He loosens his tie a bit and remembers the steps from PUA training, which his Captor broodmate still resents him over. He has enough clues to jump right into assumption building, so he just has to throw in a few attraction spikes, initiate kino a couple times, and she'll be thinking of him all night. Whether she wants to or not.

He doesn't remember exactly when he hired this consultant, but her presentation makes immaculate use of the corporate template. "And as you can see here, with this workflow," she explains, using a laser pointer to highlight the proposed change, "you can save about five minutes per onboarding phase per employee." It's a sharp change to how things have always been done, and the old hands in HR will complain, but if her math is right, it will eliminate the need for about half the complainers anyway. He shivers as he considers it, but nods anyway, encouraging her to continue.

STORIES

Mètminwi, from Haiti, gets his name from "maître de minuit," or "master of midnight." Mètminwi stood over two stories tall, with thin, stilt-like legs and arms to match. He looks for anyone staying outside too late at night, and those not smart enough to go indoors become easy prey to catch and eat. His threat keeps people safe at home, even would-be robbers or criminals who could also consider evening travelers easy prey.

The noppera-bo, or faceless ghosts from Japan, impersonate human beings regularly, especially people close to their victims. Multiple noppera-bo appear in individual tales; a single person ignores advice or offers consolation to a stranger, only to find that the people he encounters all wipe off their faces, revealing themselves to not be human at all. The noppera-bo primarily terrify rather than do direct harm, but take no responsibility for any harm their victims may do to themselves in trying to escape.

In Albanian folklore, the Catalan is not merely a man from Spain, but a monster stemming from colonization. After the Almogavars, a class of Catalan soldiers, terrorized the region through the 13th and 14th centuries, the word "Catalan" grew to mean "soulless man" or "ugly, wicked man" to the people who lived there. After a brush with spare Greek mythology, the Catalan transformed into an actual monster with one eye, long legs like the masts of ships, and no knees, so he cannot bend. He is frequently represented as a wild blacksmith that devours human flesh.

HORROR

Dreamers encounter the Inguma in as many ways as they can imagine outsiders who make them feel the slightest bit of unease. A dreamer could find herself pursued by a textbook example of the most terrifying terrorist group of the day, trapped directly in harm's way when the terrorist creates maximum carnage. He could come home to find a stranger present and receive an earful from his family for not recognizing his favorite cousin, who then turns his whole family against him. The Outsider could be the

lover of an unfaithful husband, showing the dreamer just how inadequate she is as a wife, unable to compete with the woman draining her husband's life away with every tryst.

In these dreams, the dreamer almost immediately notices the Outsider is not who she seems. He could a flash of some decidedly inhuman trait, like a patch of scale, blackened eyes, or needle teeth. The Inguma could also not appear monstrous in body at all, but the dreamer witnesses the Outsider committing some sort of heinous act that no one believes her to be capable of doing. The dreamer can never convince his loved ones of the Outsider's threat, even if he is absolutely right about her nature.

BIRTHRIGHT

The Inguma is the consummate infiltrator, moving through groups and being accepted by their members without a second thought. She gains an exceptional success result on three successes (instead of five) on all rolls to disguise herself, infiltrate groups, or to bluff her way through tests designed to verify her bona fides. Anyone actively seeking to police a group or root out traitors suffers her Lair dots as a penalty to their dice rolls.

Nicknames: Outsiders

Atavisms: Alien Mindset, Doppelganger, Enemy Within

LAIR

Unfamiliarity gives the Outsiders advantage in their Lairs. Any who enter feel immediately like they do not belong there, but attempts to leave prove difficult. Intruders know just one little thing could guide them to a safe exit, but they simply don't know the area well enough to accomplish it.

Suggested Lair Traits: Crosswinds, Jagged, Maze, Sealed Exits, Unstable, Disruption, Exposed, Mirages, Razored, Isolated (p. 148), Murmurs (p. 149)

STEREOTYPES

Vampire: So you really do think that Carly Simon song was about you? You must be honored. What was she like back then, anyway?

Werewolf: For all their strength and bluster, without their pack they are nothing, and I never let them forget it.

Mage: With great power comes great paranoia.

Promethean: Nothing I could ever do could come close to their plight.

Changeling: No matter how hard they try to blend in, they must always run. Clearly, they need me to intervene, if only to show them how to use their gifts to their advantage.

Mummy: They're almost older than I am. Almost.

Demon: I have never spotted one, and yet I hear stories of glass and clockwork and intrigues beyond mere fleshy design. They are entirely too good at hiding, but they cannot evade me forever.

TALASSII

NIGHTMARES OF CONFINEMENT



He knows this is a dream, and he is ready to wake up. He is safe in his own bed. If only he could open his eyes and stretch a limb, the dream would end and the world would be as it ought to be. He sends the correct signals to his muscles to move, and he thinks he sees his own hand stretched out before him, but he can feel his arm still limp at his side. His head aches under the strain of willing himself to roll over to his right side, but still feels the bed underneath his left shoulder. He doesn't roll over. His eyes don't open. He doesn't want to be dreaming anymore, but his own body does not give him that choice.

The Begotten do not always fully understand each other, but they understand the Talassii least of all. Reclusive by nature, the Captors have borne the sting of a single Hero's curse for millennia, branding them as kidnappers at best and rapists at worst. The Talassii may kidnap, but they truly excel as jailers.

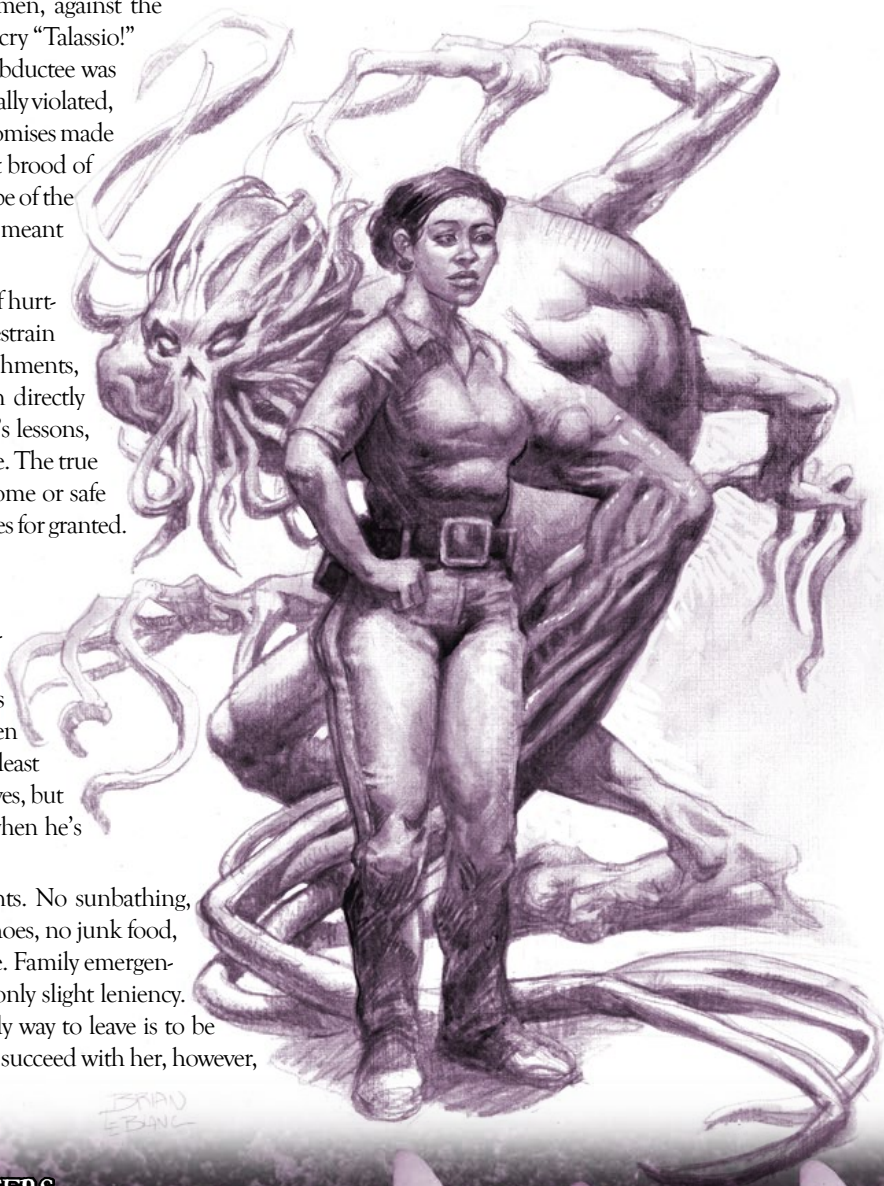
The Talassii's current name stems from Talassius, who led the *raptio*, or forced abduction of women, against the Sabines in early Roman legends. In that context, the cry "Talassio!" meant "for Talassius," identifying who a particular abductee was intended for. While the Sabine women were not sexually violated, they were seduced into marrying their captors with promises made by Romulus himself. Still, by the time an imprudent brood of Captors indulged their Horrors and re-enacted the rape of the Sabine women on a band of Heroes, the word "rape" meant sexual violation as well as forced abduction.

While Horrors may lick their chops at the idea of hurting and humiliating their prisoners, Talassii actively restrain themselves from unnecessarily cruel or unusual punishments, unlike the Anakim. The chase and the capture can directly provide an appropriate environment for the Captor's lessons, but the cause or method of confinement matters little. The true lesson comes from being actively kept from one's home or safe place, and lacking the everyday freedom humanity takes for granted.

LIVES

The prison doesn't pay much. While his coworkers don't do work they're underpaid to do, he makes his rounds every hour without fail. The inmates in his block don't even have cells, just rows of bunks, but when he comes in no one misbehaves. His block has the least contraband in the whole facility, which the warden loves, but somehow she can't bring herself to leave her office when he's on duty to see how he does it.

Her students must follow ironclad requirements. No sunbathing, no makeup, specific brands of leotards and pointe shoes, no junk food, and hours of practice every day. Sickness is no excuse. Family emergencies and serious injuries earn a roll of her eyes and only slight leniency. Students are not allowed to quit her classes; the only way to leave is to be cast out, which kills a budding career on the vine. To succeed with her, however, is to have your pick of roles and dance companies.



He cries again, sobbing and reaching out from his car seat while they're stuck in traffic. He holds out the book his mother has read for him thousands of times before. He wants her to read it again. "Not now, baby," she says, but he doesn't understand yet. He can't hear the strain in her voice, only her telling him no. He screams, and she cringes. Reading the story book will make everything better. She wants him to be happy, doesn't she? Doesn't Mommy love him? He just doesn't understand why she would say no. He just wants her to read to him. That's all.

Her desk is flanked with stacks of heavy binders and pamphlets that took at least two reams of paper to print. "I'm sorry, Darold," she says, "but your new policy needs to comply with international standards if you want a universal, global rollout. There are at least 13 areas of noncompliance. On top of that, in a couple of places, the standards we have to follow are contradictory to one another..." Darold's shoulders slump as she grinds his dream of saving time and money to dust.

STORIES

In Central Africa, the Eloko were small creatures whose jaws extended wide enough to eat people whole. They possessed long claws, and grass grew on their bodies in lieu of hair. The Eloko wore small bells that magically lured people, especially hunters' wives, away from safety. Under the Eloko's spell, victims came to him and even offered their own flesh to sate the creature's hunger. When the Eloko ate their fill, only bones remained for the victim's loved ones to find.

A leshy is a Slavic woodland spirit, acting as a guardian of the forest. While he has a wife and children in several versions of the tale, he seems to have little compunction of leading travelers astray or abducting children. When he snatched women, he brought them to his home, where he tickled them to death. While most of his antics tend toward capricious, that abduction habit lent comparisons to the explicitly evil god Chort, who sported hooves, horns, and a tail and became a minion of Satan when Christianity took hold in the region.

While the Makara would like to lay claim to them, the encantado could easily belong to the Talassii. Encantados love sex and parties, and seduce humans regularly. They can even take human form, but only at night; usually they resemble river dolphins. They come from a place where pain and death do not exist, and like to kidnap their lovers and illegitimate children to take them there. However, as their home is underwater, few, if any, of their captives survive the trip.

HORROR

To dreamers, the Talassii represent the lack of freedom they are accustomed to in their own lives. This could manifest as hostage situations where the Captor demands too much for the dreamer's loved ones to set him free. The Captor could act as jailer in an actual prison, preventing any means of escape and forcing her to face hard truths. The dreamers could find themselves sealed in a vacuum bed, frozen in place, or otherwise bound. The Captor could taunt the dreamer with the sole key to his freedom or enforce the idea that the dreamer will never be free, giving even an Anakim pause with the display of absolute control.

Additional torments the dreamer suffers during their captivity depend on what terrifies the dreamer most. Even with all the inspirational quotes lauding pain as the best teacher, they never understand until the pain of their captivity yields insight in the waking world. In active defiance of the stigma of their Family name, the Talassii avoid using rape in their lessons, but they cannot deny that their Horrors express particular relish in haunting the dreams of those who treat consent carelessly. Some Captors steer clear of the dreams of rapists, if only to maintain their own control.

BIRTHRIGHT

To be near the Talassii is to be trapped without knowing. The Talassii may choose one victim. For every day the victim spends four uninterrupted hours with the Beast (the victim need not know the Talassii is nearby), he suffers -1 to a Resistance Attribute of the Talassii's choosing. The Talassii can't impose a greater penalty than (Lair) dots across the three Attributes. The victim recovers one dot per day he spends away from the Talassii. The Beast can't select a new victim until the previous victim has fully recovered.

Nickname: Captors

Atavisms: Caught in the Webs, Crushing Coils, Illusion of Safety

LAIR

Anyone entering a Talassii's Lair eventually loses hope of ever leaving it. Its Chambers leave its visitors disoriented, constricted, and otherwise ensnared or forced along a singular path. Wherever they turn, the Captor is there, waiting, or following close behind. Freedom is an illusion.

Suggested Lair Traits: Cramped, Currents, Maze, Sealed Exits, Crushing, Darkness, Engulfing Heavy, Suffocating, Bad Angles (p. 147), Hunting Ground (p. 149)

STEREOTYPES

Vampire: They keep hooks and chains in their blood that latch onto their thralls like nearly nothing else.

Werewolf: They are not pets, no matter how nice you make the collar.

Mage: One of my Kin is an Awakened escape artist. I cannot appropriately quantify how much pure, unmitigated glee this challenge has given me.

Promethean: They likely won't understand what they're giving up until they've walked into that cell, locked the door, and thrown away the key.

Changeling: At least they understand the inherent lie to their freedom.

Sin Eater: They call themselves the Bound. They have no idea what they're talking about.

Mummy: You know, I wish they would get out more. I could learn so much from them.

Demon: I wonder how long I could keep one in my basement...

WHISPERS

HUNGER FOR SECRETS



I won't tell.

A secret's not worth keeping if it isn't dangerous. People take the long way home from love affairs. They purge browser histories. They keep vigils as the bodies burn. The dark has eyes, and only a fool lights a trail for them. Monsters trawl the depths of human lives, fishing out the truths their owners would rather leave behind. These are the rain-worn gargoyles scowling over eaves. These are the gleaming eyes nesting under beds, never seen and always seeing. The Whispers know what you did, and they'll make sure you never forget it.

Beasts with this Hunger are detectives and spies, or voyeurs and creeps, as others would have it. They lust not merely for secrets, but the shock of a secret revealed. A Whisper sates as his prey realizes someone was watching all along, and that he saw *everything*. Some sift truth from lies, or search out hidden lore, but many are just stalkers, tracking countless victims and logging dirt away for future use. Yet for all the paranoia they spread, suspicion isn't the point of their lessons. No, the Whispers have a far more frightening goal: an open world.

ON THE HUNT

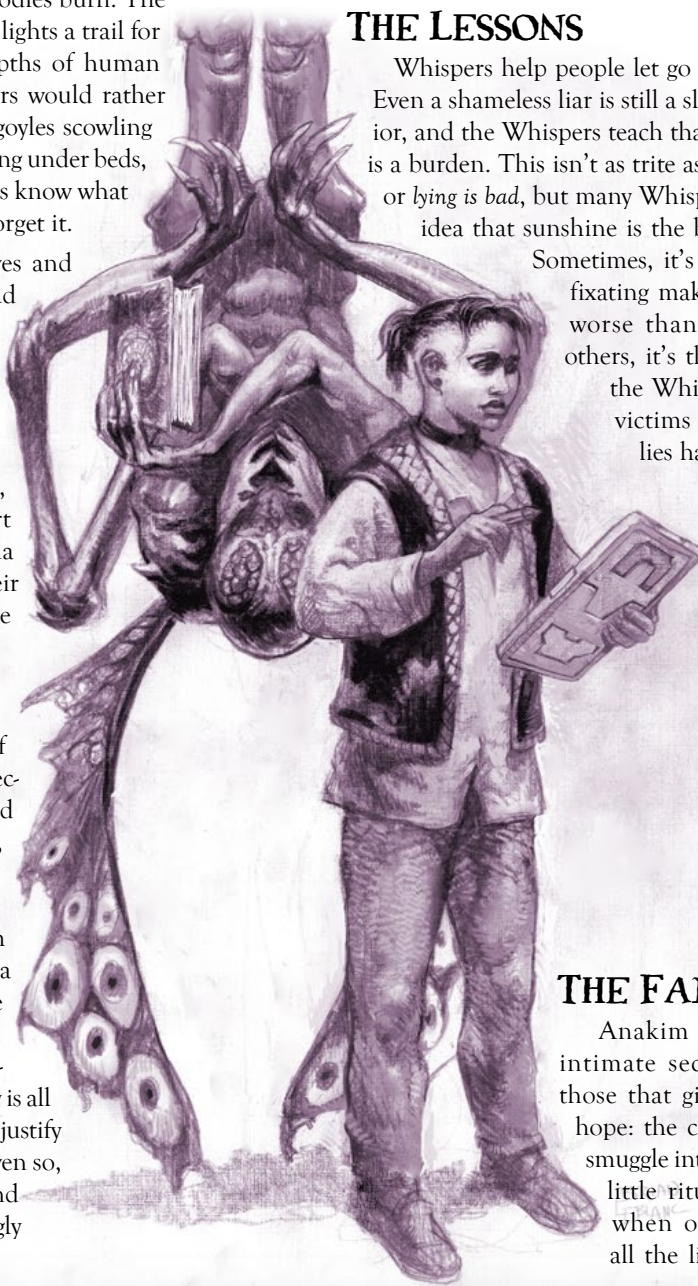
To a Whisper, the subjective value of a secret is more important than the objective. Intimate moments — quiet kinks, old shames — can hold the weight of any crime, depending on the victim. An objective value doesn't hurt, but it needs to have consequences. A journalist uncovers backroom deals to bring low rich and powerful prey; a profiler hunts serial killers, feeding as she rips away their masks. Indeed, Whispers often have human jobs to cover their predation. Today's identity-theft-conscious society is all too wary of privacy invasion, so many Beasts justify their snooping with a badge or a license. Even so, some prefer to stay off the grid. Hacking and other forms of cyber espionage are increasingly common ways to feed.

It doesn't have to be so mundane, though. Whispers have their claws on the pulse of a hidden world. All Beasts have a touch of the occult detective, but more than any other Children, the Whispers hunt their kin. One tracks vampires who poach their vessels. One catalogues werewolves who violate their oaths. One stalks mages, and waits.

THE LESSONS

Whispers help people let go of their baggage. Even a shameless liar is still a slave to her behavior, and the Whispers teach that such obsession is a burden. This isn't as trite as *never keep secrets* or *lying is bad*, but many Whispers buy into the idea that sunshine is the best disinfectant.

Sometimes, it's a reminder that fixating makes a secret seem worse than it really is. At others, it's the opposite, and the Whispers teach their victims that even white lies have fallout.



THE FAMILIES

Anakim Whispers hunt intimate secrets, especially those that give their victims hope: the comfort items we smuggle into adulthood, the little rituals we perform when others can't see, all the lies we tell about

ourselves. Giants go for the throat, and even those who teach lessons have a reputation for cruelty, or, at best, tough love.

The cynics admit Kassie has talent. Yes, most of her “psychic powers” are just good cold reading, but her Horror has a knack for warbling things it shouldn’t know. For fans, Kassie provides a service, so it’s the skeptics she preys on, the ones who hold to a mundane world despite its obvious strangeness. For them, she lets the Horror sing, revealing hidden faiths and superstitions they would never dare to breathe.

Buried secrets are the best secrets. An Eshmaki Whisper isn’t drawn to any one kind, but she isn’t satisfied unless her prey’s built a good defense, layers she can relish tearing through. This isn’t the thrill of the hunt so much as the pleasure of a good mystery. Tracking clues through dank alleys, a Lurker likes it best when her victims rest easy.

Sam Spade was Felipa’s idol since she could say film noir. Her love of hard drinks and hard-drinking women went well with the trench coats, but finding out what private eyes really do versus what they do in the movies was a letdown. Since the Devouring, she mostly still covers cheating spouses and insurance fraud, but sometimes a client has secrets of his own. Maybe he’s covering his own affairs, or spilled blood to cover them up. And maybe his own blood’s more than human. When the client becomes the case, that’s when Felipa really hits the pavement.

Inguma Whispers misdirect, playing off innate distrust of the other. People rush to protect their secrets when they think strangers might reveal them, and the Outsiders capitalize on that fear. They watch and wait from a distance, but not so far the prey can’t see their shadows. Like their methods, their Horrors exist only in the periphery, humanoid blurs whose presences can never be accounted for.

Penumbra is a social butterfly. She gets invited to all the best parties, and she knows all the best ways to charm people. It’s like she’s known you all your life! It’s like she’s your closest friend! It’s like she knows everything. About. You. That’s an illusion, of course, a cheap trick she uses to break down social fronts. She doesn’t know her victims from Adam, and they couldn’t describe her if they tried. But she does know how to read people, and how to push their buttons. Her implications cut deep, so all she has to do is wait for flop sweat.

Leviathans are native to the sunken, arcane places of the world, and thus like calls to like. Of all the Whispers, Makara drink deepest of the occult, hunting the supernatural secrets of humans and kin alike. Siblings aren’t exempt, either. Makara Whispers have a well-earned reputation as liabilities in broods.

Seamus doesn’t want human secrets. He’s caused too much pain over those. He thinks he’s found a better form of prey, with

a better form of secret: the Awakened. He’s especially fascinated by those who maintain whole libraries of enlightenment, yet hide that knowledge from their peers. He thinks he might like to help them, but first he needs to show them the true depths of a lie.

The Namtaru wants to know ugly things. Crime, perversion, bigotry — all the slime that people hide by daylight. She doesn’t care if it makes them feel good or bad, or nothing at all, but she does want them to own it. Gorgon Whispers teach that personas are fragile things, and that the divide between public and private life is a quaint fiction. Their Horrors embody this false dichotomy, wearing beautiful, broken masks with hints of the malice beneath.

Imani, Esperanza & Ai have little use for reasonable doubt. The small firm caters to the oiliest white-collar criminals they can find, but they only ever take a case if the client’s *assuredly* guilty. IEA’s vetting process is second to none, and by the time their targets need attorneys, their team’s already built the best defense money can buy. Their substantial fee does come with a rider, though: confession, but just for the senior partners. Let the district attorney do her own dirty work.

Talassii Whispers favor secrets with leverage. They aren’t exactly blackmailers, but they hunt the people with the most to lose. Some Captors do use that leverage for threats, but it’s often enough that the victim *thinks* he’s got a dagger hanging over his head. Cruel Talassii sell their intelligence to Nemeses (or Ravagers), but that can spoil the lesson.

The Shackle Dragon lurks beneath the shadow of your sins. Know its passage by the scraping of its chain-link tail. Know its purpose by the locks that clang against your door. Shut your mouth if you hear the rattling — it loves to eat loose tongues. The Shackle Dragon doesn’t quite remember what it is to be human anymore, but its lizard brain knows that knowledge is power. Mortals will do anything to hide their secrets, and those the dragon chains are harbingers of its Legend, at least until they find it better victims.

As Nightmares of Exposure, the Ugallu are exemplars of this Hunger. Few things leave people as naked as a secret laid bare, and many Beasts believe this was once the Hunger of all Ugallu, with later Raptors developing more varied methods of exposure. Whatever the truth, Ugallu hunt for shameful, embarrassing secrets, and have no misgivings over outing their victims if they think they deserve it.

Aki Aozora’s puff pieces would make clickbait blush. Other bloggers call her a shill, but that’s just the limits of their vocabulary. She’s always looking for access, and a new celebrity to exalt. People say it’s ungrateful, then, that she’s always the first to break their scandals. A handful have caught on to her pattern, but following her trail leads to dead ends. The brood that dreamed her up know how to cover their tracks.

ENABLERS

HUNGER FOR TRANSGRESSION



I'm not the hangman. I make the rope.

Everyone has a price — admitted or not. History runs red with the blood of traitors whose famous last words were *Never*. Some Beasts rule that moral precipice, luring their prey into sin, dishonor, and betrayal. They sing siren songs for zealots and cynics alike, just to watch them drown in their shame. Once upon a time, such Beasts were holy adversaries, called to tempt the faithful on behalf of jealous gods, or to prove the loyalty of nations in the face of hardship. Today, people call that entrapment. They say the devil makes them sin, but the Enablers know he simply holds the door.

The Enablers feed on sinners and hypocrites, pushing their prey to violate their beliefs, and sating on the realization that one is capable of *anything* under the right circumstances. They are cads and Jezebels, oozing charm, wealth, and sex to bait their dupes down the road to Hell. They are Old-Testament furies, wielding terrible misfortunes to test their victims' mettle. The Enablers seek to put humanity on trial, confident that all will be found wanting.

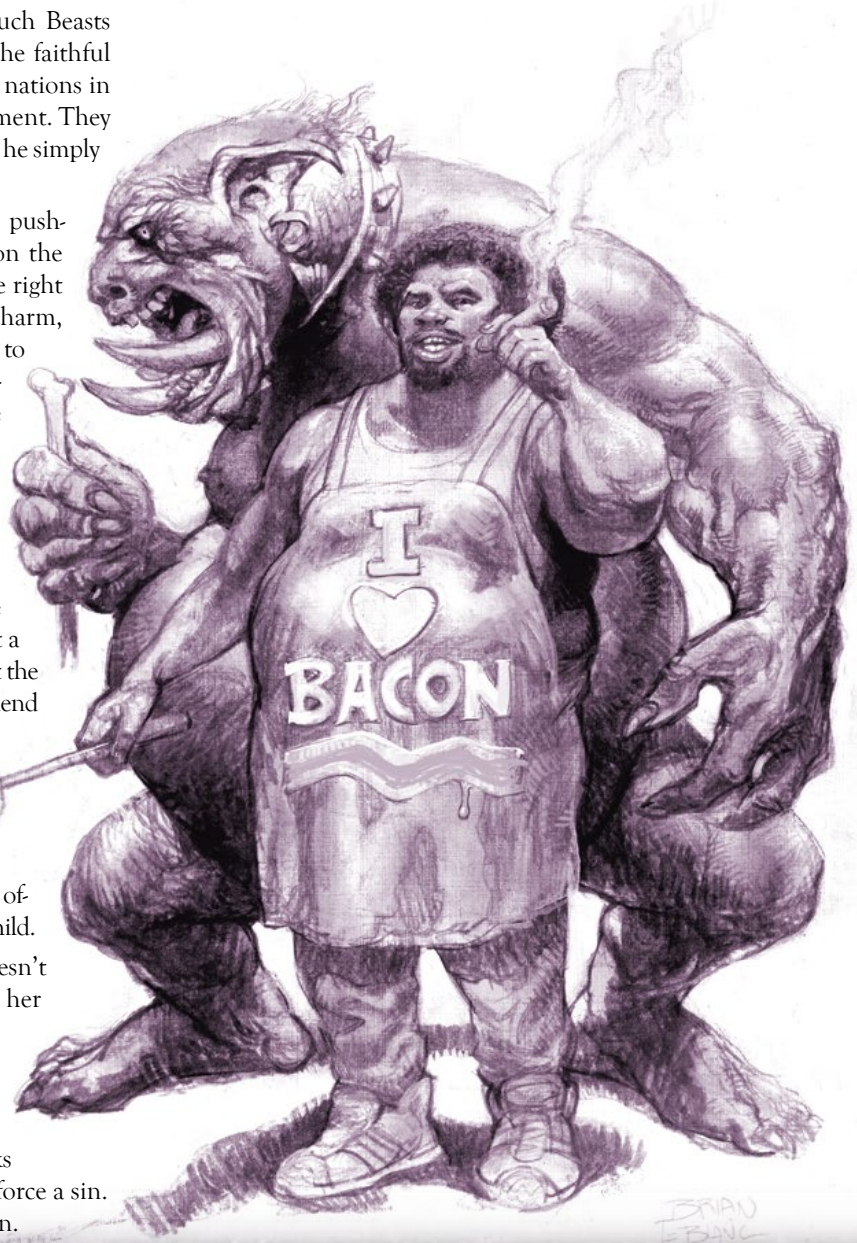
ON THE HUNT

Enablers Hunger for a myriad of transgressions, but the principle must be important to the victim's sense of self. A Christmas-and-Easter Catholic won't do, but a deacon will. Enablers often prefer religious victims, but the power of love is just as fragile as faith and doctrine; a friend betrayed teaches as much as a tenet broken. One Enabler plays devil's advocate with ideologues, convincing vegans to feast on flesh and strikers to cross picket lines. Another goads fistfights with pacifists, careful to never throw the first punch. Yet another likes the old ways best, offering wealth and happiness for the price of a firstborn child.

Most importantly, an Enabler enables. She doesn't trick...at least, not directly. Lying can be part of her arsenal, but it's never applied too bluntly. Fooling someone who keeps halal into eating pork isn't transgression, it's just being a jerk. Moreover, it proves nothing. Enablers give their prey just enough agency to ruin themselves. They can lead their marks with wit and guile, or pressure, but they can never force a sin. Transgression is about choice, even if it's an illusion.

THE LESSONS

All dogmas break down. All codes have catches. All Heroes are flawed. Enablers teach that blind faith is dangerous, and that fanaticism is a hollow way to live one's life. Cynical Beasts teach that nothing is worth taking as gospel, but often the intent is to lead the victim down a middle path, giving her a broader view where once she would've stuck to party lines. A few Enablers



believe that transgression can show people just how important their ideals really are. They honor the virtue through the breach, and show their victims the true costs of sin.

THE FAMILIES

Anakim know people without hope will take any salvation they can get. These Enablers break their prey with trials and troubles, and strike ironic bargains for relief. Some employ proxies, or act in secret, but others openly admit the pain won't end until the victim gives in. Their targets are often religious, and their Horrors reflect it, taking on forms of demons and devils. A few recall Milton's Lucifer: glorious, and irresistible.

Fatima tests believers. Those who seek God's grace must prove themselves, and so she acts as His chosen advocate. Her prey endure sacred tests, for only steadfast hearts are worthy of His love. Of course, who "He" is depends on her mood. She knows a god gifted her with power, but she doesn't care for labels. Dark Mother? YHWH? One and the same. All religion is an emanation of the divine, and so she'll serve them all.

The Eshmaki Enabler puppets her prey from the shadows, tangling them in golden threads of repressed desire. She baits the hook with morsels first — an unguarded wallet, a beautiful stranger — then raises the stakes as petty theft becomes burglary, and flirtation becomes invitation. That's when she reels them in, and her victims find the monster is Ariadne, not the Minotaur.

Harlan's infomercials blaze over late-night TV, promising riches for the low, low investment of \$19.99. Those willing to pay into his Diamond Club get invited to "The Conference," where top financial mavericks reveal secrets *THEY* don't want *YOU* to know about. And how did *they* get where they are? It wasn't by having friends. Or a family. When the smoke clears, Harlan leaves his marks with little but their returns, and a business card inscribed with his lesson: Proverbs 17:17.

Inguma with this Hunger hunt with logic and paradox, wearing down their victims by othering their values. They grasp what few Enablers ever realize, in that a good argument can be just as effective as cash and thumbscrews. Most are clever sophists, but many Outsiders argue in good faith to better test the limits of human idealism.

They call her the Deprogrammer. Every few years she burns an identity and joins a cult, one where corruption runs deep in the vein. She worms her way into their mysteries and alienates the faithful with doubtful whispers, drawing adherents out of brainwashing and into heresy — or apostasy, but she never sticks around long enough to see the fallout. Rumor has it she's rehearsing for the cults of bigger fish, like vampires and demons...or Beasts.

The Makara Enabler is a beacon of mystery and intrigue, with rocks to run aground on. The deeper the prey wades into his glittering Lair of lost treasures, the closer she'll come to his truth...and compromising what she believes for that truth. Some Leviathans reward victims for their curiosity, but just as many teach that still waters don't run deep.

Everyone in town knows the selkie is real, but the traveler can barely mask his scorn as locals take him down by the lake. Soon enough, though, he's begging for another glimpse of her loveliness. He pleads to know where she hides her skin, so he might come to know her better. He'll pay any price, do anything he's asked — but he's surprised when she takes him up on that. When he comes to in his motel, a sealskin wrapped around his body, he learns to count his blessings.

A Gorgon Enabler leads his victims into sin by revealing the hypocrisies of their belief structures — their churches, their social movements, even their lovers — whether by gaining sway over a flock and taking an active hand in the rot, or by revealing ugly truths that've already taken root. His favorite targets are those who invest too deeply in their creeds, and live in need of sobering lessons.

Among scenesters, DeAndre's the gossip king, and his word is taken as an article of faith. Most of the time. Gina? She didn't really cheat on Angie with their ex, but by the time Angie knew that, she'd been out with Jean and, well... If the prey act with maturity instead of pettiness, he'll usually set things straight. He tells himself he's teaching lessons, but deep down he knows he's just a mean prick who hates happiness. He may as well enjoy it.

Make war to make peace? Perjure to aid the falsely accused? Such questions are where Talassii Enablers thrive, deep within Lairs of endless forking paths. These Beasts bind their victims with dilemmas, throwing the proverbial ox in a pit to see if anyone pulls it out on the Sabbath. Captors favor moralistic prey, who only see the world in terms of black and white.

Molosh has a key. The man behind its lock wants out. Molosh cages him against his will, or so the man claims to people the Beast invites to view his cell. But, says Molosh, he's dangerous. A psycho killer. His empathy is an illusion to lure in bleeding hearts...and on that note he offers them the key. A few find the choice comes easy, or decry it as a trick, but many agonize. The actual choice makes little difference to Molosh. He set himself free a long time ago.

Beasts often mistake Ugallu Enablers for Nemeses, as their victims suffer such open humiliation that it could qualify as punishment. Ugallu prefer public transgressions, amplifying the prey's guilt under the critical eyes of the masses. Raptors claim to teach the most effective lessons on transgression, as social stigma does much of the hard work for them.

People come to the Op for favors. Name it and she can do it; she's never turned anyone down because she couldn't. Prices, however, are proportional. Money comes cheap, but real favors require real debasement. The mayor can deny his brothel antics all he likes, but video evidence came part and parcel with the deal. It won't prevent his reelection — it never does, and that's the point. The Op doesn't teach any nonsense about clutching to values like her siblings. Pay the price and the world is yours.

Everything else is dead weight.





Under a freezing, black sun that sucked life's heat from the Chamber, Adlar knelt beneath the branches of the World-Tree. The tree's flesh was dark, brittle and flaky - ash that broke away with Adlar's every move.

Adlar wasn't concerned with the constant ashfalls. The powder drifted across his feathery skin and fell away without so much as a mark. What held his attention wasn't the undead Yggdrasill, it was the desiccated seed pods hanging from strangle-vine twisted hungrily around the branches. Long past the point of ripening, the pods were dried and withered on the vine. Fractures scattered across their wrinkly surfaces, bringing to mind the sunbaked leather of foolish, unprepared humans who tried to cross desert plains with insufficient water or protection. Adlar licked his dry beak-lips as his Horror rumbled its hunger.

Soon, Adlar whispered to the Horror, knowing that it wouldn't be placated. The hunt, the chase, the kill. These were what it understood. Dried, coagulated blood was what it preferred, but if it had to take meat fresh, it would. Adlar had kept it in the Lair for too long. He had kept himself in the Lair for too long, but with deliberate purpose. This first crop of pods had taken longer to wilt and fade than he had predicted. But the time was now, and Adlar felt no need to accede to the Horror's wishes. It would soon feast again, and it would demand more shortly thereafter. It had no appreciation or gratitude, it just hungered.

A pod shuddered and split. Adlar held his breath against the pungent stench that wafted from within. His heart beat faster with excitement as the first talons reached around the gap and pulled head and shoulders through. The infant looked around its birthplace with oversized, lidless, and black avian eyes set into a humanlike face. Thin fleshy lips open and shut beneath a short, curved, and pointed beak. Sharp, greasy feathers covered its upper torso and arms, but its abdomen and stumpy legs were bare, pimpled skin.

It was grotesque, and Adlar smiled as it climbed up the pod's outer surface and clung to the underside of an ashen branch. It noticed his attention and hissed at him, its mouth a gummy hole beneath a beak lined with jagged fangs. Further along the vine another pod broke open, quickly followed by more. It was as if the first delivery was a catalyst to trigger the other births. Soon the branches of the World-Tree were crawling with twisted avian-human hybrids. They hissed and swiped at each other, siblings fighting for dominance from their earliest moments.

Adlar looked at what he had spawned and was as proud as the day he stood in the hospital's maternity ward and cradled his tiny daughter in his arms. He was certain that day she was going to achieve great things, just as he felt unbridled joy and pride at what he knew his offspring would bring to the world.

CHAPTER THREE UNLEASHING THE HORROR

The Beast affects the world in many ways that are all too human. She is a wolf unknown to the sheep, moving among them in flawless human disguise. But the Horror is always just beneath the skin of the world. In its Lair. Watching. Waiting. It is a constant reminder to the Beast that she has other options. She doesn't have to smile sweetly and say "please" and "thank you." She isn't part of the flock, she's a predator that behaves only exactly as long as it decides. Then she allows the Horror to step into the world, however briefly, to tear and rend and corrupt.

This chapter provides many more options for the Beast to change the world. New Atavisms, Birthrights, and Nightmares put subtle or grotesque powers at the Begotten's fingertips. He can channel the sorcery of the Primordial Dream, molding its chaos into shape to unleash terror on the world and commune with the Dark Mother. Or he can force the half-breed spawn of Horror and human out of his Lair and into the world, adding to the darkness and despair engulfing the planet.

There was The Beast,
all around him.
And that's all it was.
A beast. Useful, but still
a beast. You could hold
it on a chain, and make
it dance, and juggle
balls. It didn't think.
It was dumb. What you
were, what you were,
was not The Beast."

— Terry Pratchett,
Night Watch

ATAVISMS

At their most basic, Atavisms are the intrusions of a Beast's Horror upon the physical world. Though they can wreak havoc on the environment or drive the Beast's foes to despair, Atavisms are more than simple tools to a Beast. They reaffirm her monstrous nature and her place in the world. To use Atavisms is to commune with the Beast's Horror — and through it, experience the Dark Mother's love.

ALIEN MINDSET [INGUMA]

Fear of outsiders is a deep-seated byproduct of human evolution. They are different from us, they have strange customs and don't think the same way. Inguma know this and exploit it. They are Outsiders even among other Beasts, with mercurial, unknowable minds.

Action: Persistent, Reflexive (Satiety expenditure)

Normal Effect: The Inguma's mind is a maze of dead ends, logic leaps, and thought spirals. Anyone following his thought processes becomes lost and confused. Those attempting to question or manipulate the Beast suffer his Lair dots as a penalty. This applies to Skills, Social maneuvering, or even supernatural abilities (though the latter provokes a Clash of Wills). This Atavism can't stop others from revealing information about the Beast — but how likely are they to know the truth anyway? Characters suffering a dramatic failure while attempting to manipulate or question the Beast gain the Confused Condition from following his convoluted logic and twisted thought processes.

Low Satiety: The hungry Horror is malleable and resents attempts to know and define it. The Beast gains another Legend of the player's choice and can use this to regain Willpower. Additionally, the Beast can choose to provide false information to anyone attempting to discern his Life, Legend, Aspirations, or Hunger. This may generate a Clash of Wills against supernatural powers intended to learn these facts.

Satiety Expenditure: The Inguma are strange even to other Beasts. On spending a point of Satiety, the Beast gains an additional Hunger of her choice for the remainder of the scene as she twists her Horror's needs to better suit the spoils and offerings of the moment.

CAUGHT IN THE WEBS [TALASSII]

The Talassii are expert at restraining their victims. Some favor shrinking gossamer webs that tighten as the prey struggles, others use sticky black tar that drown beneath its weight. Whatever the preference, Talassii delight in the capture, and savor the prey's fear of what comes next. The Atavism draws the Beast's preferred material from her Lair, giving the appearance of creating it from thin air.

Applying the snares requires a thrown weapon or touch attack (**Beast: The Primordial**, pp. 164-165), but activating the Atavism itself is reflexive.

Action: Reflexive

Normal Effect: On a successful strike, the victim temporarily loses (Lair dots/2, rounded up) dots of Dexterity, affecting all Dexterity-based rolls and derived traits. If the victim's Dexterity reaches 0, she suffers the Immobilized Tilt. The effect is cumulative, and the Beast can attack the same target over multiple turns. Snares disappear at the end of the scene.

Low Satiety: Struggling weakens the ensnared victim. After being successfully ensnared by the normal effect, subsequent Physical actions automatically inflict bashing damage equal to the current Dexterity penalty. This effect ignores armor and the victim can knock himself unconscious though these struggles (though bashing damage accumulated from this Atavism does not convert to lethal if the victim's last Health box is marked).

Satiety Expenditure: Snares erupt from the Beast, blanketing a radius around him equal to (2 x Lair dots) yards. The snares automatically entangle everyone within this area. Opponents may try to dodge (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 164) to avoid being trapped. The Beast makes a single thrown weapon attack that all dodging opponents try to defeat. The snares strike with such force that they inflict bashing damage equal to the attack's successes, as well as inflicting the usual Dexterity penalty.

CRUSHING COILS [TALASSII]

Like Jörmungandr's stranglehold on the world, or Antaeus' fatal wrestling holds, the Talassii's grip isn't easily broken. When a Captor decides to hold something tight, it is often easier to sever the limb than break the grasp.

Dice Pool: Strength + Lair dots - Durability (Satiety expenditure only)

Action: Persistent or Instant (Satiety expenditure)

Normal Effect: The Beast locks her grip such that almost no force can make her relax it. She could hang from one hand for days without discomfort — even with others pulling at her. The Beast automatically keeps her hold under ordinary circumstances, and adds Lair dots to any rolls or resistance against opposition. The Beast also adds her Lair dots to initiate a grapple; once grappling, non-supernatural characters can't attempt the Break Free

move, while opponents with supernaturally enhanced strength must succeed at a Clash of Wills before attempting to Break Free.

Low Satiety: The Beast's body resists all efforts to crush or tear her apart. She can clamp each hand on different trains and stop them from moving apart (at least until something on the train breaks free), or grab onto a passing car without tearing off her arm. This usually doesn't require a roll as the Beast simply ignores forces that would crush or dismember her body. This Atavism provides no protection in from deliberate attacks.

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast can crush almost anything she can place her hands on. For objects too large to fit within her grasp she merely touches it with her outstretched hands and brings them together — her Horror takes hold and does the rest. The player spends a point of Satiety and rolls Strength + Lair - Durability or Size (whichever is higher). She can continue rolling each turn without further Satiety expenditure if the Beast maintains contact with the object. This power doesn't work directly on living creatures, but can crush those too slow to escape a structure.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The object is too well reinforced for the Beast. Her Horror is confounded and retreats, preventing her for using this Atavism for the remainder of the scene.

Failure: The object resists the Beast's attempts, suffering no damage this turn. She may turn this to a dramatic failure and gain a Beat.

Success: The object collapses under the Beast's force. Successes are subtracted from the object's Structure.

Exceptional Success: In addition to subtracting successes from the object's Structure, its structural integrity is damaged. Subtract one from its Durability.

DOPPELGÄNGER [INGUMA]

The Inguma are a (comparatively) young Family, but one of their greatest weapons is something that humanity has always feared: the idea that something might take on their face and mannerisms and replace them. The Inguma with this Atavism can bring that fear to life, creating autonomous (albeit temporary) doubles of a chosen target.

Dice Pool: Wits + Medicine - Stamina

Action: Extended, target successes 5 + Size, one roll per hour (normal effect); instant (Low Satiety and Satiety expenditure)

Normal Effect: The Beast replaces a person with a substitute under her control. She must render her victim unconscious and take him somewhere private — many prefer to use their Lair if possible. The Begotten uses the sleeping victim as a template, crafting a doppelganger from her preferred materials. Some use mud and clay, others grow replacement humans in giant seed pods.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The doppelganger dies in gestation, poisoning the Beast's connection with his Horror. Any further attempts at creating doppelgangers for the next (10 - Lair dots) days suffer -2 to rolls.

Failure: The Beast can sense that the doppelganger is failing to thrive. He may gain the Fatigued Condition and further focus his energies to make it work or abandon the attempt.

Success: Successes are accumulated as the clone gestates towards its birth.

Exceptional Success: The gestation progresses extraordinarily. The player may reduce target successes by the Beast's Medicine dots, reduce the time per roll by 15 minutes, or have the doppelganger gain the Inspired Condition when it awakens.

When the Beast achieves sufficient successes, the doppelganger awakens, naked and curious. It has all the Attributes, Skills, and non-supernatural traits of the original, and lives as long as its template remains unconscious. Doppelgangers display the personality of their original, but obey the Beast's commands without question. The Beast can maintain a number of doppelgangers equal to her Lair dots.

Low Satiety: The Beast experiences what her doppelgangers sense. She has a general impression of where each one is located, what they are doing, and their state of being. She can concentrate on an individual doppelganger and experience the world through its senses. The Beast maintains awareness of her own body while exploring her creations' senses. This effect only comes into play if the double is created while the Beast's Satiety is low; if the Beast creates the double under the normal Satiety rules and then spends some, this effect does not become available.

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast's Horror takes control of a doppelganger, while the Beast herself falls into a deep sleep. The Beast then controls the doppelganger, wherever it may be, and may use any of her powers and abilities for the remainder of the scene. The Beast has no access to the Skills or memories of the doppelganger, however. At the end of the scene, she can spend additional Satiety to continue the effect or allow the Horror to leave the body and return to the Lair (at which point the Beast's human body wakes up). If the Beast was actually in her Lair (and thus Merged with the Horror) when she used this ability, she has a third option: Reform her body within the doppelganger's shell, clawing her way out in a spray of gore.

ENEMY WITHIN [INGUMA]

How well do humans really know one another? Evolution wired the human brain to pay close attention to only a handful of people. As populations grew, humans favored broad detail over intimate familiarity. The Inguma exploit this weak spot, slipping between the cracks of human programming and passing themselves off as someone familiar.

No matter what form the Beast wears, she always retains access to her own Attributes and abilities.

Action: Instant (normal effect and Satiety expenditure), Persistent (low Satiety)

Normal Effect: The Beast takes on the appearance of a victim he has previously met. This is sufficient to fool most of the victim's acquaintances, but close friends and family of the victim, or people who have reason to be suspicious can roll Wits + Empathy vs. the Beast's Manipulation + Subterfuge to

see through the disguise. Add the Beast's Lair dots to his pool if he has previously fed from the victim.

Low Satiety: While disguised and interacting with people who know the victim, the Beast gains an instinctive awareness of their unconscious cues and body language. She can answer their questions and engage in conversations. The Beast doesn't gain access to the victim's thoughts or memories, but guesses at what her interlocutors know. This normally doesn't require a roll but against particularly suspicious people, or those skilled at controlling their responses, the player rolls Manipulation + Empathy vs. Composure + Subterfuge to gain information or avoid being trapped by probing questions.

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast practically becomes his victim. Every trace left by the Beast is that of the victim, including fingerprints, DNA, and other evidence the Beast might accidentally or deliberately leave behind. The Beast automatically passes any physical test designed to verify identity, such as fingerprint, voice, or retinal scanners. The Beast can replicate any Skill possessed by the victim up to her Lair dots, but gains no access to the victim's supernatural abilities or powers. The copy is so perfect the victim doubts himself if confronted by the Beast. The victim's player rolls Resolve + Composure, and gains the Confused Condition (on a failure), or the Fugue Condition (on a dramatic failure). The Beast's player must spend 1 Satiety per scene to maintain the disguise.

ILLUSION OF SAFETY [TALASSII]

The Talassii know that the fear of confinement goes beyond just being kept in one place. The greatest fear comes when the victim knows that no matter how she escapes, or how far she runs, she's never safe from the monster. Such victims become trapped within their own fears, to the delight of the Beast.

Action: Instant (Normal effect and Satiety expenditure), Reflexive (Low satiety)

Normal Effect: Few locks can keep Talassii at bay. By watching an object or location, the Beast understands points of entry and how to defeat any protections. She gains understanding of (Lair dots x 2) rooms or compartments per turn of study — storage areas such as closets and wardrobes aren't considered separate rooms. The Begotten's understanding begins with the rooms closest to her and expands outwards as she continues to observe. She benefits from the rote quality (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 161) for any roll to gain entry to a room she understands, including defeating locks or alarms, or simply smashing through the walls. This Atavism only provides information about entry points, locks, and alarms; it doesn't provide information about the purpose of rooms or anything within them.

Low Satiety: Talassii usually delight in the chase, but the hungry Beast doesn't indulge in letting the prey run. The Beast unleashes her Horror to twist and distort any door or window she can see. Anyone trying to open these must take an instant action to do so, rolling Dexterity + Larceny – Lair dots for those with latches, or Strength + Athletics – Lair dots to force open unlocked portals. The Beast can remove this resistance at will.

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast shreds the thin veil separating reality from dream. On spending a point of Satiety, the



Beast transforms any portal within view into a Burrow to the Heart of her Lair. Those who succeed on a Perception roll feel an air of hunger coming from the transformed portal – Beasts and Heroes instantly recognize the Burrow for what it is. The Beast can keep the portal open for (Lair dots) turns, or have it automatically close when a victim moves further than (his Speed) yards along the Burrow.

LIGHTNING-STRIKE [UGALLU]

Some monsters lurk in the darkness; others hunt in plain sight. Raptors find both approaches unsatisfying. They are the fear of never being safe, of always being vulnerable to the unknown blow, or the unexpected attack. The Ugallu strike without warning, devastating their victims in an instant before disappearing.

Action: Reflexive

Normal Effect: The Beast strikes like lightning, moving up to (Lair dots x 10) yards to attack. If the victim was unaware of the Beast's presence before the strike, he must check to see if he is surprised (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 164). The Beast's player adds Lair dots to the Dexterity + Stealth roll.

Low Satiety: An exposed Beast is vulnerable. After conducting an attack that dealt damage, the Beast may instantly move up to (Lair dots x 10) yards from her victim. If this removes the Beast from the victim's view, the victim must check to see if he is surprised by the Beast's next attack. A victim with a power

allowing a reflexive counterattack generates a Clash of Wills to see if he strikes before the Raptor escapes.

Satiety Expenditure: By spending Satiety, the Beast is a bloody flash across the battlefield. If her attack inflicts damage, she can move to another victim within (Lair dots x 10) yards and attack again. The Beast must move to a different victim each time, and can only attack each victim once per turn.

PLAGUE BEARER [NAMTARU]

Namtar – for whom the Namtaru are named – commanded 60 diseases to infect his victims. Modern-day Gorgons believe Namtar aimed low. These Namtaru collect diseases they've sampled through touch, taste, or scent, and distill them to deliver via this Atavism.

Dice Pool: Strength + Medicine – Stamina

Action: Instant (normal effect and Satiety expenditure) or Reflexive (low Satiety)

Normal Effect: With a touch (and a successful roll), the Beast infects her victim with a non-fatal disease. If in combat, the victim suffers the moderate version of the Sick Tilt. Outside of combat, the victim suffers a disease (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 171) with Severity equal to Lair dots that inflicts bashing damage equal to Lair dots at an interval of (12 – Lair dots) hours. The victim must achieve (Strength + Lair dots) consecutive successes to overcome the disease. The Beast can infect a number of victims equal to her Lair at once.

CONDITION: PESTILENCE (SYMPTOMATIC OR ASYMPTOMATIC)

Your character carries a deadly disease, of which he may be unaware. Those with the Symptomatic version are clearly sick and infectious, suffering a disease inflicting lethal damage equal to the Beast's Lair dots, with a severity equal to the original Beast's Strength + Lair dots. Characters without precautions or protective gear who spend more than a few minutes with the infected must roll Stamina + Resolve – Severity, suffering the Symptomatic version on a failure, and the Asymptomatic version on a dramatic failure. Success protects the character until re-exposed, whereas exceptional success renders the character permanently immune from the disease.

Possible Sources: The Plague Bearer Atavism.

Resolution: The character receives intensive medical care and aggressive cocktails of drugs. He makes a weekly extended Stamina + Resolve – Severity roll, requiring 10 + Lair dots successes. The cure impacts the character's body. Each time the player rolls, the character suffers one point of bashing damage on a success, one point lethal damage on a failure, or one point of aggravated damage on a dramatic failure as his organs begin to fail. He avoids further injury on an exceptional success.

Beat: An Asymptomatic carrier gains a Beat if he voluntarily surrenders himself for treatment. A Symptomatic sufferer gains a Beat if she survives the treatment.

Low Satiety: A miasma of sickness surrounds the hungry Beast. Anyone who comes within (Lair dots) yards must succeed in a Stamina + Resolve – Lair roll or suffer disease as per the normal effect. In addition, victims gain either the Confused, Fatigued, or Lethargic Conditions from the rapid onset of symptoms. If a character remains near the Beast longer than (Stamina) turns, she must test for infection again. An exceptional success renders her immune for the remainder of the scene.

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast unleashes plagues of potentially biblical proportions. Everyone within (Lair dots x 10) yards of the Beast must succeed in a Stamina + Resolve – Lair dots roll or gain the Pestilence (Asymptomatic) Condition. The infectious zone moves with the Beast for the remainder of the scene. Supernatural creatures are immune to infection.

RAVENOUS MAW [MAKARA]

Seaside communities tell of myriad objects founds within the bellies of monstrous creatures from the deep. Predators that prowl the midnight depths make a meal of anything that fits their mouths. Makara go further, devouring objects and substances that would kill any normal creature.

Action: Reflexive or Instant (Satiety expenditure)

Normal Effect: The Beast can safely consume anything that fits in her mouth, regardless of danger. For harmful substances, she reduces the hazard by (Stamina + Lair dots). She suffers no ill effects if this reduces the danger to 0, otherwise, she takes damage as per the reduced effect.

Low Satiety: The Beast's jaw, throat, and body distend grotesquely, expanding to engulf people or objects of Size up to (her own Size + Lair, maximum 10). This isn't quick – the Beast spends one turn swallowing per Size. Once the target is swallowed, the Beast shrinks to normal within a turn. She suffers no ill effects from consuming large objects, and reduces the danger of hazardous objects as per the normal effect. The Beast must first subdue living creatures or succeed in an on-

going grapple to consume them (a victim that uses the Break Free move during the process escapes, though probably suffers a breaking point).

Satiety Expenditure: With a point of Satiety the Horror splits the Beast's body from nose to groin, opening a massive, grotesque maw framed by countless serrated teeth. The Beast initiates a grapple; the player adds the Beast's Lair dots to the dice pool. If successful, the Beast's body closes around the victim. Each turn, the victim can only try the Break Free or Damage moves (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 165). The Beast can choose Break Free or Damage moves (inflicting lethal damage), or can use a special move to disgorge the victim into his Lair. The player adds their Lair dots to this roll, while the victim adds her Supernatural Tolerance rating to resist.

SHADOW STALKER [ESHMAKI]

Everyone has a shadow, a constant darkness an Eshmaki can use to stalk a victim. Lurkers devour the victim's shadow and take its place, though observers may notice the Beast's true nature bleeding through. The Beast can cancel this Atavism at any time by vomiting up the victim's shadow. Shadowed Beasts are immune to most damage but are vulnerable to being burned by fire.

Action: Instant (normal effect), Reflexive (low Satiety and Satiety expenditure)

Normal Effect: The Beast approaches her prey, takes hold of his shadow, and devours it to transform her flesh into shadow-stuff. Most Eshmaki prefer to do this unseen and keep the victim ignorant. Others delight in seeing the victim's terror as his shadow is consumed, and hearing his impotent rants about the monster who has taken its place. Few will believe him – while masquerading as the shadow, the Beast is silent and almost impossible to detect. Though the victim has no intrinsic ability to stop his shadow from being consumed, unless he is restrained nothing prevents him taking actions to disrupt the

Beast, including attacking her. The Beast can't use Atavisms while transformed but can inflict Nightmares on her victim without requiring eye contact.

Low Satiety: The Beast can use Atavisms while transformed. The shadow takes on aspects of the Beast's Horror when she does so, allowing observers a Wits + Composure roll each time to notice the change.

Satiety Expenditure: The shadowed Beast can detach from the victim for (Lair dots) turns. She can reflexively transition between solid and shadow forms at any time. Only those attackers operating on the same Initiative as the Beast (including those who hold their actions) can strike at her. Foes using fire can burn her in whichever form regardless of Initiative.

SKIN DEEP [NAMTARU]

The alien grotesquerie of the Namtaru's Horror lives just beneath her human facade. She need make only the slightest effort to surrender to the Horror and let it tear through her skin to impose its nature on the world. The modifications from this Atavism are expressions of the Primordial Dream; their presence creates ripples in the physical realm. Witnessing modifications is a breaking point for most humans (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 155) which triggers Heroic Tracking (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 206) to the location.

Action: Instant (normal effect) or Reflexive (low Satiety and Satiety expenditure)

Normal Effect: A portion of the Primordial Dream bulges or tears through the Beast's skin, modifying her human form. She may manifest modifications equal to half her Lair dots (round up). Each one takes an instant action to draw through her flesh, or force to recede. The Beast's modifications are not fixed — she may summon different effects with each use of this Atavism. Refer to the nearby sidebar for modification examples.

Low Satiety: The Horror is impatient to tear through the Beast. She may summon each modification as a reflexive action, though it still takes instant actions to force each one to recede.

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast's body is the Horror's canvas, twisting her into a nightmarish amalgamation. Her desired modifications simultaneously mutate her form but the Horror goes further in reinforcing her weak human flesh. The Beast gains (Lair + 3) dots to distribute between Strength, Dexterity, and Stamina — at least one dot must be allocated to each. At the end of the scene the Beast gains the Fatigued Condition as all modifications melt into ephemera and her body painfully twists back into its usual shape.

SMASHING CURRENTS [MAKARA]

Survival in the murky depths is a constant struggle. Water resistance slows movement; disorienting currents twist and pull in different directions. Untold thousands of creatures are better adapted than humans to hunt, kill, and survive here. The Makara don't just survive here, they thrive. Where other creatures struggle, the hostile environment protects and nurtures the Beast.

Action: Persistent or reflexive (Satiety expenditure)

Normal Effect: Phantom currents and unseen tentacles surround the Beast and confound those who would attack her. She applies her full Defense to all melee attacks and never reduces Defense against multiple attacks. Her Defense is even more effective against individuals or small groups. Increase her Defense by one when facing fewer opponents than her Lair dots.

Low Satiety: Only the foolish think it's an advantage to strike a hungry Beast from a distance. The invisible forces surrounding her apply her Defense against ranged attacks, and downgrade autofire by one step. As against melee attacks, her Defense doesn't reduce for multiple ranged attackers.

SKIN DEEP MODIFICATIONS

The modifications presented here are just a sample of the limitless horror disgorged from the Primordial Dream. Players should feel free to design their own — each modification generally provides +2 dice to a single Skill or situation, or a smaller bonus to multiple situations.

Fleshy Wings: These ugly protrusions don't allow flight, but can slow a fall. The Beast doubles the falling distance between each point of damage (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 172) — generally taking 60 yards to reach terminal velocity.

Myriad Eyes: The Beast gains two dice to sight-based rolls and can't be ambushed or surprised by attackers she can see.

Prehensile Limbs: Adds one die to grapple rolls and to Athletics rolls involving climbing or grasping.

Scaly Hide: Downgrades up to two points of lethal damage to bashing each turn.

Shaped for Speed: Twisted legs and a jagged, flexible spine bend the Beast into a form better suited to chasing down prey. She adds two plus her Lair dots to her base Speed.

Sharp Talons: Attacks from her hands and feet inflict 1L damage, and add one die to climbing rolls.

Snapping Maw: Can make bite attacks without needing to grapple, and her teeth count as a weapon (0L).

Satiety Expenditure: When the Beast spends Satiety, her invisible protectors are no longer content to remain purely defensive. For the remainder of the scene, these tendrils bludgeon attackers, making reflexive unarmed combat attacks against anyone within (Lair dots x 10) yards who strikes at her. These counterattacks inflict bashing damage and can't be enhanced by other Atavisms.

TERROR'S FRIEND [ANAKIM]

The Giants of legend were as inspiring to their allies as they were terrifying to their enemies. To face the Anakim as part of a force was to know defeat before the battle began. Humans allied with the Beast grow bold as their foes' resolve falters. As Goliath was the rallying point to the Philistines, these Beasts focus their group's strength.

Action: Reflexive

Normal Effect: Demonstrations of the Beast's prowess intimidate her foes. Whenever the Beast succeeds on a roll that is resisted or contested by an opponent, her opponent is cowed by the Beast's clear superiority. He gains the Shaken Condition, or the Frightened Condition if the Beast achieved an exceptional success.

Low Satiety: Fear of the Beast drives her friends to greater feats of valor. Allies within (Lair dots x 10) yards of the Beast can choose to add 2 dice to rolls for the remainder of the scene. Those who accept the bonus dice gain the Spooked Condition. Characters who track Integrity and use the bonus more times than their Resolve experience a breaking point (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 155).

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast's Horror unleashes pent-up rage on the world. All foes within (Lair dots x 10) yards of the Beast whose Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance (if any) is less than or equal to the Beast's Strength + Intimidation rating must flee the battlefield or gain the Beaten Down Tilt. Heroes suffer the Insane Tilt rather than Beaten Down if they refuse to flee.

DEATH OF LIGHT [ESHMAKI]

Fear of the darkness leads humans to put their faith in light. The Eshmaki know this is foolish. When light fades, darkness always returns — and Lurkers know that light always fades.

Dice Pool: N/A or Presence + Occult (low Satiety)

Action: Reflexive (normal effect) or instant (low Satiety and Satiety expenditure)

Normal Effect: The Beast's presence suppresses light. The Beast can reflexively dim all light within a radius equal to (Lair dots x 10) yards, imposing -2 dice on all rolls requiring vision and reducing Defense by two against the Beast. This is cumulative with any existing penalties for low light. Light of supernatural origin is resistant to the Beast, triggering a Clash of Wills.

Low Satiety: Those who trust light are betrayed. The redirects nearby sources of light toward her victim's eyes, dazzling and confusing him. The player rolls Manipulation + Occult.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Beast draws light toward him, repelling the Horror. The player either suffers a -5 modifier on all Atavism-related rolls, or gains the Blind Tilt (player's choice) for the remainder of the scene.

Failure: The character fails to redirect light.

Success: The victim suffers as if she were exposed to the Blazing Light Lair Trait (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 102). The Beast can simultaneously target (Lair dots) victims.

Exceptional Success: The Beast can affect twice as many victims.

Satiety Expenditure: Absolute darkness spills forth from the Beast. This quickly fills the area as her Horror consumes all sources of light. The Beast fills an area with a radius equal to (Lair dots x 10) yards per turn, for (Lair dots) turns. Everyone within this area suffers the Blinded Tilt. The Beast and members of her brood are immune. The darkness doesn't remain centered on the Beast — once it is made, she may move within it.

VENGEFUL EARTH [ANAKIM]

Local legends abound with tales of giants being one with the terrain. The contours of the hills are giants' shoulders and hips; rocky spires are their fingers grasping at victims above. These stories tell that the world is harsh, and the land can turn against you, fueled by the Anakim who bend rock and dirt to their will.

Action: Reflexive

Normal Effect: The Beast strikes the ground, sending waves of destructive force towards her target. The Beast can make melee attacks inflicting bashing damage against targets up to (Lair dots x 2) yards away. If damage exceeds the victim's Dexterity, he suffers the Knocked Down Tilt.

Low Satiety: The hungry earth is eager for the sweet taste of blood. Everyone within (Lair dots x 2) yards of the Beast suffers the Earthquake Tilt as the ground shudders and bucks around the Beast.

Satiety Expenditure: Dirt and rock amplify the Beast's will. On spending Satiety, the Beast can summon massive limbs of earth and control them as she would her own arms and legs. The limbs are strong — add Lair dots to the Beast's Strength — and can be further boosted by other Atavisms, but the oversized fingers are too large to be used for tasks requiring fine manipulation, such as picking a lock or typing on a computer. The limbs can appear and reach anywhere within (Lair dots x 4) yards of the Beast. Asphalt, concrete, and other rock-like substances of human manufacture are just as willing to answer the Beast's call.

WEAKNESS EXPOSED [UGALLU]

The Ugallu strips away false protection to expose vulnerability. The Raptors always seem to find chinks in the victim's armor, whether it be actual layers of metal and Kevlar, or a brusque facade designed to hide away insecurity.

Action: Reflexive

Normal Effect: The Beast tears away protection each time she damages her victim. Physical assaults reduce armor by one

per successful attack. This includes weakening natural armor, which regenerates when lethal damage is healed. Social maneuvers (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 161) strip away two Doors on a success, or four Doors on an exceptional success. If the Beast achieves an exceptional success on a contested mental action, her opponent loses a point of Willpower and gains the Confused Condition.

Low Satiety: Preventing the hungry Beast from exposing her prey frustrates the Horror and redoubles its efforts. When the Beast fails an “attacking” roll — whether combat, Social maneuvering, or another roll resisted by the target — her Horror’s instincts flood the Beast’s mind, adding its Power as bonus dice to her next roll. The Beast must reattempt the failed action — or an appropriately similar action — on her next turn. If the character fails this roll, the Horror sulkily retreats to the Lair and the Beast gains the Abruption Condition (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 321).

Satiety Expenditure: To the Ugallu, protection and reinforcements only serve to highlight weaknesses. The Beast sees these vulnerabilities and understands how to circumvent them. For the remainder of the scene, the Beast ignores armor or other protections. Additionally, because she directly targets her opponents’ most vulnerable areas, each attack that deals damage also inflicts the Stunned Tilt. Opponents protected by supernatural enhancements or abilities generate a Clash of Wills.

NIGHTMARES

This section presents a plethora of new common and Kinship Nightmares, followed by a discussion of how a Beast can use Family Ties to a supernatural being to create custom Nightmares.

COMMON NIGHTMARES

The following Nightmares are more of the Dark Mother’s gifts, available to all of her Children.

THE WALLS HAVE EYES

The air in here feels thick and you smell something awful, but you can’t place where that terrible odor is from. You wish you could just escape this place and breathe, but you can’t. You’re trapped in here.

Dice Pool: None, see below.

Action: Reflexive

Normal: The Beast takes a -2 penalty on her roll to invoke another Nightmare, and in return she can infuse a room with her Nightmare. The first person to sleep in that room becomes the target of the infused Nightmare. Even a brief cat nap is enough to activate the Nightmare hidden within the room.

High Satiety: As normal, but simply entering the room is enough to become the victim of the Nightmare next time he sleeps.

Satiety Expenditure: The invocation roll for the other Nightmare suffers no penalty and earns an exceptional success with three successes rather than five.

Exceptional Success: As per the invoked Nightmare.

THEY DON’T LOVE YOU

You are boring. They can hardly stand humoring you and they’re definitely making plans to go somewhere without you. Doesn’t that make you sad? Doesn’t that make you angry? It’s not that they don’t get you. They do and they’re not asking for seconds.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Satiety vs. Composure + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim is plagued by doubt, and assumes all social interactions are insincere — especially with those closest to her. Dice pools for actions meant to persuade or empathize with others suffer a -3 penalty. Repeated uses of this Nightmare may provoke a breaking point at the Storyteller’s discretion.

High Satiety: Everything the victim picks up from others belies their contempt. The victim’s threshold for exceptional success on Social rolls is raised from five successes to seven. The victim may reflexively spend one Willpower to negate this effect for a single action, though that Willpower does not also grant the usual dice bonus.

Satiety Expenditure: The victim becomes frustrated and impulsive. She cannot regain Willpower through her Virtue (or a similar trait that relies on her better nature or connection with others) for as long as the Nightmare lasts.

Exceptional Success: The victim adds three Doors to all Social maneuvering actions that don’t involve hard leverage (see p. 83 of the **Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook**).

THEY PUT SOMETHING IN YOUR FOOD

It’s the way they’re smiling at you that gives it away. There has to be something in your food — why else are they so insistent that you partake of it with them? Nobody is this excited about somebody else eating casserole unless it comes with a sprinkling of glass or a generous portion of arsenic.

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim suffers under the delusion that others are trying to poison him. The player must succeed at a reflexive Stamina + Composure roll to eat a prepared meal and ignore the hallucinatory taste of poison. If the roll fails, the character gains the Sick Tilt (moderate) for the following scene. If the victim attempts to cook a meal himself, the player still must make the roll, as the character suspects that somebody has already tampered with his food supplies.

High Satiety: While the victim is perfectly candid in all other respects, even the mention of food is enough to put them on edge. The victim gains the grave version of the Sick Tilt while in the presence of food or someone trying to get him to eat.

Satiety Expenditure: The suspicion lasts a day per point of Satiety spent on the Nightmare, though once the character has been “poisoned” once the effect fades. Long-term usage of this Nightmare (more days than the victim’s Composure) always counts as a breaking point due to the stress and social isolation.

Exceptional Success: The suffering of the victim brings succor to the Beast’s own horror. If the victim falls to their de-



lusion in the Beast's presence, it counts as fulfilling the Beast's Hunger (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 107).

THEY WALK AMONG-US

What is that thing? It has that head full of holes that flop and make the most disgusting sounds. It keeps saying that it's human, but you're pretty sure you know what a human looks like and that's not it. That thing is standing there, just pretending like you can't see that it isn't real. Just looking at it makes you ill and the fact that you haven't noticed it until right now is the worst part.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim becomes convinced that the people standing around him aren't human at all, but rather replacement beings that only look similar to humans. The victim gains the Spooked Condition for the duration of the scene.

High Satiety: As long as the victim has the Spooked Condition, the Beast gains the 8-again quality on any attempt to manipulate the victim by pointing out or playing to the inhumanity of those around him.

Satiety Expenditure: The victim can barely keep his tone civil, let alone keep from practically retching just looking at how horrible these replica beings are. All failures on Social rolls are counted as dramatic failures. All attempts to use Social maneuvering by the victim must use hard leverage as he sees those around him as a means to get what he wants.

Exceptional Success: As long as the victim has the Spooked Condition, any action to harm or otherwise ruin the lives of

the simulacra doesn't count as a breaking point. When the Condition ends, the victim's player must immediately roll for any breaking points he accrued during the duration of the Nightmare. If the victim is a Storyteller character, the Storyteller can simply narrate the results as applicable.

THIS IS DUE TOMORROW

You knew the assignment was easy, that you could definitely get this done. Now you're stuck. Every time you look at that damned empty space where your work should be, you can feel the anxiety crawl down your spine. Whatever you create will be worthless and you're never going to be able to make this up with what little time you have left.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The Beast chooses a project or an action that the victim would normally have to complete for their career or daily life. For the average person, these are projects like account reports or a university thesis rather than defusing bombs, unless the victim happened to be an EOD officer. Any attempt the victim makes to finish the project costs one Willpower.

High Satiety: Every impediment is worse than the victim originally thought. Even a simple setback makes it feel like it would just be better to start it all over again. Any failed rolls relating to fulfilling the project on the part of the victim count as dramatic failures.

Satiety Expenditure: Feeling the panic well up inside of her, the victim focuses on distracting herself from the feeling of impending doom hanging over her. She gains the Fugue Condition with the triggering event of trying to finish her intended project.

Exceptional Success: The victim gains the Shaken Condition.

WE'RE GOING DOWN!

She was handling just fine a second ago but now she's throwing warning alarms you've never even heard of! You can feel the stupid ape brain inside of you insisting people were not meant to go this fast. Now all that's left to do is scream as your metal coffin goes plunging into the broken earth.

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety vs. Composure + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim is frozen in place with terror as the vehicle swerves out of control. The player must make a reflexive Resolve + Composure roll to attempt to prevent the vehicle from crashing. Even if the roll succeeds, the victim still receives a -2 penalty to all actions relating to operating a vehicle.

High Satiety: Something about the brakes sticks a little bit and the steering wheel always turns a little to the right if the victim doesn't pay attention. All of the victim's failed Drive rolls are treated as dramatic failures.

Satiety Expenditure: The victim unconsciously keeps his foot on the gas pedal even as the wall, truck, or pedestrian comes rushing up to meet him. The victim reflexively attempts to accelerate every turn as long as he is at the controls of the vehicle.

Exceptional Success: The victim can't attempt to bail out of the moving vehicle without succeeding on a reflexive Resolve + Composure roll.

YOU CAN'T DIG IT OUT

How did you not notice it before? How could you have possibly not noticed there was a piece of metal inside of you? The itching and stinging like something had just gotten trapped there. How can anyone concentrate with a sensation like that? You can just barely see it, and if you just dig a little more then it will finally come out.

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety vs. Stamina + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim's attention is fully consumed by the horrible itching of something lodged inside of his body. The victim gains the moderate Sick Tilt.

High Satiety: The victim becomes convinced that whatever this thing is, it isn't alone. Somehow the device is communicating with others, be it through radio transmissions, pheromones, or infrasound. The victim gains the Paranoid Condition, seeing those around him as potentially responsible for his misery.

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast may spend multiple Satiety on this effect. Nothing works — not itch cream, not hot baths. The only way the victim is going to have any relief from the sensation is if he does something himself. For every point of Satiety spent, the victim inflicts two points of lethal damage on himself unless physically stopped.

Exceptional Success: The victim is distracted by the constant itch, suffering a -3 to all Perception rolls.

YOU DON'T HAVE A FACE

You used to remember the way that you looked. You know that you had a face. You looked so much like that one guy you can't quite place. It's right there on the tip of your tongue, because you look just like him. You used to look like someone, but now you can't recall who.

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: As the Beast's influence settles in, the victim finds he has a hard time remembering the facial features of those around them — or even his own. As long as the Nightmare lasts, the victim is unable to recognize individual human faces. The victim must make a Wits + Composure roll to keep track of a single individual in a crowd as even a few people becomes a dizzying shell game. In addition, the character gains the Distracted or Confused Condition (Beast's choice).

High Satiety: Names and faces all blend into each other, and it becomes harder for the victim to remember which set of facts relates to one person or another. Any failed roll related to noticing or differentiating people on the part of the victim is treated as a dramatic failure.

Satiety Expenditure: All supernatural abilities based on the victim's ability to see or appreciate the beauty of the user like a vampire's Majesty or a Makara's Alien Allure become Clashes of Wills with the player rolling Resolve + Composure (if human) or Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance (if a supernatural being). If the victim is successful, he simply is unaffected by the supernatural being's power, and most likely oblivious that such a power was used on him in the first place. The victim treats all other human beings as having the Anonymity Merit equal to the number of successes rolled on the activation of the Nightmare.

Exceptional Success: While the Nightmare is active, the victim's threshold for exceptional success on Perception rolls is increased to seven.

YOU'RE ONE OF US

It all makes sense. Those awful dreams of a beautiful stranger in the night, those scratches that you don't remember getting during the day, that awful stomach cramp and hunger that's been twisting you up inside. How could you have been so blind to it? You're like them and they're here to claim one of their own.

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim gains the Delusional Condition, believing himself to be some form of supernatural entity chosen by the Beast. When the scene ends, the Condition resolves as normal.

High Satiety: The victim's delusion is easily molded by the suggestions of others. Characters offering opportunities that reinforce the victim's belief in his supernatural nature count as soft leverage for any Social maneuvering actions against the character.

Satiety Expenditure: Something deep inside the victim is hungry in a way that only a monster truly could feel. The victim's player must succeed at a Resolve + Composure roll to

resist “feeding” in a way appropriate for their delusion. However, the Nightmare empowers the victim, he gains 8-again to any roll that brings him closer to feeding. This is dependent on what the victim has been convinced he is. A victim who the Beast has convinced that he is a vampire may gain bonus on seducing individuals, while if he assumed he was a werewolf it would benefit rolls to hunt and consume prey.

Exceptional Success: The victim never suffers the Beaten Down Tilt while fighting human beings.

YOU WERE NEVER RIGHT

Everything that you’re doing right now is fighting inevitability. No matter what you sacrifice. No matter how much you give, when the dust settles you’re going to be on the wrong side of history. All that anyone will ever remember you as is just one insignificant being with an opinion – and that opinion wasn’t even right.

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim feels hollow. Stating his stale ideas and the thought of drawing on those useless factoids sounds like nothing short of agony. The Beast chooses a Mental Skill. Using that Skill costs the victim one point of Willpower (which bestows no dice bonus). Also, the victim’s threshold for exceptional success is raised from five to seven successes.

High Satiety: Facts grow jumbled in the victim’s head. It’s hard to recall what’s real with so much nonsense in his mind. It’s hard to remember what he has already said and the most common refutations to the arguments he is hearing. All failures on Mental rolls by the victim are counted as dramatic failures.

Satiety Expenditure: The victim realizes he is surrounded by frauds, charlatans, and phonies that are dragging them down into this philosophical abyss. While the Nightmare persists, the victim loses access to Merits like Library and any Social Merits related to the academic community. While they are still present, the victim can’t stand the thought of being surrounded by people who are clearly just preying on the ignorance of others.

Exceptional Success: The Beast may select two Skills that the victim believes are false information.

KINSHIP NIGHTMARES

The Kinship Nightmares presented below include more possible examples of the sort of abilities a Beast may develop with Family Ties.

CHECKING IT TWICE (WIZENED CHANGELING)

You know that you assembled it perfectly. This is absolutely the way to put this together, but you still feel like something could have gone wrong. What if something came loose while your back was turned? What if somebody ruined your masterpiece? You just need to check it to be sure. Just one more time.

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety vs. Composure + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim becomes consumed with the need to perfect her craft. The victim gains the Obsession Condition for an object they can toy with, repair, or are even planning to create in the future.

High Satiety: The victim is consumed with the need to double check her work to make sure it’s absolutely immaculate. Any action the victim takes other than rechecking what she’s previously done requires a reflexive Resolve + Composure roll. If this roll fails, the victim can’t do anything as she goes back to just making sure everything was running smoothly. In combat, the victim loses her Defense for the turn she fails her roll.

Satiety Expenditure: The victim knows something is wrong and she needs to fix it *right now* because if she doesn’t do it, nobody will. The character becomes utterly monomaniacal in her focus on the object of her perfectionism. The Obsession Condition remains even after the Nightmare expires. The victim can only cure herself of the Obsession by finally perfecting the object or being forcibly separated from her project. The Beast can cure the Condition with a touch as well.

Exceptional Success: The victim gains a +2 bonus to any roll that furthers their obsession, but a -2 on all rolls to notice or focus on anything else.

EVERYTHING YOU KNOW IS A LIE (MAGE)

Your eyes have been opened to the profound truth. Nothing you have ever experienced is true. This world is a simulation and others are just pawns in some cosmic play. How can you love if you don’t know what love truly is? How can you eat if you’ve never felt true hunger?

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim comes to the terrible realization that his life experience is based off a false paradigm or incorrect assumptions. The victim loses access to Specialties and 10-again for the duration of the Nightmare.

High Satiety: The character is plagued by doubt — every action feels false and guided by some principle that simply doesn’t apply to the situation. While the Nightmare is active, the victim’s player must reroll any dice that come up successes when using any Skill in which the victim has a Specialty. The victim keeps the results of this reroll.

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast chooses a Skill category (Mental, Social, or Physical). Within that category, the victim treats all Skills as untrained (meaning the character loses access to any dots in that Skill and suffers a -1 or -3 penalty as appropriate). If this would affect a supernatural being using a power or ability, it provokes a Clash of Wills.

Exceptional Success: The victim’s threshold for exceptional success in any Skill that lost a Specialty is raised to seven successes. For Storyteller characters, who might not have Specialties, the player can specify one Skill that suffers from this effect.

EVIL DOLL (UNFLESHED PROMETHEAN)

You just saw it. Somewhere out of the corner of your eye you saw it, with those mechanical hands and blank, beady eyes. You saw that monstrosity somewhere right when you got into the room, but now you can't find it. That monster is hiding from you, waiting for you to look away long enough to get you.

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety vs. Composure + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim becomes convinced that some inanimate object in the room is actually a monster in disguise, just waiting for her to lower her guard. As long as the object remains in the room the character has the Spooked Condition, unless they prove without a shadow of a doubt that the object actually isn't alive (perhaps by burning it).

High Satiety: If the victim destroys the object, she believes that another object in the room has become possessed by the same malevolent force.

Satiety Expenditure: The victim lets her guard down for just a moment and is attacked by the creature in a flurry of motion, biting her leg or lodging a steak knife in her shin as it skitters by. In reality, the only damage dealt to the victim is caused by their nervous handling of the object causing it to go off, fall, or otherwise cause injury. The victim suffers the object's equipment bonus in lethal damage. This deals a minimum of one damage; even with the most harmless objects the victim finds a way to stumble into a suitably horrible accident.

Exceptional Success: As long as the victim has the Spooked Condition, she may not perform extended actions or other time-consuming activities that might let the monster get the drop on her.

FAMILY IS FOREVER (VAMPIRE)

You know what they say about blood being thicker than water. You also know that just because you have to be polite doesn't mean you have to particularly like this asshole. Something about them drives you up the wall but you can't just put them out.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim becomes convinced that they're in some way distantly related to the Beast. No matter how vague the details are, the victim's subconscious fills in the gaps to make the cover story seem true. The victim gains the Leveraged Condition.

High Satiety: The Beast gains access to a number of the victim's Social Merit dots equal to the Beast's Satiety at the activation of the Nightmare. She cannot partially access flat-rate Social Merits (such as True Friend) if she doesn't have the requisite number of dots, but may partially access scaling Merits like Resources. For example, a Beast with 7 Satiety using the Nightmare on a victim with Contacts 5, Resources 4, and True Friend could gain access to Contacts 5 and use the remaining dots to access two of the victim's Resources, but not True Friend. She could, however, use Contacts 2, Resources 2, and True Friend.

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast may make requests of her "family" that would normally require blackmail or weeks of cajoling. The Beast may spend multiple points of Satiety while this Nightmare is active — for every point of Satiety spent, open one additional Door against the victim.

Exceptional Success: The victim may be irritated by the distant "family" member, or even hate them, but them but turning them away seems unthinkable. The victim gains the Guilty Condition if they refuse a request of the Beast.

THE WATER WON'T LAST FOREVER (HUNTER IN DARKNESS WEREWOLF)

You can't help but think about it. How long has it been since it's rained? Aren't those earthquakes just a little too frequent for this part of the world? Sure, the government has done a good job of keeping it covered up, but the truth is obvious. This world is dying and you're not going let it take you with it.

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety vs. Composure + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim is "clued in" to an impending environmental or economic apocalypse that he's certain will happen in the immediate future. The victim gains the Paranoid Condition, feeling compelled to hoard material resources to ensure his own survival from the impending end of all things.

High Satiety: The victim only respects the rule of might and all other law is just a weakness of society. As long as the victim is under the effect of the Nightmare, he is treated as hostile for all Social Maneuvering actions short of hard leverage. Attempting to bargain for resources instead of just taking them for himself fails outright without a roll.

Satiety Expenditure: In a world without law, only survival of the fittest matters. The Beast may spend multiple Satiety on this effect. For each Satiety spent the Nightmare persists for another day. Additionally, the Beast may indicate one object in these Nightmares that the victim simply can't be without if they have any hope of surviving. The victim gains the Obsessed Condition for acquiring this object.

Exceptional Success: The Paranoid Condition persists for a day after the end of the Nightmare.

YOU ARE A MEAT MACHINE (PROMETHEAN)

Everything you do is simply a series of chemical reactions in your head. Do you feel pain or are you simply programmed to behave as though you do? Your existence is nothing more than a farce, an absurd dance of atavistic desire with no driving will.

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim realizes he is nothing more than a machine made of meat merely acting as directed by society rather than having actually ever made his own decisions. The victim suffers a -2 penalty to actions that are not in his own self-interests (for example, giving first aid to a stranger or assisting someone being mugged) for scene.

High Satiety: The victim no longer views others except in terms of what he can get for himself. The victim loses a point of Willpower whenever he acts takes any action without obvious and immediate compensation or benefit.

Satiety Expenditure: Freed of the responsibility of humanity the victim continues his day-to-day routine, completely oblivious to outside inputs. The victim gains the Fugue Condition with the trigger of being forced to make a moral or ethical decision. While in the fugue state the victim returns to his daily routine, apathetic to the world around him. The victim retains a survival instinct — a musician will not continue to play a violin in a burning concert hall, but he will not attempt to save others either.

Exceptional Success: The victim gains the Wanton Condition for the duration of the scene.

YOU HAVE FORESEEN THIS (ACANTHUS MAGE)

There's no chance they're going to stop it in time. You already know exactly how it's going to happen and how much they're going to suffer, but nobody will believe you. So all you can do is watch it play out exactly as you saw it coming.

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim falls under the delusion they are in some way able to foresee or plan for all future outcomes. The victim gains the Delusional Condition (the Beast outlines the delusion in general terms), and any attempt to stray from the vision of the future the Beast left in their head requires a reflexive Resolve + Composure roll. The Beast may resolve the Delusional Condition prematurely by touching the victim of the Nightmare.

High Satiety: The player may select a number of rolls equal to the successes rolled on the Nightmare activation roll that the victim knows are destined to fail. No matter how many successes the victim's player achieves, these rolls are treated as though they only show one success.

Satiety Expenditure: The victim walks through the world a helpless tool of capricious destiny. As long as the victim has the Delusional Condition, her threshold for exceptional successes is three successes instead of five — as long as she follows the vision's narrative. When the Delusional Condition is resolved, the Beast regains one Willpower for each exceptional success that the victim achieved. After the Delusional Condition is resolved, the victim loses 10-again for the scene.

Exceptional Success: If the Delusional Condition is resolved by the victim during the duration of the Nightmare, it counts as fulfilling the Beast's Hunger.

YOU SHOULD FADE AWAY (SILENT SIN-EATER)

You're so tired but you don't want to impose on anyone. What kind of needy and desperate thing would you be if you couldn't take care of yourself in this situation? You're an adult. Surely you can get through this yourself instead of bothering somebody else with your

problems. Maybe someone will just notice you when they have the time to spare.

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim seeks to avoid being a problem for those around him, subconsciously aware that his needs are a drain and annoyance on those around them. The victim must make a Resolve + Composure roll to ask somebody else for something he needs, even if his life is at stake.

High Satiety: The victim is grateful for any attention. He gains the Swooning Condition with whomever chooses to directly address him.

Satiety Expenditure: The victim becomes part of the background noise of the environment, a barely noticeable footnote on the occurrences of daily life. To try and get someone's attention, the victim rolls Presence + Resolve if human, or Presence + Supernatural Tolerance if not. Success for the victim means the observer doesn't even notice there was anyone there at all.

Exceptional Success: The victim's body grows heavy and the will to continue to participate in the world with others bleeds away. The victim gains the Lethargic Condition.

YOU WILL BE FIRST AGAINST THE WALL (CARTHIAN VAMPIRE)

The edges of society are already starting to crumble, and you can hear the growing mob outside. The revolution is now and you're the first thing they're going to burn.

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety vs. Composure + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim sees the hatred and knowing looks of the wronged everywhere she goes. The victim gains the Agoraphobic Condition.

High Satiety: Even the most trusted allies may possibly surrender the victim to the mob. Even a helpful offer of a ride might just be a delivery to the gallows in disguise. The victim may no longer benefit from Teamwork actions with others.

Satiety Expenditure: It isn't paranoia if they're really out to get you. The victim sees the signs of the mob anywhere, and any situation where they're outnumbered is enough to put them in a panic. Any room that has more than two people is treated as a large crowd by the Agoraphobic Condition.

Exceptional Success: Everywhere the victim looks he can see signs of those out to get him. Even once-safe places are now a threat. The victim gains the Lost Condition whenever he attempts to flee from a crowd.

YOUR STRUGGLE WON'T MATTER (TORN SIN-EATER)

Nothing you do is going to matter. Everything you sacrificed to get this far was a waste. Systems are self-perpetuating, and your little temper tantrum isn't even going to turn a head. Someday you're going to be dust and the status quo will be still be here, a monument to all the people it crushed underfoot without even noticing.

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim gains the Beaten Down Tilt. If the victim normally would not be able to gain the Beaten Down Tilt, he instead take a -2 penalty to fighting back.

High Satiety: The victim feels the futility of his actions pulling him down into deeper despair. Every attempt to prove his attacker wrong with words or actions just seems to make him seem that much stronger. The Beast regains one Willpower when the victim spends a point of Willpower to fight back.

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast may spend multiple Satiety on this effect. For every Satiety spent, the Beast reduces one attack by the victim to a chance die.

Exceptional Success: Forcing the victim to surrender (**Beast: The Primordial**, p.163) in the Beast's presence counts as fulfilling the Beast's Hunger.

CREATING KINSHIP NIGHTMARES

Orson's **Beast** chronicle has been going well, but he thinks the players have become a little too sedentary in their quiet little lives and that it's time to shake up the neighborhood status quo by reminding the cast they aren't the only Children of the Dark Mother in the world. He decides that he's going introduce another predator into the game to see how Ms. Winters, played by Magda, will react to somebody muscling in on her line of work. He thinks an old monster with a youthful face would make a nice contrast to the young Beast with an old face.

THE FAMILY

Harmon Bourke is a Ventruue of the Lancea et Sanctum. He is a sinner by most accounts and a saint only by his own claims. Some younger Kindred wonder if that's his real name — it seems a little too on the nose for a member of the Lancea — but he was named for the legendary baseball player Hammering Harmon Killebrew so those young, uncultured shits can go dance in the sunlight. Embraced in the late 70s, Harmon still has the face of boyish innocence and if it weren't for the harsh eyes, one might almost mistake him for a young man instead of someone pushing 60. He is a man prone to keeping a grudge, the sort of person that can't help remembering all the ways a person has slighted his ego whenever they cross paths.

Banished to the suburbs due to a failed power play on Lancea leaders within the city, Harmon spends his nights operating a Bible reading group amongst the flock as a "cool" young minister. Suburbia fits him, though. Nowhere is more consumed in traditionalism than a herd that has fled the imagined vice and crime of cities for respectable white-picket communities. He keeps his flock on the straight and narrow. The test scores are always through the roof at the local school, the property values are high, and the crime rate is low. Harmon doesn't consider himself a predator, he just considers himself a good shepherd.

Orson decides that, as a Storyteller character, Harmon is a master of the Dominate Discipline easily ensnaring the minds

of mortals and weak-willed vampires in his power. With a command, he can make just about anyone instinctively obey him, and with a little effort he can warp their minds to such a degree they don't even remember doing it. He's also been initiated into the most basic rituals of Theban Sorcery, though his little misunderstanding with the local Lancea elders has stopped him from developing any considerable knowledge in that field.

THE TIES THAT BIND

Against all odds, Orson discovers that Ms. Winters and Harmon get along rather than attempting to tear each other apart. They both have a passion for their own unique brands of justice, which they feel are underappreciated by others around them. They both enjoy preying on those who require testing. Their only true disagreement is why they do what they do. Harmon is a firm believer that God created monsters as a lathe upon humanity, scaring humanity to the straight and narrow. While he finds Ms. Winters' views about some sort of mother of monsters quaint (if entirely wrong) he feels validated in his beliefs by her presence. Meanwhile, Ms. Winters thinks Harmon is a dogmatic zealot who denies the very evidence in front of him. This is why they work together for hunting and not for philosophical discussions. Theirs is a trust built on mutual enmity and fascination.

While neither is particularly cozy with the other, they work very well together. Local church groups often have elder members, and Ms. Winters' approval of Harmon's private meetings in the community center brings enough legitimacy to the vampire amongst Ms. Winters' neighbors that he is able to form a flock. In return, Harmon only has to point out little troubles in the community that Ms. Winters might otherwise miss in her hunts. No matter what, they're in it together, and anything that comes for one of them is sure to discover the other, be it Heroes, hunters, vampires, or something stranger. These are close enough connections for Ms. Winters to form Family Ties (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 323) with Harmon.

THE PROCESS

Magda decides it's time that Ms. Winters create some Nightmares from experiences she has had with Harmon. Magda identifies a few different aspects of Harmon that could easily inspire new Nightmares. She decides that she wants to purchase a couple to show off the tightening bonds between Ms. Winters and her vampiric ally.

The first thing Ms. Winters considers is the concept of a vampire and the sorts of fears one inspires. With Harmon, she's certainly seen enough of vampirism to get some ideas about it. They are ravenous predators hidden beneath a suave exterior, capable of manipulating people with ease. She has seen how easily they can get their hooks into power structures, manipulating entire organizations while remaining hidden. She has seen Harmon casually mention a few words to a bureaucrat within his flock, and then later seen denied loans trap families in the neighborhood, licenses revoked to halt development, and even arrest warrants disappear. That isn't even mentioning the physical perks — she has seen Harmon kick down doors and hardly flinch after being shot.

Those are all terrifying ideas and certainly would work very well for a vampire, but Harmon rarely uses his vampiric physique in a brood of Beasts, and Ms. Winters prefers the personal touch over the cruel machinery of bureaucracy. Ultimately, she decides the most striking thing about Harmon's vampiric condition by far is his immortality. In the cozy world of suburban affluence people are terrified of looking their age. Her neighbors look at Ms. Winters hoping they'll age a little more gracefully than her, but they look to Harmon wishing they could have skin like his, smooth and unblemished. Ms. Winters decides to capitalize on that fear, creating a Nightmare about limited mortal lifetimes. She decides Harmon will enjoy that desperation and she'll enjoy his irritation as he has to deal with fear-stricken mortals begging for a chance to live forever as a child of the night.

YOU ARE RUNNING OUT OF TIME (VAMPIRE)

Your body is a wreck, a useless lump of ragged flesh. Even though you've hardly begun to live you're already being robbed of everything that was promised to you. Then you look at them – the eternal ones. They have forever and you are nothing but a mayfly. What you wouldn't do to have a little more time...

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim feels the beauty of youth draining out of his body – and somebody younger and more attractive is always there to replace him. The victim's threshold for exceptional successes on Social rolls is raised from five successes to seven, and failures on rolls to make first impressions or impress younger people are considered dramatic failures.

High Satiety: The victim temporarily loses access to Merits that revolve around a young body, such as Striking Looks or Iron Stamina. Any promise of life extension for the victim counts as soft leverage on Social maneuvering.

Satiety Expenditure: The victim sees herself as a withered husk of a human being and can sense the contempt in other people. The player may spend multiple points of Satiety on this effect. For every point of Satiety spent, the Beast may reflexively cause the victim to fail a single Social action (which, depending on the type of action, might count as a dramatic failure).

Exceptional Success: The victim gains the Leveraged Condition for the Beast if the Nightmare takes effect immediately. Alternatively, the victim gains the Condition for another being that the Beast chooses to subliminally hint at within the imagery of the Nightmare if the Nightmare activates when the victim next sleeps.

Next, Ms. Winters considers what sort of fears lay in what she knows of the vampiric community. Harmon is of Clan Ventrue, who are well known for their airs of nobility and lordship. Leadership and control are certainly fertile ground for a Nightmare, but ultimately Ms. Winters decides it's not really the strongest connection with Harmon or the community. Harmon is a failed ruler thrown out from the courts of the city to a mere suburb for a failed power play – hardly the right subject for such a Nightmare. Meanwhile, the neighborhood has its share

of self-styled lords, people that have built empires out of their businesses, but those are hardly Fortune 500 material. They're big fish in small ponds.

Ms Winters decides to instead look at the Lancea et Sanctum, the order to which Harmon claims allegiance. The Sanctified philosophy certainly explains a lot about her companion. The Lancea is a covenant that believes itself doing the work of a higher power – perhaps not always literally, but that its existence is part of a larger divine plan. She finds a lot to work with in that organization, especially the irony of the failed lord of the night Harmon devoting himself so completely to a higher power. Ms. Winters focuses on the Lancea's obsession with trials and tribulations being a way of honing faith. She decides to use the terror of being chosen to prove that faith. This will do nicely, especially with the sorts of lessons Harmon preaches to his flock.

GOD IS TESTING YOU (LANCEA ET SANCTUM VAMPIRE)

Everything that is happening to you? God planned it. This is the will of Heaven being written across your body and soul. You are an instrument in the hand of the Lord and all you can do is submit and hope that the divine is merciful.

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety vs. Composure + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim is flooded with the belief that any dangerous situation that confronts him is a test from the divine. The victim can't avoid this situation, and the only way around this test is through it. The victim experiences a breaking point when he attempts to flee from a situation that would put him in significant physical harm, such as climbing out the window of a burning building or giving a mugger his wallet.

High Satiety: A victim seeking to avoid the test placed before him finds he is punished for his hubris. Whenever the victim fails a breaking point to avoid peril, he suffers a point of lethal damage.

Satiety Expenditure: The victim is tested and found wanting in the eyes of Heaven. As long as the Nightmare is active, the Beast's player may spend 1 Satiety to reduce the victim to a chance die on a single roll. If the victim suffers a dramatic failure, he may regain Willpower as if he had indulged his Vice (or a similar trait).

Exceptional Success: The Beast may dictate an action the victim must take in the dangerous situation or risk a breaking point.

Finally, Ms. Winters decides that Harmon as a person embodies certain kinds of fear that could be interesting. She's seen the way he manipulates people, and she's tasted their fear as their bodies move without their control. She's also seen the way he shapes his congregation with fire and brimstone speeches that crush even the smallest whisper of disagreement, even from the teenage members of the flock. Ms. Winters considers how best to shape a Nightmare inspired by such a man, then

realizes that the fervor the vampire inspires in his flock isn't entirely supernatural. Those that regularly join his services have the same instinctive needs of anyone else, to belong to part of a community, regardless of vampiric charisma at work. Ms. Winters remembers how Harmon has strong armed people out of the community, using both his powers and influence to banish people he had found wanting in their faith. She realizes this is perfect – the fear of the being cast out by the shepherd was just the sort of inspiration she needed to craft the perfect Nightmare representing their Kinship. Besides, the neighborhood certainly has other bad influences she'd like to get away from the children, and now she has a new tool to make them do just that.

YOU DON'T BELONG HERE (HARMON)

Don't look back, you just need to keep going. Just as Adam and Eve were barred from Eden, you were tossed out and now all that you can do is flee. The rest of the flock can smell the sin flowing from your body and now you need to run. How did you ever think you could hide it? How can one insignificant mote stand up to the Lord's plan?

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety – Composure

Normal: The victim knows instinctively that he has been banished and is no longer welcome in a neighborhood or similarly sized community of people. If the Beast intends this Nightmare to take effect immediately, the victim knows never to return to the area he now stands in. If the Beast suspends the effect until the next time the victim sleeps, he awakens with a fright knowing he must never return to his home at risk of some unspeakable punishment. The Beast speaks a number of ultimatums that the victim must fulfill to safely leave the place they are banished from, such as leave

by dawn, take no one with you, or don't look behind you as you go. If the Beast suspends the Nightmare, the ultimatums come as strong imagery rather than direct commands that the victim can't help but remember as they wake screaming. These commandments must be possible, but that doesn't necessarily mean they must be fair. For example, nothing stops a Beast from demanding a vampire leave at dawn. The victim's player must spend a point of Willpower to violate one of the Beast's ultimatums.

High Satiety: The Beast instinctively knows which of the ultimatums has been violated by the victim.

Satiety Expenditure: The victim feels the awesome and terrible wrath of divinity behind him, and knows that to even look over his shoulder risks the wrath of that god. For every point of Satiety spent, the first time the victim violates one of the commandments he suffers two lethal damage. Victims slain by this ability often fall to their knees, having a religious epiphany as their parasympathetic nervous system fires into overdrive, though it's just as likely they will dissolve away into salt.

Exceptional Success: The victim gains the Guilty Condition if he violates any of the ultimatums put forth by the Beast (in addition to any other consequences).

FINAL TOUCHES

Having come up with three new ideas for vicious Nightmares to continue to help Ms. Winters pursue her Hunger, Magda compares her Nightmares to any Nightmares the rest of the table has created and then presents her three Nightmares to Orson. He reads them over to make sure both of them agree on the sort of relationship that Magda and Harmon have, and then agrees they're ready to make their debut at the table.

BREAKING DOWN A CHARACTER

Creating a Kinship Nightmare based on another character can be difficult for both player and Storyteller characters. A neonate vampire, originally a faceless pawn sent to hunt the brood, is unexpectedly adopted after the Beasts take a liking to him. A werewolf whose original concept was a remorseless berserker has a change of heart after several stories, embracing a different way of life before a Beast gets around to creating a Kinship Nightmare. Here are a few ways to break down a character into that essential fear needed to create Nightmares. Remember there is no one right answer to what makes a member of the supernatural community terrifying, as long as the table agrees it makes for an interesting part of the story.

- Describe the character to someone else at the table without bringing up their supernatural species, profession, or affiliation with a supernatural order. What traits most strongly define them? What most differentiates them from the presumptions of the setting?
- Discuss with the character's player or the Storyteller a single defining event that happened, either at the table or in the character's backstory. How did it alter them? What was the worst possible outcome of that event? Why is it terrifying?
- Define a single area where the character has unparalleled power. What is the worst possible thing they could do with that control? What is the character most afraid of becoming with that sort of control?
- Consider what sort of predation the character is capable of that would cause a Chamber to form. How does that Chamber resonate with the Legend of the Beast? How did they perform such an act? What sort of Lair Traits tie the two together?

BIRTHRIGHTS

The Birthrights presented with each Family are the most common, but they are not the only options. Many Begotten sit apart from their siblings, manifesting their legends differently than the rest of their kin. Their Birthrights mark them as different, but they're no less members of the Family because of them.

ANAKIM

- The Anakim automatically knows when someone whose blood she has tasted or smelled is within (Lair dots) yards. With a Perception roll she can also recognize people related to this bloodline, knowing the exact relationship on an exceptional success. This also applies to mystical relationships – Anakim with this Birthright can smell vampire lineages.
- The Anakim seems unstoppable, shrugging off wounds and walking through deadly traps no matter what assault the victim unleashes. Anakim with this Birthright gain additional Health equal to their Lair dots.

ESHMAKI

- The Eshmaki enflames her victims' terror with shadowy phantasms sculpted from darkness. Once per chapter, the Lurker can sculpt puppets of shadow and infuse them with her Horror's malevolence. Roll Manipulation + Expression – Composure. On a success, the victim suffers the Shaken Condition. On an exceptional success the victim also suffers the Frightened Condition. On a dramatic failure, the Beast gains the Shaken Condition as the rebuffed Horror turns its rage against her.
- A true hunter doesn't need pitch darkness. With a touch, the Eshmaki shrouds the victim's eyes with darkness. Until the sun next sets and rises, the victim can't see fine detail no matter how much light he shines on the subject, suffering –2 dice to any action requiring clear and effective vision. The Beast can use this Birthright no more than once per day.

INGUMA

- To her victims, the Outsider always feels close enough to know their every move. The Inguma selects her victim with a touch or a few moments of conversation. Once per day thereafter she may send the victim a message; this can take various forms such as a brief voicemail, a few lines of text on a mirror, or a single object no larger than Size 1. The next time the victim is alone, he notices the message. Though the message feels real, it exists entirely within the victim's mind. It vanishes when he takes his attention from it or tries to prove its existence to others. The Inguma can only have a single victim at a time, and knows exactly when each message has been received.
- Once per chapter, the Inguma can make anyone she can see notice her no matter how obscured the view or

OPTIONAL RULE: MULTIPLE BIRTH RIGHTS

As Beasts grow into their legends, they subvert the expectations of the story and make it their own. Experienced Begotten become even greater examples of their Family than their lesser siblings. At Lair 4, the Beast develops further understanding of her place in the Primordial Dream and may purchase an additional Birthright from her Family list for five Experiences. At Lair 7, she begins to transcend the traditional boundaries placed on her legend and can purchase another Birthright from any Family for five Experiences.

crowded the location. The victim clearly sees the Beast and knows she is watching him. The victim has an uneasy fascination with the Inguma and must continue watching or move towards her for (Lair) turns or spend a Willpower point to look away. The Inguma can choose to disappear from the victim's view when line of sight is broken. Though not invisible, she is occluded from the victim's vision for (Lair dots) turns.

MAKARA

- The Makara moves with the unstoppable force of a tsunami. Shackles or locks can't stop her onward motion for long. Objects specifically designed to slow or restrain the Makara suffer Structure damage equal to her Lair dots each turn until they snap under the strain. Foes attempting to initiate grapples suffer her Lair rating as a penalty. Even the environment can't stop her momentum. The Leviathan's Speed never falls below 1 from environmental conditions or mundane forces.
- Makara thrive in hostile environments that would destroy lesser creatures. Once per chapter, the Makara becomes immune to all effects caused by Environmental Tilts, as if they matched her Lair Traits (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 101). This immunity lasts for the remainder of the scene.

NAMTARU

- The Namtaru stains a victim with her bodily fluids – a smear of mucus or a gob of saliva is sufficient. The marked victim resonates with the revulsive Horror, suffering –2 to all Social rolls for the remainder of the scene. Social maneuvering first impressions are also downgraded one step.
- The Namtaru makes his Horror clear to see for one victim. The victim is extremely reluctant to remain near the Namtaru and must spend one Willpower point every scene she chooses to interact with the Namtaru. This only applies when it is the victim's choice. If the Beast locks them both in a cell, or surprises and attacks the victim, she need not spend Willpower, though she will do her

best to stay as far away as she can. This Birthright can be used once per chapter.

TALASSII

- Victims of the Talassii feel sluggish and constrained, like their every movement fights against constricting vines or suffocating earth. Once per chapter, everyone within (Lair dots x 10) feet of the Talassii reduces their Dexterity by one, which also affects derived traits such as Initiative and Defense. This lasts for the remainder of the scene — the Beast can choose to not affect individuals within this zone.
- The Talassii's traps are insidious and difficult to avoid. Once per scene, the Beast can ignore a victim's resistance to one roll. Actions that lack a resistance component consider any success from the Talassii to be an exceptional success. The Beast can decide which roll ignores resistance for extended actions, but can still only use this Birthright once per scene.

UGALLU

- The stains of guilt cling to humans whether they feel the burden or not. With a moment of concentration, the Ugallu can sense whether anyone within view has caused or suffered Integrity loss within the last week. She can't tell what role the person played in the Integrity loss without further investigation, but she gains +2 Satiation potential (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 108) if she includes that person's experience into her next feeding. This Birthright only identifies one person per day.
- The Ugallu exposes the coverings humans use to prevent injury for the false hope they are. Once per chapter, the Beast negates the protective measures worn by one victim for one turn. Armor doesn't protect from injury; heat passes straight through fireproof suits. This Birthright is ineffective against natural armor or insulation. The Beast must spend a point of Satiation to bypass magical or supernaturally-enhanced protections.

MERITS

Beasts get a great deal of mileage out of Merits, compared to other supernatural beings. Their access to Advanced and Epic Merits, plus the fact that Atavisms tend to give an array of capabilities in a single block, mean that Merits are one of the better ways to differentiate them. Below are some new Merits to add to your **Beast** chronicle, at the Storyteller's discretion.

DIRECT DIAL (•)

Prerequisites: Advanced Direction Sense, Computer ••, Occult ••

Effect: Your character can place a telephone call to any person that you could track using Advanced Direction Sense. The call goes to the telephone nearest that person, and it begins ringing. This works regardless of whether that telephone is on silent, has a dead battery, is broken, totally disconnected, or is a non-functional child's toy. The call might alternately go to a computer that is set up to receive voice calls, or other similar equipment. This call cannot be traced, and it lasts until one of you hangs up. This does not give you any information about the person's location, although you might be able to derive something about it via background noise. Using this Merit costs a point of Willpower, unless you're calling a member of your brood.

HORRORSPAWN (• TO •••••)

Your character has created a permanent Horrorspawn either by giving birth to it in her Lair, or cultivating eggs. The Horrorspawn can feed for her, fight for her, and carry out basic tasks. Design your Horrorspawn using the rules presented on p. 109. Each dot in this Merit represents the Horrorspawn's Potency. Potency is limited by the Beast's Lair rating, as outlined in the chart on p. 110.

This Merit can be purchased multiple times to reflect multiple Horrorspawn.

Drawback: If not given explicit instructions for feeding, Horrorspawn attempt to feed from those closest to the Beast, preying on her family and friends.

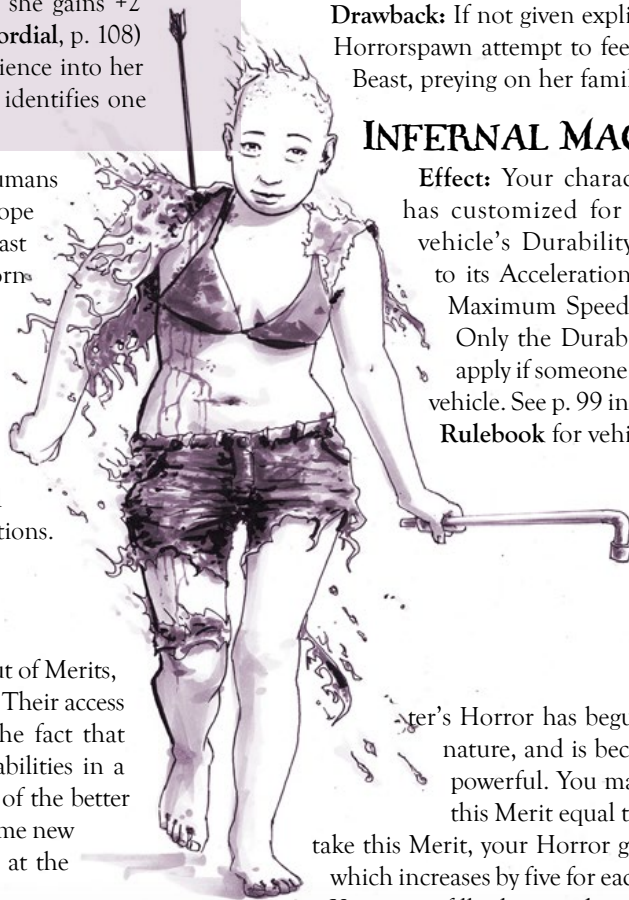
INFERNAL MACHINE (••)

Effect: Your character has a vehicle that she has customized for pursuit. Add two to the vehicle's Durability, five to its Structure, 10 to its Acceleration and Safe Speed, 20 to its Maximum Speed, and one to its Handling. Only the Durability and Structure bonuses apply if someone other than she is driving her vehicle. See p. 99 in the **Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook** for vehicle rules.

LEGENDARY HORROR (• TO •••••)

Prerequisite: Lair of ••••• or more

Effect: Your character's Horror has begun to burst the bonds of its nature, and is becoming more independently powerful. You may have a number of dots in this Merit equal to your (Lair - 3). When you take this Merit, your Horror gains an Essence pool of 10, which increases by five for each additional dot purchased. You may refill it by spending Satiation, each point of which



spent grants your Horror a number of points of Essence equal to your Lair. Your Horror consumes one point of Essence each day like any other spirit, and draws on your Satiety score of its own volition if its Essence pool is empty. However, your Horror also gains one dot of Influence and two Numina for each dot you have in this Merit. These powers belong to your Horror, and not your character's human half. They can be used by the Horror when it is acting independently, or by your character if she has Merged with her Horror temporarily. If a character with this Merit attempts the Retreat, then her dots in this Merit add to the extended roll needed for their Horror to become Unfettered. If the attempt succeeds, the resulting Unfettered is likely to be unusually troublesome.

In addition to retaining the Influence and Numina that this Merit granted the Horror, along with those conferred by their Rank, it attempts to spawn a Legend. This works similarly to the way that a living Beast might attempt to become a Beast Incarnate (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 243.) However, the Horror does not derive any particular benefit from doing so. It might also attempt to possess people, or engage in other spirit shenanigans.

OBCASUS INITIATE (••)

Prerequisites: Beast. You have experienced Guidance (see p. 141) from the Dark Mother at least once

Effect: You gain the capacity to lead an Obcasus rite. You immediately learn the Consecrate rite. You may learn further rites via Communion (see p. 104), extensive occult research, or being taught by another Initiate. You may learn a maximum number of rites equal to your Intelligence + Lair.

PRIMORDIAL CULT (••+, SPECIAL)

Prerequisites: Beast, Occult •• or Politics ••

Effect: You have gathered followers into a cult. Whether they view your Horror as a powerful dream god, or see you as a gang leader with a weird niche, they'll do anything necessary to feed your Hunger, short of killing or getting killed. Note that this Merit doesn't account for the size of your cult. A two-dot cult might represent dozens of casual followers, where a five-dot cult can comprise just a small ring of fanatics.

You can only have one cult at a time.

Drawback: If you mistreat your followers, they might take up arms as Heroes; see pp. 134–137 for more on Primordial cults, their rewards, and their risks.

All Primordial cults share the following benefits:

The Communion: Once per chapter, if your followers have aided your hunt, you can choose to gain the 8-again quality or lose the 10-again quality on the subsequent feeding roll. Cultists never penalize feeding rolls by procuring meals. **Drawback:** Humans don't always grasp the needs of Hunger. A failure feeding this way becomes a dramatic failure.

The Elect: Once per chapter, you can draw on your inner circle for the equivalent of three dots in Allies, Retainer, or Staff (**Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 54).

The Priest: The Herald is a hierophant or administrator to your followers, gifted with a shard of your power. Once per

chapter, she can foster your agenda using the cult, adding dots in this Merit as bonus dice to any roll you make to further your Legend (maximum +5 after penalties). Alternatively, you can use her as a human front to hinder your enemies, adding this bonus to rolls defending your Life.

Dots in this Merit in excess of two are used to purchase additional benefits:

Deceptive (•): Once per chapter you can use your followers to run interference on enemies and spies, inflicting the Distracted Condition on anyone investigating the aftermath of your feeding. If you have the Anonymity Merit, your followers benefit from it as well.

Edible (• to •••): You can feed by reaping your followers with Nightmares, making a Satiety roll with base potential equal to dots in Edible. You are limited to one attempt a night; apply modifiers as appropriate. Your cultists will see this as a sign of your favor, or reason to redouble their efforts, taking the Inspired Condition on a successful feeding. **Drawback:** You cannot reap your cult while Ravenous or Gorged. Any time you successfully feed this way more than once in a week, the cult experiences a breaking point with a –3 modifier.

Influential (•): Choose a narrow sphere of influence (bookies, librarians, street kids, etc.). Once per chapter, subtract two from the Availability rating of any service or equipment that would fall under that purview, to a minimum of one. This influence also counts as a dot of Contacts. You can purchase this benefit five times.

Mystic (•• or •••): Your cult has recruited one or more supernatural humans. Choose a type (clairvoyants, mediums, telepaths, etc.); you can access their abilities through the Elect benefit. For two dots, their wisdom grants you the 9-again quality on Occult rolls, or 8-again if you already have that benefit. For three dots, once per chapter you can also use them as a 3-die “equipment bonus” on any roll that would reasonably relate to their wheelhouse, achieving an exceptional success on three successes.

Resonant (•••): Your cult's dreams brush the bounds of your Lair. Once per chapter, if your cult performs a short ritual they can increase an area's *similarity* to one of your Chambers by two steps for a scene (see **Beast: The Primordial**, p. 101). Forgo the Willpower cost to impose a Lair Trait or open a Primordial Pathway.

Doctrinal (•••): Your cult is defined by a manifesto or bible. Your followers live by its wisdom, dying and killing for its tenets. The cult gains a +2 modifier on breaking points incurred from actions they take to feed you. In addition, once per session you or your followers can remove two Doors in Social maneuvers meant to proselytize or recruit allies.

LAIR MERITS

This is a special category of merits that enhance the Lair of the Beast possessing them.

CONNECTED LAIR (••)

Effect: Through some occult means, your character's Lair has access to the information systems of the mundane world. Characters with the appropriate devices can access internet, tele-

phone, television, or radio communications. Any attempt to trace these signals from the outside world will lead to contradictory or nonsensical results. The range of these communications may be limited to the rough geographical boundaries of the Hive. While the internet goes everywhere, a brood that constructs a radio station inside a shared Lair won't be able to blanket a larger-than-normal portion of the Earth's surface with sinister talk-radio programs.

TRAP ROOM (••)

Effect: Possibly unwisely, your character has learned to lever open the door to one or more of her Chambers, and leave it ajar. When opening a Primordial Pathway into or out of the mundane world (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 97) your character may choose to spend a point of Satiety in addition to the normal cost of 1 Willpower. If she does so, the duration of the pathway is extended. It stays open until sunrise or sunset on a normal success, or any time up to a week on an exceptional success. Characters may enter the area normally while this power is in effect, but if they attempt to leave before the duration expires then they end up in the Beast's Lair as normal. The exception is the character possessing this Merit and her broodmates, who may come and go as they will.

VAST LAIR (• TO ••••)

Effect: The Chambers of your character's Lair are much larger than normal and hence harder to quickly navigate or destroy. Uninvited guests require at least 10 minutes per dot in this Merit to traverse a Chamber or Burrow. Further, each dot in this Merit adds five required successes and five minutes to the time increment of any extended action to collapse a Chamber (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 100).

WELL-STOCKED LAIR (• TO •••••)

Prerequisite: Your character cannot have more dots in this Merit than she has in her Lair trait. She must also create Chambers appropriate for any Merits purchased through this Merit.

Effect: Your character has spent a great deal of time and effort to customize her Lair with everything a Beast could want. Each dot in this Merit allows the character to select two dots worth of Merits that represent the material goods and inhabitants available in her Lair. Creatures that inhabit the Lair may not typically be removed from it unless they were recruited from outside the Lair in the first place. For example, a clever brood might find that some ghosts would prefer to abide within the boundaries of a shared Lair rather than the accommodations provided in the Underworld, and are willing to trade services for their tenancy. Even mortals in desperate circumstances might prefer to go live in such an otherworldly realm. These types of servants could return to their places of origin if they were provided with an exit. Servants summoned up whole cloth from the stuff of nightmares, though, cannot leave the bounds of the Lair without fading into nothingness.

Material goods removed from the Lair deteriorate into dust, insects, water, or some other useless substance (determined by the nature of the individual Beast) within a few days. However, that may be time enough to make use of a cache of



weaponry or a fistful of gold coins removed from a Lair with appropriate Merits.

Alternately, one dot of this Merit can be used to make one or more Chambers of a character's Lair comfortable and livable. The chamber will be stocked with food, water, clothing, the necessities for sleep and hygiene, etc. The character, their brood, and a number of additional guests equal to (3 x her Lair rating) may reside there indefinitely.

KINSHIP MERITS

Some Beasts are capable of delving deeper into their connection with other beings that share Kinship with them. These Merits have the same requirements as Kinship Nightmares. If the Family Ties Condition used to establish the Merit ends, the Beast must either reestablish a suitable new Family Ties Condition within a number of weeks equal to their Lair, or else lose the Merit. The Sanctity of Merits does apply.

Players may desire to create their own Kinship Merits, which is perfectly acceptable. A Kinship Merit should be less powerful than an Atavism, and shouldn't overlap in effect too much with any Atavisms or existing Advanced or Epic Merits.

KNOW THEIR FALSENESS (••)

Prerequisite: Family Ties with a changeling

Effect: The true power of pledges and vows is forever beyond any but the changelings themselves (and the Fae, of course). However, a dedicated Beast can learn a dim echo of the ability and make some use of it. To use this Merit, you must simply convince another being to either promise to do something, or to agree to do something in return for a reciprocal consideration (you must then perform your half of the bargain). In this latter case, no language such as swearing, promising, or guaranteeing is necessary, but in the former case the target's statement of intent should be more than casual. However, the use of this Merit is not necessarily obvious to the target.

When these conditions are met, spend a point of Willpower, and the promise becomes binding. No roll is necessary. If the other character violates his promise, then your character immediately knows of it. Your character gains a brief vision of him doing so, along with an intuitive knowledge of the circumstances. The moment that a target no longer has a serious intention of fulfilling his end of the deal counts as a violation, and it occurs immediately if he never intended to perform in the first place. You gain a +2 bonus to the next three rolls you make as part of any effort to retaliate against the target, and his Defense is halved the first time you attack him. Good faith on the part of the target is no defense against this ability. If someone promises to deliver a new game console to you by midnight in return for a few hundred dollars, then the promise is just as broken if he is cut off by floodwaters as if he blew the money on weed and pizza. Unless stated otherwise, the time limit for fulfilling these promises is one lunar cycle.

Demons are incomparable liars and a source of frustration for every Beast that engages with them. If a Beast attempts to

use this power on one of the Unchained, she believes it worked normally, but it has no effect.

FEIGN DEATH (•)

Prerequisite: Family Ties with a vampire

Effect: Your character can take on the aspect of a walking corpse. This requires the expenditure of a point of Willpower, and lasts for a number of hours equal to her Lair. It may be renewed with further Willpower points. While using this ability, the character need not breathe, her heart does not beat, and she can choose not to blink or make other normally involuntary movements. To any medical examination she appears to be dead, although undergoing an autopsy is likely to prove fatal. This ability is not disrupted if the character *does* choose to move about, however, and she may go back to impersonating a dead body at any time within its duration. This power can also suspend the progress of diseases or poisons, although they will begin affecting the character again as soon as this ability ceases to function.

LOOK BETWEEN WORLDS (••)

Prerequisite: Family Ties with a ghost

Effect: Your character has the ability to see and hear ghosts, spirits, and other ephemeral beings, even if they are not currently Manifesting. However, this door may swing both ways, and entities in Twilight might notice the character making an inspection of them if you aren't careful. This ability also makes cases of possession immediately obvious, as the Beast sees traces of the spirit superimposed over the victim.

SANGUIVORE (••)

Prerequisite: Family Ties with a vampire

Effect: Your character has sharp canines, and the ability to extend them to an unusual length. They're capable of biting for 0L damage and draining blood from a victim just as a vampire does, although they cannot inflict the blinding pleasure of The Kiss as a vampire can. Beasts don't have blood pools and can't use this consumed blood in the various ways that the Kindred can. However, a point of blood from a human or near-human victim can meet your character's need for food and water for a day if she has this Merit. It's also a plausible way for a Predator to feed.

SCENT YOUR PREY (•) OR (••)

Prerequisite: Family Ties with a werewolf

Effect: Your character has some of the enhanced senses of a wolf, much like one of the Uratha does. At •, your character may have either the enhanced olfactory or auditory senses of a wolf. At ••, she has both. Enhanced hearing grants the character the ability to hear sound in frequencies that humans cannot detect, and also eliminates penalties for quietness and distance of sounds. In a quiet environment such as the countryside, your character's hearing has a range of one mile. In a loud environment such as a city, your character can only single out noises in her immediate vicinity. A character who chooses the olfactory option is able to detect and track other characters

by scent, just as a natural wolf would. For further details, see p. 94 of **Werewolf: The Forsaken 2nd Edition**.

SCOUR YOUR BODY (••)

Prerequisite: Family Ties with a mage

Effect: You may damage your physical form in order to power your abilities. As a reflexive action, you may reduce one of your Physical Attributes by 1 and take one lethal damage. This damage cannot be avoided by any means, nor can it be healed except naturally. The loss of the Attribute dot lasts for 24 hours. If you use an Atavism or Nightmare in the same turn, it takes effect as though you had spent a point of Satiety (or an extra point, should you wish to spend multiple points) along with the activation.

STEP SIDEWAYS (•••)

Prerequisite: Family Ties with a werewolf

Effect: If your character is staring into a reflective surface when attempting to open a Primordial Pathway, she gains +1 to the roll. Further, she can choose to simply transport herself into her Lair instantly, rather than merging her current location with her Chamber. All other modifiers to the attempt to open a Primordial Pathway apply normally.

WALK LIGHTLY (••)

Prerequisite: Family Ties with a ghost

Effect: Your character leaves no forensic trace of his presence. He can be seen by human eyes or cameras, but he somehow never leaves anything in the way of verifiable physical evidence. Attempts to collect usable DNA, fingerprints, hair, fiber, or the like always automatically fail. Further, evidence from the scene cannot be successfully collected from his person, clothing, vehicle, or home. Attempts to collect this type of information about them via supernatural means work normally. His footsteps never leave a clear print, and mundane dogs cannot track his scent. This Merit is most useful for those Beasts who leave a trail of crime scenes in their wake, as it relieves them of the responsibility of concerning themselves with expies from a procedural show following the character around.

THE OBCASUS RITES

Beasts are liminal creatures, pulled back and forth between the firelight of human society and the primordial darkness outside. Their human half has human needs, but their Horror has its own irresistible requirements. It drags them into other places and other kinds of experiences, things far outside the flickering circle of illumination. Most Beasts have a sense that the Dark Mother *chose* them in some way. The question of how much interest She continues to have in Her Children is hotly debated whenever enough Beasts gather for a long enough time. It may take on the appearance of evidence and argument, formal logic, highly developed and hair-splitting theology, or other academic processes for determining what Truth is. These are all merely covers for the emotional core behind them: Do individual Beasts feel

abandoned by the Dark Mother, or do they feel She is still somehow present in their lives?

The Obcasus Rites are an attempt to make her presence palpable in the world. They're a religion, a manifesto, a bottomless black lake of intuitive knowledge and gathered lore about the relationship between Beasts, Horrors, humans, Heroes, the Dark Mother and her other Children. The rites that they allow a Beast to perform bind both individual broods and the collective broods that comprise a hive. They let Beasts tell their stories to the world, hear those stories reflected back as myth, and see those myths wreak real change.

HOW TO USE THE RITES

The Obcasus Rites give Beasts access to a new rules system and set of capabilities, but Beasts already have more than enough power to stand on their own. The rites are separated from the other supernatural abilities that Beasts have (Atavisms, Nightmares, Advanced or Epic Merits, and their innate abilities such as the capacity to escape the bonds of mundane reality and explore the spirit worlds) by the need to engage with their Mother's other Children. The rites are intended to be powerful, but that power can only be fully exercised by a community acting together.

An Initiate of the Obcasus Rites may learn a number of rites equal to their Intelligence + Lair dots, but that knowledge is useless without time, resources, and the support of their allies.

So, what does your character need to conduct a rite? First, she needs someone to lead the rite. Any Beast that wishes to lead a rite must have the Obcasus Initiate Merit. This Merit isn't merely a matter of learning, as any Beast can watch a rite being conducted and mimic the physical actions. Becoming an

RITE DESIGN

Players may wish to design their own rites, with the cooperation of their Storyteller. This is to be encouraged! Good rite design has three key principles:

One, a rite should never wholly supersede an existing Merit, Atavism, or Nightmare. If some capability is already available to the brood (albeit at a cost in Experience), then they should pursue it that way.

Two, rites do not solve problems on their own. They let you trade one problem for another, make a problem easier to solve, or make an insoluble one soluble via other means.

Three, all rites should be designed to work best (or perhaps at all) with the cooperation of multiple characters. This can be achieved by giving the rite requirements of several different types (thus meaning a true renaissance Beast would be required to carry them off alone), by making the benefits of a type that can easily be shared among multiple participants, or by the simple expedient of stating that a minimum number of participants are required to perform the actions of the rite.

Initiate indicates a willingness to act in a shamanic capacity on behalf of all the Beasts in the Hive. By becoming an Initiate, your character is choosing to intercede with the Dark Mother on behalf of other Beasts.

Broods seldom have more than one Initiate, or more than a few in a Hive. There's little benefit to having a multitude of potential rite leaders, and the path requires special effort to pursue. Further, any Beast may function as a participant in a rite. Their inherent and instinctive connection to the Primordial Dream is sufficient to allow them to contribute, if they're willing to do so. Cultists and other types of supernatural beings require some amount of coaching before the rite as to what they must do and say. One dot of the Occult Skill is the minimum for meaningful participation. **See the Obcasus Initiate Merit, on p. 100.**

Next, you need to know a rite that you want to conduct. An Initiate can gain knowledge of new rites during play, but they cannot be learned by simply spending Experiences. The Initiate must learn rites from another Initiate, or through Communion with the Dark Mother. Communion is a Condition that an Initiate may achieve from time to time. It creates a special sense of connection to the Dark Mother, and may include visions and flashes of insight related to Her, to the Brood or Hive, or to the Beast's own personal struggles.

Characters cannot perform rites in any random field or warehouse. The Initiate must first find, gain control of, and Consecrate a place of power that thereafter functions as a Temple. See the Consecrate rite, on **p. 105**, for details.

SYSTEMS

In game terms, a rite is an extended action with a few special wrinkles. The first part of the dice pool is the Power or Finesse score of the *Horror* of the Initiate performing the rite. The character adds dice equal to the Initiate's Occult or a secondary Skill determined by the rite, *whichever is lower*.

Most rites come with a substantial penalty to the Initiate's rolls, which the brood should mitigate by ensuring that their Initiate has all the trappings they might need. Individual rites might have further requirements.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The rite fails, and the Dark Mother shows her disapproval. All participants gain a Beat and a Condition of the Storyteller's choice.

Failure: A rite that ends in failure consumes any listed cost, but has no other effect.

Success: As described in the rite's explanation.

Exceptional Success: The Initiate can choose one of the usual bonuses for an exceptional success (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 158) or the exceptional success bonus list in the rite's description. She can also choose to achieve Communion (see sidebar), but only once ever for a given rite.

TRAPPINGS

Each trapping present allows the Initiate to negate one die of penalty to the extended action to perform the rite. This

NEW CONDITION: COMMUNION

An Initiate may choose to achieve Communion if she takes aggravated damage from an attack by a Hero using an Anathema, or if she is the victim of a hostile supernatural effect that achieves an exceptional success. Further, the first time that she establishes Family Ties with a given type of supernatural creature, she can achieve Communion. Lastly, when performing a rite, the Initiate may choose Communion as the benefit for an exceptional success. This option may only be used once with any given rite.

While under the effects of Communion, the character is at -2 to all mundane Skill rolls and Defense, but receives +2 to all rolls to use supernatural abilities such as Atavisms or Nightmares.

Resolution: The Condition resolves when the character next falls asleep. Upon awakening from that sleep, she will have learned a new rite if she is able to do so (the player can choose which rite, or leave the decision up to the Storyteller if the character wants to trust the Dark Mother's wisdom).

applies only to those penalties inherent to the rite's dice pool, not those from profaned temples, being observed, or the like. Trappings include:

- The Initiate has at least two other characters present to assist her, who do not count as participants for purposes of any other trappings.
- The Initiate has at least a backpack's worth of ritual tools (Resources ••) available.
- The entire brood is present. Every five Beasts beyond that counts as an additional trapping.
- Beasts from at least three different Families are participating.
- Beasts with at least three different Hungers are participating.
- The Hive's Apex is participating.
- The Initiate is the Beast who consecrated the Temple.
- At least 10 cultists are participating. Every group of five cultists beyond that counts as an additional trapping. Cults are discussed in more detail on **p. 134**.
- Supernatural beings who have Family Ties to a Beast who is present are participating (each such character counts as one trapping).
- Each participant is wearing some appropriate ritual garb or regalia (Resources • per participant).
- The Temple is equipped with a grimoire from which the Initiate performing the rite reads an appropriate passage.

SIDEBAR: GRIMOIRES

A grimoire is a family tree and secret history for the local Hive. An effective grimoire recounts the character, myths, and legends of the significant Beasts and other supernatural creatures that have inhabited an area over the last several decades, or even further. Constructing an effective one requires extended rolls of Academics, Investigation, Occult, and Expression, at minimum. However, because reliable paper records of these matters often do not exist, the brood likely has to interview ghosts, spirits, vampires, and other long-lived beings; travel to dangerous, lost, and forbidden locations; and otherwise engage in various undertakings before the players may even make the rolls.

Such a grimoire would be an incredible resource for Heroes or hunters, and the brood is advised to write it in a cipher and to make the physical security of the Temple a priority. Of course, the brood could make a copy of a pre-existing Grimoire, if one is available for the Hive where the brood resides.

A grimoire grants a +2 equipment bonus to any attempts to research the occult history of the Hive.

- The Temple is properly secured and decorated (adornments costing at least Resources •••).

PENALTIES AND PROFANED TEMPLES

Rites are to be conducted in the privacy of the Temple, not in public view. Generally speaking, the only people present at a rite should be the participants (Beasts, cultists, supernatural beings with Family Ties to a Beast who is present, and any sacrificial victims or other persons who are naturally indispensable). If the rite is being spied on in some way, without the spy being physically present, the Initiate suffers a -2 die penalty and knows she is being watched. She does not, however, have any knowledge of who is observing her or how. If someone who should not be present is physically in the ritual space, then the rite cannot be concluded until the intruder is killed or captured. The Initiate must conduct the rite uninterrupted, but any of the other participants may engage in combat or otherwise struggle with intruders and still provide bonuses to the Initiate. The Dark Mother considers the slaughter of interlopers to be a valid method of participation in her Rites. If anyone intrudes into the temple and escapes, the temple is profaned.

A profaned temple incurs a -5 penalty to all rites until it is Consecrated again. The Storyteller has some discretion here. A fellow Beast, even if uninvited, probably doesn't profane the temple. A Hero does, unless brought as a captive. A mage allied with the Initiate that controls the Temple does not profane it, but a mage who is unknown to them and engaging in some other investigation certainly would. An Initiate knows her temple has been profaned the next time she visits it. Any Beast at all notices it on a successful Wits + Occult roll.

BASIC RITES

Basic rites are the simplest, and require five accumulated successes for their completion. These rites allow for simple supernatural effects, or basic story effects (like setting up a temple, which then should fuel more stories).

CONSECRATE

Dice Pool: Power + Expression or Occult - 3

Time Per Roll: One Hour

Duration: Permanent (unless profaned)

Bonus: +2 to all rolls if the Initiate has connected her Lair to that of at least two other Beasts

Cost: None

This rite, performed in a properly prepared place of power, turns it into a Consecrated Temple of the Dark Mother. It is the only rite that can normally be performed outside of a Consecrated Temple. Locating and securing a place of power may be the work of one or more chapters, depending on the brood's competence, focus, and wherewithal. Typical efforts might include an examination of the geomantic characteristics of the earthly side of the Hive, research into weird or fearsome happenings, investigation into urban legends, or the like. In any event, the place of power should be somewhere pleasing to the Dark Mother, of mysterious and occult significance, the site of events important to the chronicle, and so forth. Sea caves, haunted houses, the sites of horrifying events, and wild places where the walls between worlds are thin are all good choices. A character can also consecrate a Chamber in her Lair, or even create a Chamber based on an existing Temple, if she can engineer the right circumstances. However, this might present logistical or security complications if she intends to have a host of participants.

Exceptional Success: The Initiate knows instantly the first time the Temple is profaned.

HORROR MASK

Dice Pool: Finesse + Empathy or Occult - 3

Time Per Roll: Five minutes

Duration: Permanent until the Beast gains a dot of Lair

Bonus: +2 to all rolls if the mask was crafted with an exceptional success

Cost: None

This rite allows one target Beast who is present to bond to a previously prepared mask that represents her Horror. The mask must first be crafted. This is an extended action that costs Resources ••, has a time per roll of six hours, and requires accumulated successes equal to (3 x the target Beast's Lair). The dice pool is Intelligence + Crafts. A Beast must assist in the creation of her own Horror Mask, but any character who has intimate knowledge of her and her Horror can actually construct it. A Horror Mask has several benefits and drawbacks, which apply only to the Beast for whom it was made.

First, it counts as appropriate ritual garb or regalia for any rite. Second, if the Beast wears it during a rite, the player may

spend one point of Willpower on behalf of the Initiate performing the rite, granting him +3 dice for one roll. Third, if the Beast is wearing the mask and successfully uses the Intimidation Skill on a mortal who can see him, that mortal gains the Shaken Condition. Fourth, while wearing the mask, the character gains a +1 bonus to all rolls involving one Attribute, selected when the rite is performed.

The design of the mask reveals much about the true nature of the character's Horror. If a Hero ever sees the character's mask, he thereafter receives +2 to any rolls for Heroic Stalking and need not spend Willpower to attempt to place an Anathema on that character. Any character who has seen the Beast's mask gains a +1 bonus on attempts to uncover information about her using the Investigation or Occult Skills. A Horror Mask ceases to function when the Beast's Lair rating increases (though she can make a new one).

Exceptional Success: The mask continues to function after the character's next Lair increase.

BLOOD OFFERING

Dice Pool: Power + Intimidation *or* Occult – the victim's Composure

Time Per Roll: 10 minutes

Duration: Instant

Bonus: +2 to all rolls if the sacrifice is conducted via supernatural attack forms (such as the low Satiety versions of Limb from Limb or Monster From the Deep)

Cost: One human

This is a simple rite of human sacrifice, offering the victim's fear, pain, and blood to the Dark Mother. It requires a helpless victim, and the means to kill him. Any method that spills at least a little blood will do the trick, but the Dark Mother is es-

YEAH, WE KNOW

Human sacrifice is terrifying and evil. By performing it, you're basically marking your characters as the bad guys.

Now, just as a fun thought exercise, try coming up with reasons that characters in a horror roleplaying game might deliberately set out to hunt someone down and kill him. What's the difference?

It might be that your troupe recoils from the notion of using this rite. If that's the case, great! Maybe it's something the antagonists do. Maybe one of the characters learns it after Communion. Maybe one of the characters learns (or, at least, is told) that performing this rite *just this once* could save the whole city.

Characters in **Beast** (and, indeed, in most of the *Chronicles of Darkness*) do terrible things. It's entirely up to you where you draw the line.

pecially pleased when her Children use their natural gifts rather than mundane instruments. Performing this rite inflicts one point of lethal damage on the victim for each roll made by the Initiate. She must accumulate the necessary successes before the victim dies, or the rite fails (this isn't usually a problem unless the victim is already wounded when the rite begins). If the rite succeeds, the Beasts present gain a collective prophetic vision from the Dark Mother, regarding imminent events, dangers, or opportunities. If the victim was a Hero, then each Beast present *also* gains a Beat.

Exceptional Success: All participants gain one Willpower point.

This rite may not be conducted more than once per month.

SHARE YOUR SISTER'S PAIN

Dice Pool: Power + Empathy *or* Occult

Time Per Roll: 10 minutes

Duration: Permanent

Bonus: +2 to all rolls if the instrument or person who injured the target is present

Cost: Injury to other participants

Beasts are often supernaturally resilient, but lack the ability to easily aid a wounded broodmate. This rite isn't so simple as the healing powers available to other supernatural beings, but it works if no other means will do the job.

This rite removes a Persistent Condition or an injury by sharing it with volunteers among the other Beasts participating. A number of volunteer Beasts equal to the target's Lair must take on the injury, disease, poison, or whatever else is afflicting the target. This will not kill them (the rite cannot be conducted if the target is dead), but they will suffer all other effects (damage, die penalties, Tilts like Limb Wrack) for 24 hours. If the target has taken more points of damage than a volunteer can sustain without dying, she takes one less than would kill her. If this includes aggravated damage, she is automatically stabilized. The progress of any Conditions that can worsen or continue to injure the target or volunteers are immediately arrested. The Conditions affecting the target of the rite are removed 24 hours later, at the same time that the participants recover.

This rite can leave a brood or other Beasts in a highly vulnerable position, with numerous members too sick or injured to defend themselves. However, it may be the only way to save one of their fellows.

Exceptional Success: Volunteers all gain the Steadfast Condition upon recovery.

INTERMEDIATE RITES

Intermediate Rites require 10 accumulated successes to perform. These rites are powerful and involved enough to drive a chapter's worth of events.

SEEK THE CHILD

Dice Pool: Finesse + Investigation *or* Occult – 4

Time Per Roll: 30 minutes

Duration: Instant

Bonus: +2 to all rolls if the Temple contains the preserved remains of a Beast who died as a member of the Hive

Cost: None

This rite requires the presence of some kind of divination equipment. A large bowl of water, crystal ball, or pendulum and map are all suitable examples, although the matter is ultimately up to the preference of the Initiate conducting the rite. The purpose of the rite is to discover the presence and identity of any person in the rough geographical area covered by the Hive who has the potential to become a Beast. If the rite is a success, then the initiate and all participants gain a vision of the appearance of one potential Beast, and also determine the location of the last place she slept to within a city block. This rite may be conducted repeatedly to identify all the potential Beasts in the area. Some Broods find it prudent to keep a watch over future Begotten.

Exceptional Success: The participants see her most recent dreams and a few flashes of her daily life.

NIGHT OF REVELS

Dice Pool: Finesse + Politics *or* Occult - 4

Time Per Roll: Five minutes

Duration: Until sunrise

Bonus: +2 to all rolls if prior to the start of the rite, every Beast present takes a moment to praise an accomplishment by one of their brood.

Cost: None.

This rite can only be performed just after sundown on Halloween, or another holiday focused on dark or otherworldly matters. It can also be performed on a harvest moon, a lunar eclipse, or some other appropriate occasion. If successful, the rite identifies one individual who has in some way offended the Dark Mother, and who she demands be destroyed. Every participant in the rite gains knowledge of the individual's name and face. Any participant with supernatural tracking abilities of any kind is able to use them to track the individual until the sun rises in the morning, regardless of their normal prerequisites.

Once the rite is complete, the participants have until sunup to satisfy the Dark Mother. The target need not actually be killed (and it's preferable not to, in that killing the target may cut short the game before the Dark Mother is satisfied), but their life should be utterly laid waste. Their secrets and transgressions revealed, their possessions destroyed or taken away, whatever esteem they might have in the community irreparably damaged. The infliction of breaking points is a good indicator that the Beasts are doing their job correctly, as is using the target to sate multiple Hungers. Ideally, the target is pursued all night, repeatedly confronted and allowed to "escape," only to be tracked down again. If the characters who participated in the rite successfully drive the target to ruin and madness, preferably via the most creative and hilarious means available, then the Dark Mother is satisfied. This manifests as one Beat for each participant, and the ability to reroll any one roll of their choice, with a +2 bonus. This ability must be used within the next lunar month. If the rite succeeds but the target is not



destroyed to the Dark Mother's satisfaction by morning, every participant gains the Guilty condition. If the target is killed before their ruination is accomplished, then the venture fails and the Beasts accrue no benefits or penalties.

Exceptional Success: Any participants with supernatural abilities that allow them to gather information about a target may use them once, for free and immediately, despite not being in the target's presence.

SECRET WAYS

Dice Pool: Finesse + Science *or* Occult – 4

Time Per Roll: One hour

Duration: Permanent

Bonus: +2 to all rolls if the location is the basis for a Chamber

Cost: Boundary stones or other markers around the border, Resources •••

This rite secures a location away from prying eyes and sticky fingers. It affects an area up to (100 yards x the initiate's Lair) in diameter. This makes it difficult or impossible for normal mortals to find or enter the location. However, Heroes and beings with supernatural capabilities can find their way in. The precise character of the forbiddance should be based on the Lair traits available to the Initiate or one of the participants. However, they can always default to the Hive Trait inflicted by the Apex.

Maze is always a good choice of Lair Trait to base a forbiddance on, but if geographically appropriate almost any of them can be used. The effects of the forbiddance isn't obviously supernatural to such an extent that it provides absolute proof to anyone with a video camera, but coincidence and circumstance will always favor making the location inaccessible. Because the effects of the rite only repel opposition without supernatural powers of their own, the precise effects are not actually that important. The most likely enemies of the Beast, Heroes, remain able to conquer these defenses.

Exceptional Success: The Initiate can change the Lair Trait to form the base of the forbiddance once per chapter, using any of her own Lair Traits, those of her brood, or the Apex Trait.

ADVANCED RITES

Advanced Rites require 15 accumulated successes to perform. These rites can easily form the basis of whole story arcs.

HEART THEFT

Dice Pool: Power + Larceny *or* Occult – victim's Composure + Supernatural Tolerance

Time Per Roll: One hour

Duration: Special

Bonus: +2 to all rolls if each offering was obtained by a different Beast, and all are participating in the rite

Cost: 3 offerings

This rite works only on a victim who has a soul. It may therefore be ineffective against certain supernatural creatures.

The Beasts must collect three offerings — things that are precious to the victim. They can be dark secrets, valued possessions, or possibly even loved ones. In general, the collection of each offering must require its own separate, successful feeding. Further, no casual swiping of a wallet by a low-Satiety Collector will do the job. The things taken or learned must be highly meaningful to the target. In the case of secrets or the like, they can be embodied in a writing, photograph, recording, or some other evidence.

The offerings must be taken to the temple and the rite performed. If it is successful, the target loses his soul, and thus gains the Soulless Condition. His soul is trapped with the offerings until he dies or regains it. He may regain his soul if the offerings are destroyed, if he is able to take possession of them, or if they are irretrievably disposed of.

In the meantime, he has an instinctive sense of where his soul is, and he may regain a point of Willpower in any scene where he makes desperate and reckless efforts to get to it.

Exceptional Success: The offerings may be stored outside the Temple, or even separately.

GATECRAFT

Dice Pool: Power + Academics *or* Occult – 6

Time Per Roll: One hour

Duration: Permanent

Bonus: +2 to all rolls if a physical portal is built into the temple, at a cost of Resources •••• and 10 successes on an extended Crafts roll

Cost: Sympathetic Connection

This rite creates a permanent gateway of some kind inside the temple. These can lead to any otherworldly realm in the Chronicles of Darkness, such as the Hedge, Shadow, Underworld, or others, so long as Beasts can travel there. The creation of a gate such as this requires a sympathetic connection. Someone must first travel to the desired realm and bring back a significant artifact of some kind. This artifact is destroyed by the rite, whether it succeeds or fails. Typically, a gate is embodied by a false door or archway of some kind. These can lead to nowhere or a blank wall, but they form the boundaries of the gateway when it is opened. A temple may contain as many gates as the Beasts controlling it choose to create.

Opening the gate for use requires the Beast's Skeleton Key ability; there is no mundane means of activating it. The value used for the Supernatural Tolerance of the gate's creator is 4.

Exceptional Success: The value for Supernatural Tolerance is 2.

FOLIE À DEUX

Dice Pool: Power + Expression *or* Occult – 6

Time Per Roll: One hour

Duration: One lunar cycle

Bonus: +2 to all rolls if the participants can identify someone or something that has created large-scale fear in the mortal residents of the Hive within living memory. They must steal an object related to this fear, and bring it to the Temple for the rite.

Cost: None

This rite inflicts irrational fear and paranoia on the mortal population of the Hive. If the rite is successful, all mortal characters within the rough geographic bounds of the hive whose Composure is less than the Initiate's Lair are afflicted with an appropriate Condition. This Condition lasts until the duration of the rite ends. Appropriate Conditions are the subtler ones: Agoraphobic, Spooked, Paranoid, minor cases of Delusional, or the like. The entire affected population will have roughly the same symptoms, so any Delusion (for example) would be shared.

Exceptional Success: If the Initiate or a participant has a relatively subtle Nightmare (such as *This is Due Tomorrow*, p. 90) then that may be inflicted instead.

EPIC RITES

Epic Rites require 20 accumulated successes to perform. These rites are extremely potent and influential, and learning (and using) them can potentially form the basis of a chronicle.

KINGDOM OF NIGHTMARES

Dice Pool: Power + Streetwise or Occult – 8

Time Per Roll: One hour

Duration: From sundown to sunup, or vice versa

Bonus: +2 to all rolls if one of the participants commits a public act of ruination immediately prior to the beginning of the rite, such as burning down a building central to the community

Cost: None

This rite renders the rough geographic area covered by the Hive inescapable via mundane means. Roads twist around on themselves, maps become nonsensical, GPS systems return gibberish results. Supernatural beings might be able to use their powers to navigate a way out, but they can't just hop in a car and drive. This effect begins at the sundown or sunup following the successful completion of the rite, and lasts until the dawn or dusk following, whichever comes first. Additionally, the Initiate may select a minor Lair trait possessed by one of the participants to inflict on the area affected. Participants in the ritual will be unaffected by the Lair trait just as though they had it themselves.

Reality will make at least flimsy efforts to paper over the major effects of this rite, and Beasts may expect most of the next few days to be taken up by reports of mass hysteria and hallucinogens in the water supply.

Exceptional Success: The Initiate may select a major Lair trait possessed by one of the participants to inflict on the area affected.

RESTORE THE HEART

Dice Pool: Finesse + Medicine or Occult – 8

Time Per Roll: One hour

Duration: Permanent

Bonus: +2 to all rolls if the surviving members of the target's former brood are present

Cost: None

This is not a rite to bring back the dead, much as some Beasts might long for the return of their lost loved ones. Rather, it's a way to deal with Beasts who didn't die when they should have. The target of the rite is a Beast who has undergone Retreat or Merger. Further, a living body for her to be reborn into must be present. Ideal subjects are blood relatives of the "deceased," or one of her former cult members. Really, though, any human will do, although unwilling subjects must be present and restrained.

If the target underwent Retreat, the Rite summons her. If she underwent Merger, she must be captured and brought to the Temple.

If the rite is successful, the human has his soul ripped out of his body and destroyed, and it is then replaced with the Horror of the target. The target dies or ceases to exist, as appropriate. The new Beast retains the human's mind, memories, and personality. However, she gains dreams, intuitions, and occasional recollections of the life of the one their Horror was once bonded to.

Exceptional success: The subject immediately regains a few clear memories of their former life that convey important information. The exact traits of the new Beast are left to the Storyteller's discretion.

HORRORSPAWN

Sometimes, a Beast requires the help of someone she can really trust, someone who truly understand her and her Hunger. Sometimes, one of the Children needs a servant who won't ask questions and acts on the spirit of her orders in ways that she can't even express. Sometimes, too, a Beast gets lonely, and wants the companionship of a monster like her. In these situations, a Beast might choose to create, nurture, and love a living nightmare.

In exploring her Horror, a Beast finds she can pull pieces of the nightmare attached to the Horror into the world as a creature. Beasts call these creatures *Horrorspawn*, because creating them resembles more of a birthing process than simply cutting a piece of her Horror away. The creature that results is still part of the Horror, but is capable of functioning independently.

A Horrorspawn is metaphysically a piece of the Beast herself. It may be a small piece of her Horror – or the conglomeration of two Horrors – cultivated and expanded into its own nightmare creature and given physical form. These creatures follow and obey the Beast who created them, acting as guards, minions, and servants. They retain many of the features of the Horror that spawned them, and carry the same basic urges.

LOYAL FOLLOWERS

A Beast with a Horrorspawn is a formidable opponent. The Horrorspawn can fight and feed for the Beast, allowing her to split her concentration and even fool Heroes for a short time. Despite the drawbacks associated with having a physical image of her Horror following her, many Beasts

make and keep Horrerspawn, if only to fight Heroes when they come around. The creature could even save the Beast's life in a desperate situation.

A Horrerspawn follows the Beast's commands to the best of its abilities. The Beast can even see through its eyes and give it commands when she isn't nearby. Commanding the Horrerspawn takes an instant action, and if the Beast is attempting to give commands remotely, she sacrifices her Defense while she does so. Once commanded, the Horrerspawn acts on its own until it completes the task, or the Beast calls it off. The Beast's commands override the Horrerspawn's base desires and hungers, but once the task is completed, it often reverts to its basic instincts.

The Beast must balance her time spent with the Horrerspawn versus how long she allows it to function on its own. Its presence has a degrading influence on her Life, causing her to become more inhuman the longer she keeps contact with it. Inversely, her presence keeps the Horrerspawn invested in her, and if she lets it go too long without contact with her, it gains an independence that could be dangerous to those around her.

THE BIRTH OF A HORROR

Creating Horrerspawn is a deliberate act; it cannot happen by accident. While the process may bear many similarities to pregnancy and birth, a Beast can't just conceive and give birth to a Horrerspawn. She must take a piece of her Horror and will it to incubate in her Lair, until the Horrerspawn grows large enough to act on its own. She can do this in various different ways, though each one requires a deliberate act of will (the Beast must spend a point of Willpower to create a Horrerspawn).

While a Horror has no need to breed, a Beast can harvest gamete-like pieces of the Horror and grow them into Horrerspawn. She can do this in a number of different ways, but all require incubation within her Lair for the Horrerspawn to come to full maturity. No matter the method of separation, the Horrerspawn takes time to grow—a number of days determined by the Beast's Lair rating. The Lair's rating also determines the maximum Potency the Horrerspawn can have at creation. For more about the Horrerspawn's Potency, see p. 114.

HORROR CREATION

Lair Rating	Incubation Time	Maximum Potency
1	2 Weeks	1
2-3	8 Days	2
4-6	4 Days	3
7-9	2 Days	4
10	1 Day	5

Horrerspawn are not full Horrors on their own, and cannot leave the Beast's Lair without a physical form, nor can they create their own nightmares inside the Primordial Dream. They can enhance the nightmares created by the Horrors they come from, granting a +1 bonus to the roll to regain Satiety through a Horror's nightmare (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 99). This bonus is not cumulative; multiple Horrerspawn grant a single +1 bonus. The Horrerspawn does not need to be in the Primordial Dream with the Horror to add this bonus, as the Horror instinctually includes images and reflections of its Horrerspawn in the nightmare it creates.

MATED HORRORS

Without its human counterpart, a Horror does not reproduce in any kind of sexual manner. Horrors come into being through the primal fears of man, and have no need for gamete production or sexual organs, and they have no gender. All this comes from the Beast. While merged with her Horror in her Lair, a Beast can mate with another Beast, or Horror, with the intention of creating a Horrerspawn. This method is by far the easiest, as the Beast's human biological imperative for sexual reproduction imprints upon the Horror and gives it a narrative to follow. The Horrors mate, a seed breaks away and is now ready for germination. Either or both Beasts involved in the mating can spend Willpower to create a Horrerspawn during the act. The Beast may host the seed within herself and germinate it that way, or she could place it somewhere in her Lair to grow, allowing her to leave it there while she returns to the physical world.

This method is by far the most common, though it requires assistance from another Beast (since if a Beast were to attempt to mate with her own Horror, she would merge with it). Broods prefer to utilize this method, but Begotten who work alone

ON MAKING A HORRORSPAWN GABRIELA RODRIGUEZ, ANAKIM PREDATOR

I never wanted children. I think it's funny that now I find the act of creation fascinating. I've done it once before, and this is my second time. That time, I was afraid to carry it around, I left it in the Lair, though I checked on it nearly every hour.

This time, though, I'm carrying it around. I can already tell a difference, even though everyone else says I'm probably imagining it. I can sense it already, even though it hasn't come out yet. It feels powerful, more in tune with my own desires, and not the Red Ogre's. I dream about it sometimes, bursting forth from inside me, and hunting down my Horror. Sure, I die, but so does the thing that hunts. I'm going to take that as a good sign.

The last one was gross, and I'm not looking forward to giving birth to anything, much less the bundle of claws, teeth, and fur that I had last time. Thankfully, my brood intends to be here for the birth. They even threw me a party.

may seek out other Beasts specifically for this purpose. While the process is mostly mechanical, the act is still one of deep intimacy, and few Beasts engage complete strangers for the task.

HORROR HARVESTED

Beasts who do not wish to engage in sexual acts may still convince the Horror to produce a seed, though this method is a bit more complicated. The Beast enters a nightmare created by the Horror, which requires her to merge with her Horror in her Lair and open a Primordial Pathway into the dreams of a human. If the Horror is Starving or Ravenous, it may break its bonds to feed on its own. In this case, the Beast can follow her Horror utilizing a Primordial Pathway with the external end counting as being in the Primordial Dream.

Once in the nightmare, the Beast manipulates her Horror into leaving small pieces of itself in the dreamscape. She directs the nightmare to include the Horror laying eggs, shedding its skin, or leaving a trail of viscera in its wake, all heightening the nightmare's effect. She needs only to harvest a single piece, and the rest merge back with the Horror when the nightmare is over. The piece she has collected also attempts to return to her Horror, and she must will it to remain apart. To do so, the player rolls Resolve + Composure – her Horror's Power. If she gains a single success, she keeps the harvested piece separate.

She may incubate the piece she has collected either inside herself or within her Lair, the same way as she would if she had mated with another Horror.

THE PHYSICAL FORM

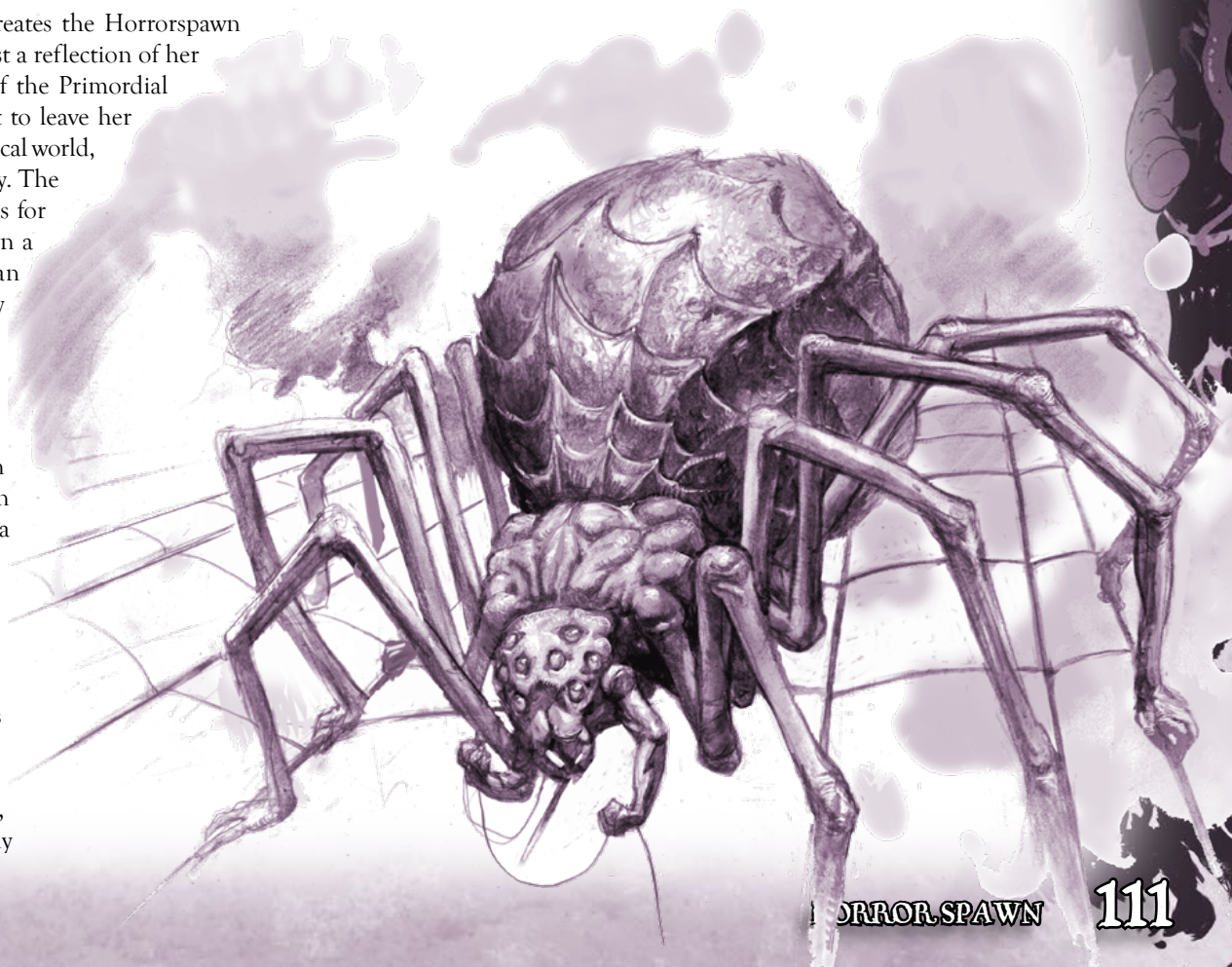
After the Beast creates the Horrortspawn in her Lair, it is still just a reflection of her Horror – a creature of the Primordial Dream. If she wants it to leave her Lair and enter the physical world, it needs a physical body. The Beast has a few options for giving her Horrortspawn a physical body. She can give it a physical body to inhabit, or she can perform a rite to create a body out of the Primordial Dream.

The Horrortspawn can enter a body in much the same way a Horror does. It does not have the same ability to bind to a person and create a Beast, though. Instead of replacing a person's soul after a Devouring, it simply kills its host and takes over the body, or takes over an already

dead body. Most Beasts provide a dead body, or an animal, though some use living people in order to gain Satiety in the process. The Horrortspawn is drawn from the Primordial Dream into the physical realm with the merger, much in the same way a Beast and her Horror Merge into the Beast Rampant. The Horrortspawn fills the body and pushes all else out of the way, going so far as to twist its shape to match that of the Horror which gave it life.

If the Beast does not provide the creature a body, it roams the Primordial Dream, and moves between any Chambers within the hive. It may even antagonize other Beasts, or enter sleeper's dreams as it opens Primordial Pathways seeking prey, though it cannot create nightmares on its own. It may even enter the physical world and subsume a body on its own, if one happens to be in the physical representation of a Chamber it moves into. To prevent this, most Beasts keep a close eye on their Horrortspawn, providing a new body for the Horrortspawn after the first decays.

Horrortspawn Potency	Time to Decay
1	1 month
2	2 weeks
3	1 week
4	1 day
5	12 hours



TEMPORARY HORRORSPAWN

Creating Horrorspawn takes time and effort on the part of the Beast, but sometimes a Beast needs something to go out and fight for her on a moment's notice. She can create a Horrorspawn, forgoing all the normal incubation time and the need for creating a physical body. The creature is temporary, the separation between it and her Horror incomplete. The Beast can create a temporary Horrorspawn anywhere, and does not need to be in her Lair to accomplish her action, though if she does, the player gains a +1 to her roll to create the creature.

In order to create the Horrorspawn, the Beast must have a physical body ready for the creature before she separates it from her Horror. Most Beasts use small animals, though some choose to cut off a piece of their own body — taking a point of aggravated damage in the process — to entice the Horror into the form. This grants a +1 bonus to the roll. She then spends a point of Satiety and wills her Horror to enter the physical body. Once it begins to do so, the player rolls the Beast's Stamina + Satiety to separate the piece of her Horror that entered the body. The creature she creates is a reflection of her Horror, and appears as a smaller version of how her Horror appears while she is in her Lair.

The new Horrorspawn lives for a single day per success, after which the Horrorspawn retreats back into the Beast's Horror. If the Beast dealt damage to herself while creating the Horrorspawn, she cannot begin healing the damage until the Horrorspawn returns to her Horror. These Horrorspawn count as minions, see below for minion rules.

WAKING NIGHTMARES

A Beast's Horrorspawn takes on aspects of her Horror, and sometimes appears as a mini version of the Horror. All bear at least some resemblance to the Horror, even if they take on their own nightmare shapes. This is especially true when a Beast's Horror takes a form that inspires dread through presence over form. Even in a physical form, the creature twists the body to take on a horrific shape. Each Family's Horrorspawn are distinctive in their own ways, taking on aspects of the deepest part of the visceral fear the Horrors evoke.

ANAKIM

The Anakim's Horrorspawn have an imposing presence. While the Horror may take on the appearance of an authority figure, the Horrorspawn is a physically daunting creature. It may have thick musculature giving it the appearance of strength and means, it may be tall and looming, or it may simply radiate an aura of hopelessness that drives people who see it to desperation. All Anakim Horrorspawn are well-muscled and toned, no matter what other traits it may have.

Latisha's Horrorspawn appears almost bear-like, with a thick body, legs like tree trunks, and arms as big around as a normal person's torso. Hard, chitinous skin covers its body, clicking as it moves. The creature's head appears almost human, except its eyes are too large and completely black and its mouth is filled with rows of blunt teeth.

ESHMAKI

Eshmaki Horrorspawn take on animalistic features of creatures who slink and lurk when hunting prey. The Horror may have a single trait it shows to dreamers, but the Horrorspawn is the creature that stalks in the Horror's wake. The Horror may only show its glowing eyes, but the Horrorspawn appears as a feral animal with sleek, black fur. The Horror who only shows scratching claws creates a Horrorspawn with long limbs and elongated digits ending in sharp points. The Horror with only the musk of an animal appears as a nightmare creature with matted fur and a gaping maw. All Eshmaki Horrorspawn have some kind of animalistic feature.

Marko's Horror lurks in the dark, and the only clues giving away its presence are red eyes and a deep, rumbling growl. His Horrorspawn is a giant jaguar with dark fur and glowing eyes. The fur around its muzzle is metallic and sharp, a vicious beard surrounding a mouth full of elongated teeth and sharpened fangs. It moves silently, the only sound anyone hears is a low growl just before it pounces.

INGUMA

The Inguma's Horrorspawn take on the strangest appearance of any other Family. The Horror often appears human, but deep down is something else. The Horrorspawn are the strangers, the creatures that take over the human, or can take on the human form. They often have shapeshifting Dread Powers. They take the form of the unknown entity that people fear the most. This may be the collective idea of aliens, a nebulous creature without an easily described form, or a nightmare creature with impossible shapes and anatomy. Inguma Horrorspawn all have strange anatomical anomalies, even when they appear mostly human.

The Horrorspawn Joan created appears humanoid. Its eyes are missing, with black holes and sunken skin where they should be. Dark brown skin sags around the creature's shoulders and ankles, as though it is too big for the form underneath. The way it moves, from its jerky steps to its slow head bob belies a creature only masquerading as a human. The flesh it wears can be sloughed off, revealing a bony humanoid shape, spindly arms and legs made of stark white bones and gray muscles.

MAKARA

The Makara make literal horrors from the depths. The Horror may evoke nightmares of suffocation and drowning, but the Horrorspawn appear as the creatures only seen in the darkest reaches of the abyss. They may have long, eel-like bodies, stretching tentacles, scales, glowing luminescent tendrils, or nightmarish mouths full of rows of sharp teeth. All Makara Horrorspawn have traits reminiscent of sea creatures.

Andrea's Horrorspawn has a huge head with knife-sized serrated teeth arranged in dangerous rows leading all the way back into its gaping maw. Its eyes are set forward on short eyestalks and move independent of each other to increase its range of vision. It has a thick, scaly hide and walks on four stubby legs, which belie power and speed.

NAMTARU

A Namtaru's Horrortspawn evokes revulsion. While the Horror may appear in appalling metaphors to dreamers, the Horrortspawn is the gut-churning monster given physical form. The creature is twisted and terrible, no matter what shape it takes. Its flesh may be rotting and falling off, its limbs twisted and grotesque, or have bulging eyes and smell repugnant. The Namtaru Horrortspawn all have a distinctive stench; it may be sulfur, the sickly sweet smell of rotten meat, or the unmistakable stink of sewage.

The Horrortspawn Sofia created has a roughly humanoid shape. Its char-blackened skin cracks and oozes blood and puss in sickly, greenish-brown rivulets. Beady, black eyes peer out through a fat, bulbous face, covered in scabs and pus pockets. Its meaty hands and thick feet give it a lumbering gait. As it walks, it leaves a trail of blood and pus that stinks like rot.

TALASSII

The Talassii's Horrortspawn are creatures with subtle strength. The Horror sends nightmares of confinement and constriction and the Horrortspawn is the constrictor. It may be a large, serpentine creature that grabs and constricts, a monster with huge, unhinged jaws, or a creature that paralyzes its prey, such as a spider or scorpion. All Talassii Horrortspawn have animalistic features of creatures that imprison their prey.

Jesse's Horrortspawn looks like a giant black spider. It has eight legs — each ending in a set of long, digitated fingers — and a black, bulbous body. Its carapace is made of a blackened iron, which rings and clangs as the thing moves. It spins a web made of fine wire, which it uses either as a garrote-like weapon, or to build enclosures. Its head sports eight eyes, all with a metallic silver sheen, and a mouth with giant sharpened pincers.

UGALLU

The Ugallu create Horrortspawn that are swift and relentless. The Horror evokes feelings of exposure and an unknown watcher; the Horrortspawn is the watcher, the creature that sees all. The creature's very presence invokes the feeling of being watched. It may take the form of a bird of prey, an alien form that bespeaks an inescapable speed, or it may have an unnerving number of eyes all moving and watching in every direction. The Ugallu make Horrortspawn with raptor-like features, from beaks and talons to feathers and wings.

Ryan's Horrortspawn is a watcher. It has many eyes, each a different color and capable of seeing a different light spectrum. Its head and body are naked, with dark flesh that appears to be covered in tiny interlocking metallic scales. Shaggy feathers cover its legs, which end in thick talons. It has sharp metallic claws on its hands, and sharp rows of teeth in its small mouth.

LITTLE HELPERS

Beasts create Horrortspawn for various reasons, but most often use them in pursuit of their Hungers. It is, after all, what comes most naturally to the creature.

COLLECTORS

A Collector often uses his Horrortspawn as a retriever, going out and gathering small items from hard to reach locations. He may use the creature as part of an elaborate heist, ordering it to provide a distraction as he takes a prized possession, or simply use it as brute force during a smash-and-grab operation.

Jack often directs his Horrortspawn to steal objects from a victim, while he distracts her. He may use that time to attempt to instill a lesson, or simply use it as opportunity to take something valuable without drawing suspicion. Mostly, he does so because he likes to take from the same people over and over again, and the Horrortspawn allows him to act as a false support once the victim realizes her loss.

ENABLERS

While most Beasts give their Horrortspawn bodies, the Enablers are the ones most likely to opt for a human form. She uses the creature as bait; it serves as a temptation of the flesh, or a proxy for her victim's wishes. For example, if she wants to enable a pious man into sin, she may allow him to command her Horrortspawn to enact the deed in his stead. Other, more physical, Enablers may use the Horrortspawn as a threat of force, or to help create elaborate scenarios in which her victim must choose between difficult choices.

Janet gives her Horrortspawn the body of a beautiful woman. She pimps the creature out, and when people partake of her offer of flesh, they often get more than they bargain for. For her, the lesson is less satisfying than the horrible realization people come to when they realize the mistake they've made.

NEMESSES

The Nemesis generally uses his Horrortspawn during a meal, using it as part of whatever punishment he has concocted for his victim, heightening the lesson. He may set it as a jailor, its presence keeping someone trapped in a location through fear alone, or he may command it to protect an innocent against attack. Just like a Nemesis' Horror, the Horrortspawn has no sense of justice, and simply acts as commanded, meaning the Beast needs to be careful what kind of tasks he assigns it.

Thomas sets his Horrortspawn to guard those he wishes to feed on. The creature finds and confines the person, allowing him to come and enact punishment at his leisure. When he needs to feed fast, he uses the Horrortspawn to mete out punishments, though it rarely does so in the just or righteous manner he prefers.

PREDATORS

The Predator sets her Horrortspawn on the hunt, rooting out a victim and forcing him to flee. Even in less physical settings, the Beast sends her creature to harass and harangue her opponent. The creature weakens his mental and social defenses, and plagues his waking time with nightmares until she eventually comes in for the proverbial kill. Her Horrortspawn follows her wherever she goes, which creates a sense that she is watching and lurking even when doing the most mundane tasks.

Laura's Horrorspawn keeps her within line of sight at all times. She doesn't always see it, but it keeps close. When she hunts, it parallels her movements, heading her prey off. When she lurks, it sits ominously by, biding its time until she commands it to strike.

RAVAGERS

The Ravager's Horrorspawn helps alleviate her desire to create ruination around her. Even when her Satiety is high, or she isn't in the process of feeding, she has destructive tendencies. She may send the creature out to terrorize someone, causing him to believe he has gone mad, or she may send it to wear at the foundation of a building to erode its stability over time. When feeding, she uses it to enhance the destruction she causes, sending her creature to set fire to someone's house, or to tear his new car to shreds.

Marie likes to set fires, but doing so isn't always convenient. Her Horrorspawn is a salamander, skin hot to the touch, and flames licking from its mouth. When she wants to feed particularly well, she sends the thing to set houses on fire, making sure the people inside see the horrible creature as it does.

TYRANTS

Of all the Hungers, the Tyrant is the one most likely to have multiple Horrorspawn. The creatures act as faithful minions and allow the Beast to show force when necessary to cow a victim. She may send a Horrorspawn against someone as a warning of worse things to come, or simply to keep someone in line if he attempts to get out from under her control. The creatures serve as guards, gatekeepers, and implacable executors of the Beast's will.

Rowena's Horrorspawn is an attack dog. She keeps it by her side as an obvious threat to any who would cross her. It growls and strains against its leash, though listens to her commands without fail. She likes to give people a false sense of security, one that she would never release her aggressive hound in polite company. The satisfaction of seeing the fear spread across someone's face when they realize that she never actually binds the creature is sweet indeed.

WHISPERS

A Whisper uses his Horrorspawn for both feeding and more utilitarian purposes. He likes to use them as spies just as much as messengers or defenders. Often, a Whisper keeps the presence of his Horrorspawn a secret, preferring to keep his own capabilities hidden. He tends to leave it in his Lair, letting it enter a victim's nightmares, rather than giving it a physical form. With a physical form though, it can spy in places he could never reach.

Yong likes to give his Horrorspawn a small physical body, often of a snake, rat, or spider — something that can get into small places. He sends it out to spy on people and collect hard-to-find secrets. Sometimes he makes them collect evidence of the secrets, so he can be the only one who has access to them. His victims often find rat-chewed evidence of the creature's passing.

CREATING THE SPAWN

While a Horrorspawn is the extension of the Beast's Horror, it takes on a life of its own, with its own goals and motivations, often centered around helping the Beast who created it. Players build the Horrorspawn based on its Potency, and purchase the Horrorspawn Merit at the appropriate dot rating for the creature's Potency. At Storyteller discretion, a player who plays through the process of creating a Horrorspawn may gain the Merit at a discount, or for free.

Creating a Horrorspawn is a multi-step process, similar to creating a **Beast** character.

STEP ONE: POTENCY

Potency is a measure of the Horrorspawn's raw power. This trait is rated 1-5 and determines the number of Attribute, Skill, and Merit dots the creature has, as well as its maximum trait limit. The maximum potency Horrorspawn a Beast can create is determined by her Lair rating (see p. 110).

POTENCY

Potency	Trait Limits *	Attribute Dots	Dread Powers
1	5 dots	10	2
2	6 dots	13	2
3	7 dots	16	3
4	8 dots	19	4
5	9 dots	21	5

* These represent normal permanent dots, not temporarily boosted ones. Nor does this cover Trait limit increases from Merits.

STEP TWO: ATTRIBUTES

The Horrorspawn reflects the nature of the Beast's Horror, and follows similar guidelines for building. The creature does not have the nine Attributes like Beasts, but instead uses the simplified set of Power, Finesse, and Resistance. When creating the Horrorspawn, use the Potency chart to determine how many dots are available, and what the Trait maximum is. Players may choose to build their Horrorspawn in any way, and do not need to reflect the Beast's own Power, Finesse, and Resistance when creating the Horrorspawn's character sheet.

Horrorspawn do not possess Skills, and can only undertake certain types of actions pertaining to the Beast's instructions, or feeding their Hunger. They roll the appropriate Attribute + Potency for actions directly related to the Beast's desires or feeding, or Attribute + Attribute for actions like surprise and perception. Certain actions are out of the realm of possibility for a Horrorspawn to take, such as driving a car or performing surgery. Players should consult with their Storytellers on what kinds of actions are appropriate for the Horrorspawn.

STEP THREE: DREAD POWERS

Choose a number of Dread Powers as indicated by the Horrorspawn's Potency. Some Dread Powers (e.g. Natural Weaponry) have multiple levels, like Style Merits. Each dot of such powers counts as an additional Dread Power.

STEP FOUR: APPLY HORRORSPAWN TEMPLATE

Horrorspawn have many of the same advantages as Beasts, sometimes sharing the Beast's Traits. The Horrorspawn shares the Beast's Legend, but does not have a Life. The Horrorspawn regains Willpower whenever the Beast does through her Legend. It can also regain Willpower by acting in accordance with the Beast's Legend without her direction.

The Creature does not gain access to the Beast's Atavisms or Nightmares, unless a Dread Power grants it.

The Horrorspawn does not feel Kinship with creatures other than the Begotten. Most other supernatural creatures find Horrorspawn slightly disturbing, especially if the physical form is a representation of the Beast's Horror. While it does not experience Kinship in the same way Beasts do, it does have limited powers of Kinship. The Horrorspawn does not have and cannot use the powers of Thicker Than Water, Passing Resemblance, or Family Dinner. It can still use Family Resemblance to detect the nature of other creatures, and boost their power using Mother's Kiss, though is unlikely to do so unless directed by the Beast who created it.

The Horrorspawn can open Primordial Pathways, but cannot open gates to other realms. The creature can open a Pathway from a Chamber into the physical world's representation of that Chamber, but cannot apply Lair Traits on the area before moving there. The creature cannot open Primordial Pathways to any worlds other than the Temenos or the physical world, though it can follow a Beast through a Pathway she created. Additionally, the Horrorspawn can only create Primordial Pathways to and from the physical world in the physical analog of a Chamber. This Chamber does not have to be part of any Beast's Lair; all the Horrorspawn needs is a connection to the Primordial Dream.

It shares a Lair with the Beast who created it, using her Lair rating for any rolls requiring Lair, and as the creature's Supernatural Tolerance trait. The creature has Environmental Immunity based on the Beast's Lair Traits, but cannot impose Lair Traits on the physical world, nor can it add Chambers to the Beast's Lair, though it does count as a supernatural creature for purposes of Lair expansion (**Beast: The Primordial**, pp. 94-95).

The Beast is always aware of her Horrorspawn's Satiety and mood, as well as in general where it is located, just as she is with her own Horror. The Beast may concentrate to experience whatever the Horrorspawn is experiencing and can exert control over the Horrorspawn with an instant action, just as she can with her Horror.

If a Hero places an Anathema on a Beast with a Horrorspawn, the Anathema always affects the creature instead. The creature does not need to be present to gain the effects of the Anathema. If a Hero attempts to track or follow the Beast, he is instead led to her Horrorspawn. If the Horrorspawn spends its time in the Beast's Lair, this could be a dangerous proposition. If a Hero kills a Beast's Horrorspawn, he can continue tracking the creature back to the Beast who created it, granting a +2 bonus on Heroic Stalking checks (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 207).

STEP FIVE: ADVANTAGES

Because they have simplified traits, Horrorspawn calculate derived traits similarly to ephemeral creatures, except they use Satiety to fuel their powers instead of Essence.

Health: Horrorspawn take damage in the same way as Beasts. If a creature takes damage either in a physical form, or while in its Dream Form in the Beast's Lair, it suffers the damage the same. The Horrorspawn's Health is equal to its Resistance + Size. A Horrorspawn suffers wound penalties when its three rightmost Health boxes are marked, just like a Beast. The Horrorspawn can heal itself using Satiety just like a Beast in her Lair.

Willpower: Horrorspawn have Willpower dots equal to Resistance + Finesse, with a maximum of 10 dots regardless of the creature's potency.

Initiative: Initiative is equal to Finesse + Resistance.

Defense: Defense is equal to Power or Finesse, whichever is lower.

Speed: Speed is equal to Power + Finesse + a species factor of 5.

Size: The Horrorspawn is the same Size as the physical body given to it. In the Primordial Dream, the Horrorspawn's Size varies based on the creature's Potency and the Horror that birthed it. The creature's Dream Form Size is its Potency plus one half the Size of the Beast's Horror (see **Beast: The Primordial**, p. 99). This change in Size changes the creature's Health while in the Primordial Dream.

SATIETY AND FEEDING

A Horrorspawn has its own Satiety rating, and can spend Satiety to fuel certain abilities, similar to the Begotten. Its Satiety rating is always capped by the Beast's own Satiety, preventing it from ever being more sated than the Horror who spawned it. A Horrorspawn can feed on its own, allocating successes to both the Beast and itself to maintain an equilibrium in Satiety. For example, if the Horrorspawn's Satiety is 3 and the Beast's Satiety is 5, it would first allocate Satiety to itself, bringing the Horrorspawn's Satiety to 5 before allocating Satiety to the Beast. Once the Beast's Satiety raised to 6, the Horrorspawn would then raise its own Satiety to 6. The Horrorspawn feels the same predilection of Hunger as the Horror it comes from, but it isn't nearly as picky about its meals.

The Beast's maximum Satiety is reduced by one for each additional Horrorspawn she has beyond the first, meaning the highest Satiety rating a Beast with two Horrorspawn could have is 9. Any excess Satiety that would bring her above that number is simply lost. This also limits what Satiety Conditions the Beast can access; a Beast with two Horrorspawn cannot become Slumbering. A Beast with five cannot be Gorged.

If the Horrorspawn is present while the Beast feeds, it grants a +2 bonus to her Satiety Potential. Whenever a Beast feeds — regardless of the Horrorspawn's presence — she may allocate successes to her Horrorspawn. This is not necessary, and she does not have to increase its Satiety in equal measures to her own in the same way the Horrorspawn does.

A Horror is not happy to have pieces of itself torn away and acting independently. While the act causes no pain to the Horror, the loss of Satiety seems to cause it distress. It longs to be whole again, its Hunger driving it to full Satiety, despite the Beast's assurances. Horrors may interact with the Horrortspawn while in the Beast's Lair, and if the Beast is not around, it grows aggressive. The Horrortspawn's foul mood often transfers to the Beast, making her antsy, aggressive, and sometimes heightens her Hunger, regardless of her current Satiety. If left for too long in the Lair without attention, the Horrortspawn may begin to try to take over the Lair, further inciting the Horror. Before long, the Horror loses patience and attacks. If a Horror kills or eats a Horrortspawn, it immediately gains a point of Satiety, even if the Horrortspawn it kills was not originally a part of itself.

HORRORTSPAWN MINIONS

A Beast may create a short-lived Horrortspawn to do her bidding. These creatures only live for a day, but still take actions and work for the Beast just like their longer-lived brethren. The key differences are how they are created and the creature's longevity. Players can create these Horrortspawn using the full creation rules above, or instead use an abstracted system establishing a few key dice pools and powers. If the Beast is creating a Horrortspawn as a spur-of-the-moment action to solve a single task, then using the abstracted method may be a quick and easy solution. Some players may want to have their Beasts create a temporary Horrortspawn that is similar each time, and in that case, a full character sheet may be more worthwhile.

Just as with a full Horrortspawn, the creature gains the Beast's Legend. Use the chart below to determine potency and dice pools for the Horrortspawn, using the same Lair requirements for potency as a full Horrortspawn.

For the Horrortspawn's best dice pool, describe two or three things that are its particular strengths. Don't think in terms of Attributes or Skills but in terms of actions. Don't think "Brawl" or "Persuasion," think "rip things apart" or "spy on the enemy." The creature uses the listed dice pool for those actions. Similarly, list one or two things it is especially bad at and use the Worst Dice Pool column to determine its dice pools. For all other actions, the Horrortspawn uses the All Other Pools value. Then jot down a few Dread Powers to fine tune the Horrortspawn. If Dread Powers have a dice pool to activate, use the Best Dice Pool.

Horrortspawn minions do not have a Willpower rating or Willpower points, but instead have a pool of Willpower they can use in a scene.

The Horrortspawn is likely to engage in combat, or attempt to feed on behalf of the Beast. Use the following guidelines to determine the Horrortspawn's other traits.

- Health equals 2 + Best Dice Pool
- Defense equals 2 + All Other Pools
- Speed equals 5 + All Other Pools
- Armor Rating and Damage are determined by Dread Powers, if any.
- For resisted actions, use All Other Pools value as resistance Attribute, remembering to add the Beast's Lair rating as the Horrortspawn's Supernatural Tolerance

INCREASING POTENCY

If the Beast's Lair rating increases after she creates her Horrortspawn, the Horrortspawn can gain Potency accordingly. When the Horrortspawn increases in power, it increases in Potency and gains new dots and trait maximums based on the potency chart. Players may decide how to allocate these Attribute points, and choose new Dread Powers and Merits at the same time she would spend her own Experiences.

DREAD POWERS

Horrortspawn are animalistic creatures and their powers reflect this part of their nature. Horrortspawn resemble the Horror that they come from, and their Dread Powers should reflect that as well. The following list isn't fully comprehensive, nor are the descriptions binding. Players should feel free to describe their Horrortspawn as closely to the Beast's Horror as they would like, taking Family and Hunger into account as they do. Powers that require the Horrortspawn to activate use the Horrortspawn's Traits.

ARMORED HIDE

The Horrortspawn's flesh is particularly resilient, providing it an armor rating of 2/0. This armor cannot be lost or removed.

ATAVISTIC NATURE

The Horrortspawn can access one of the Beast's Atavisms. It can use any aspect of the Atavism — normal, low Satiety, or Satiety expenditure, though the latter still requires spending Satiety. The Horrortspawn uses its own Attributes if the Atavism requires a roll. Additional selections of this Dread Power gives the Horrortspawn access to a new Atavism.

MINION DICE POOL

Potency	Best Dice Pool	Worst Dice Pool	All Other Pools	Dread Powers	Willpower/Scene
1	5	Chance	2	3	1
2	7	1	3	3	2
3	9	2	4	4	3
4	11	3	5	5	4
5	13	5	7	6	5

CHAMELEON HORROR

The Horrorspawn can blend into its surrounding environment, matching not just the colors but even the textures and characteristics of what lies around it. The player rolls Finesse + Potency to hide. Anyone attempting to perceive the Horrorspawn receives a -3 penalty on all rolls, increased to -6 if it remains still.

DEATH FROM ABOVE

The Horrorspawn has wings and can fly, moving its normal Speed while doing so.

ENSNARE

The Horrorspawn can create a snare to entrap victims, whether sticky webs, or some grotesque part of itself. By spending 1 Satiety and gaining successes on a Finesse + Potency roll, the creature traps an area of up to 10 square yards per success. The creature can attempt to grapple any victims in the area using the snare, with a +3 bonus to its dice pool.

FEARFUL AURA

The Horrorspawn's very presence instills fear. Anyone who sees the Horrorspawn is unnerved by its appearance and must succeed on a Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance roll or suffer from the Spooked Condition. The Horrorspawn may spend a point of Satiety to increase the effects of its aura for a Scene, inflicting the Frightened Condition instead. Beasts are immune to this aura.

HUNTER'S SENSES

The Horrorspawn has incredibly honed senses for specific types of prey. Against that prey, the creature gains a +4 bonus to all Perception rolls, and applies 9-again to the dice pool. The prey is defined by the Beast's Hunger, and additionally applies to anyone with Doors open to the Beast.

HIDDEN MOVEMENT

The Horrorspawn can move quicker than normal, as long as it is hiding. Whenever the creature is completely alone or unobserved, it can move at twice its normal speed. Cameras do not function as proper observers, as the creature's power is fueled by the fear of those it stalks.

NATURAL WEAPONS (• TO • • •)

The Horrorspawn is armed with formidable natural weaponry, whether savage jaws, rending talons, or bony spurs. The weaponry has a weapon modifier and armor-piercing quality equal to the number of dots in this Dread Power. If the creature's natural weaponry includes a bite, it doesn't need to establish a grapple in order to bite.

PHASE STEP

The Horrorspawn can pass through solid objects, becoming temporarily incorporeal. The creature spends 1 point of Satiety and the player rolls Resistance + Potency; success allows the creature to become incorporeal and can move its full movement speed through a solid object. The effect lasts for one turn, and the creature must end its movement outside the object. If

any part of the creature is still in the object when it ends its movement, it takes one point of lethal damage each turn until it can free itself. If it happens to be fully encased in the object at the end of its turn, it takes a point of aggravated damage. The Horrorspawn is immune to damage while incorporeal, and cannot be the subject of physical attacks.

PRODIGIOUS LEAP

The Horrorspawn can make great, bounding leaps; by spending 1 point of Satiety, it can jump about four stories straight up or across a six-lane highway (or the equivalent distance).

SHAPESHIFT

The Horrorspawn can shift its form into another one, often something innocuous. When this Dread Power is chosen, the player picks a single form for the creature. This form can be human, animal, or some other alien form designed by the player. By spending a point of Satiety and gaining a success on a Power roll, the creature can shift into its chosen shape. While the creature's form changes, its traits do not, though the new form could include a natural form of attack, or the ability to wield weapons. The creature remains in its new shape for one scene per success gained on the activation roll.

SLICK SKIN

The Horrorspawn is particularly slimy and slippery, perhaps resembling an ancient horror from the deepest reaches of the sea. The creature gains a +3 bonus to its Defense versus establishing a grapple, and gains a +3 bonus to checks while in a grapple.

TOWERING PRESENCE

The Horrorspawn is larger than normal, and gains an additional two points in Size.

TOXIC (• OR • •)

The Horrorspawn has a poisonous or diseased bite. When making a bite attack, the creature does not inflict damage, but instead a Tilt. The one-dot version of this Dread Power inflicts the moderate version of either the Poisoned or Sick Tilts; the two-dot version inflicts the grave version of the Tilt. The creature may spend 1 point of Satiety to make all bite attacks the creature makes inflict both the Tilt and damage for the rest of the scene. If the Horrorspawn also has Natural Weaponry, it inflicts both poison and damage without the Satiety expenditure.

WALL CLIMB

The Horrorspawn can walk up walls or even cling to the ceiling, and can move its full Speed while doing so.

EXAMPLE HORRORSPAWN CREATION

Magda's character, Ms. Winters, has learned that a powerful Hero has moved into her area and is seeking her out. She isn't good at combat, but wants to be able to defend herself from

this threat. Her brood is there at her side, but she doesn't want to just sit by while they endanger themselves on her behalf. She decides to create a Horrorspawn to fight the Hero. Ms. Winters is not a brand-new character anymore, and her Lair rating is now 3. The maximum Potency Horrorspawn she can create is 2, and she decides to go ahead with that.

Magda has 13 dots to distribute among the creature's Power, Finesse, and Resistance. Ms. Winters wants a protector, so she decides to give it 6 dots in Power, 3 dots in Finesse, and 4 dots in Resistance. She doesn't mind if it is not graceful as long as it can hit hard and resist damage. The creature gains 2 Dread Powers, and she decides on Armored Hide, to give it a bit of protection, and Ensnare, to show the creature's Lurker nature.

Magda then sets the creature's Legend as her own, Judgmental, and writes in its Lair rating as 3. She also notes that the creature Hungers for Punishment. She writes a few lines to describe the Horrorspawn, using her earlier description of her Horror to inform her. It is a pale creature with skin loosely draped about the protruding bones of its body. It stands on two legs, but hunched, and it prefers to run on all fours. Magda describes the creature's bones as thick and strong, providing its armor. It has a modicum of tool-using ability and can wield simple weapons. She describes its ability to create a trap with Ensnare as a sticky mucous it spits from its mouth.

Magda has Ms. Winters provide a physical body for the creature using a corpse one of Ms. Winters' broodmates stole from the local mortuary.

Magda does some quick math and sets the Horrorspawn's Health at 9 (Resistance 4 + Size 5), Willpower at 7 (Finesse 3 + Resistance 4), Initiative 7 (Finesse 3 + Resistance 4), Speed 14 (Power 6 + Finesse 3 + Species Factor 5). The Horrorspawn's Size is set to 5 while it remains in the physical body Ms. Winters provided for it.

A MIND OF THEIR OWN

A Horrorspawn is unmistakably an extension of the Beast who created it. To other of the Children who have seen her Horror, they cannot mistake this creature as anything but its manifestation. Even those who have no idea what the Beast's Horror looks like can see her Legend and personality traits reflected in her Horrorspawn. Heroes often mistake Horrorspawn for the Beast herself, which works in her favor. A Horrorspawn is its own being, a reflection of the Horror bound to the Beast, but not as fully controlled by the Beast. Instead, it's a small piece she's taken off the leash and let out to roam free. Other Begotten caution against giving the Horrorspawn too much freedom, as it can have serious and disturbing side effects.

The longer the Beast goes without contact with the Horrorspawn — either by directly interacting with it and giving it instructions for activity, or by allocating Satiety to it when feeding — the more the Horrorspawn gains its own independence. Even a day without minding the creature could have disastrous results. A Horrorspawn left untended may seek its own meals, feed on people without reservation, cause nightmares, and possibly kill people.

If the Beast ignores the creature for more than a week, it begins seeking out activities to perform, attempting to fulfill the Beast's Aspirations. The Horrorspawn has a twisted view of the Beast's Aspirations, colored by its own Hungers. A Horrorspawn out on its own in this way could cause severe issues for the Beast, and the player gains a Beat each time the Horrorspawn's actions cause her issues later when attempting to fulfill her Aspirations.

If the Beast lets her Horrorspawn go for a month or longer, the creature takes on a life of its own, possibly taking over Chambers in the Beast's own Lair. The Horrorspawn eventually merges with her Horror, but if it gained independence before it does so, the Horror does not gain Satiety when it returns.

FAMILY ATTRACTION

Horrorspawn live a strange life as both part of the Beast who created them, and separate entities. They act instinctually, following the imperative to hunt and survive, much like the Horror that spawned them. They continue to have feelings about whomever the Beast may have feelings for, but have no way of expressing those complex feelings as more than a visceral desire. This desire manifests itself in conjunction with the only true other desire a Horrorspawn has — its Hunger.

If the Beast gives the Horrorspawn specific feeding instructions, or a specific target, the Horrorspawn follows those instructions. If allowed to feed on its own, it attempts to feed on the nearest victim that satisfies its Hunger, which can include those the Beast has the strongest emotions for — her family and even enemies.

If no one the Beast cares about is nearby, it simply chooses the first suitable meal. When feeding from someone with the Family Ties Condition to the Beast or someone with open Doors to the Beast, the Horrorspawn gains a +1 to its Satiety Potential, as though it were feeding in line with its Hunger.

LEGENDARY HORRORSPAWN

Having a Horrorspawn lurking around the Beast lends her a dangerous air. While she might not be actively projecting her Horror into the world, the Horrorspawn is doing a fine job of it for her. The Legend of her as a creature of myth grows, and counts as work toward Spawning a Legend for the purposes of becoming a Beast Incarnate. Even if the Beast isn't powerful enough to fully Merge with her Horror, the effects of the Horrorspawn increase her Legend, throwing a general cast of dread over the area she lives in. Other Begotten easily feel the effects, and know the Horrorspawn is the cause. Some Children may attempt to subvert the Beast's Legend by killing her Horrorspawn, believing the risks of its presence are not worth the benefit to the Beast. Others may accept the Beast as their Apex, accepting the narrative of her Legend as a way to grow their own power.

Either way, Horrorspawn draw Heroes to the Beast's location. The Horrorspawn pulls the Primordial Dream into the physical world wherever it goes, causing waves and ripples to flow in its wake. The Heroes don't know the exact cause of

the disturbance, but the constant disruption and the stories of the creature draw them forward. Its presence may also awaken new Heroes in the area, making it dangerous for the Beast to stick around.

CLOSER TO THE HORROR

Spending time around a Horrorspawn can have deleterious effects on a Beast. The longer she spends in its company, the less she cares about her Life, and the more her Legend takes over. She can feel both her Horror's and the Horrorspawn's Hunger, and the combination of the two pull at her, causing her to embrace her Horror more fully. If the Beast spends more than two consecutive days in the presence of her Horrorspawn, she feels hungrier than normal. The Beast must spend 1 Satiety per day over two.

She cares less about her lessons and is more likely to feed to her fill, including killing her victims. If she spends a consecutive week in the presence of her Horrorspawn — by interacting with it either to give it commands or share Satiety with it for seven days in a row — she starts withdrawing from those closest to her. She loses progress on any Social maneuvering she may have been working on, closing the last Door she opened. If she spends more than a consecutive week with the Horrorspawn, all her relationships suffer. Anyone attempting Social maneuvering against her faces one additional Door, and anyone she had affected with the Family Ties Condition loses it from her. If that person had Family Ties to another Beast, that Condition remains.

DEATH AND DYING

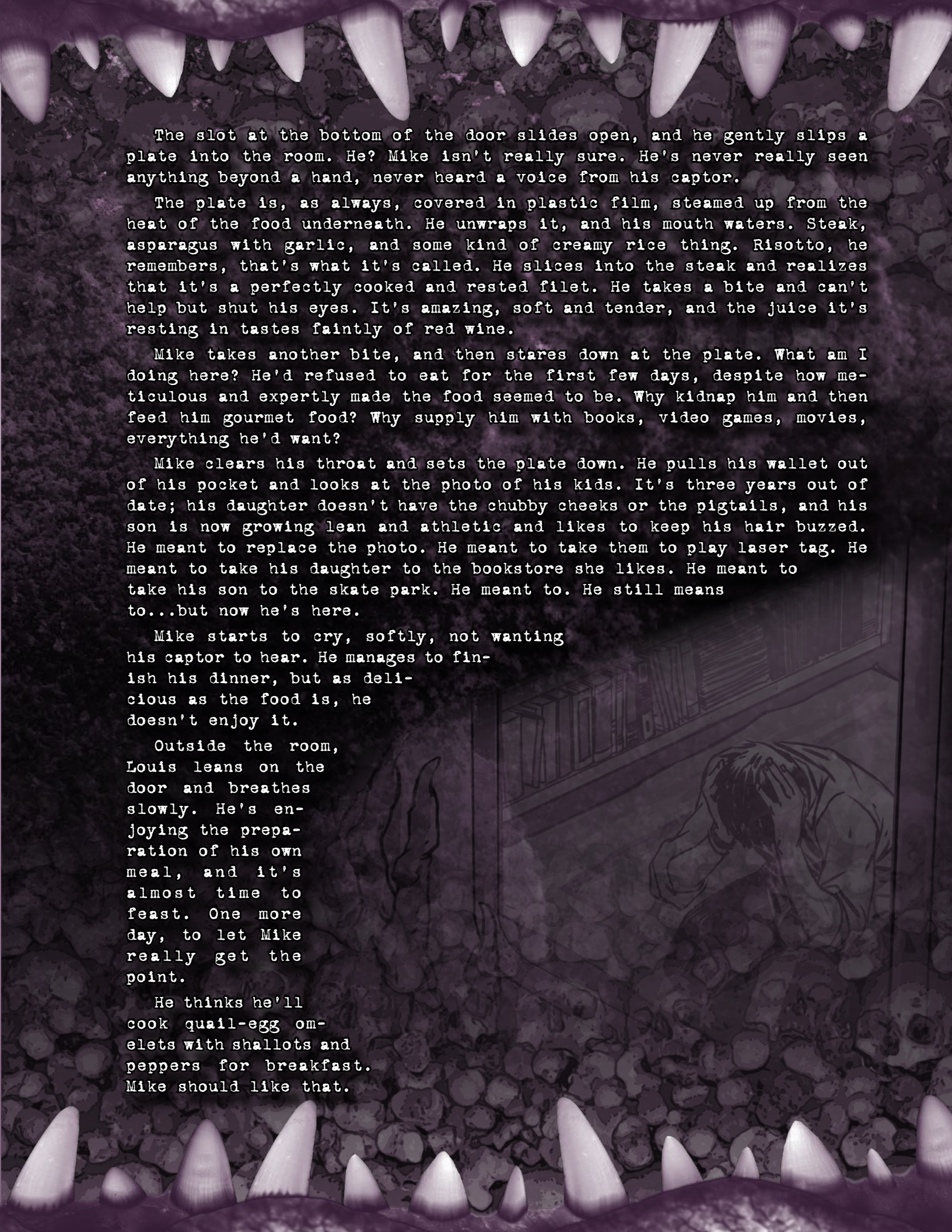
Horrorspawn have a relatively short lifespan, as the Horror longs to be whole again. The more potent a Horrorspawn is, the longer it sticks around, but even the most potent live no longer than a few years. The Horrorspawn lives for one year for each level of Potency it has. If the Horrorspawn dies — either through natural causes or because someone kills it — the Beast regains a single Satiety as the Horror is placated by the return.

If a Beast dies in the physical world, her Horrorspawn remain. After an extended period of time, the Horrorspawn's physical body decays and is relegated to the Primordial Dream, though it still has the capability of opening Primordial Pathways, and thereby entering a new, unsuspecting body. Without a Beast to direct it, the Horrorspawn reverts to its most primal nature, hunting and feeding without direction. It still seeks out those who were closest to the Beast who created it, entering their dreams and creating nightmares to feed when possible.

If a Beast's Horror dies in her Lair, the Horrorspawn has a chance to save her life. Regardless of where the Horrorspawn is when it happens, it immediately returns to the Heart of the Lair and attempts to take the place of the Horror. If the Horrorspawn is potent enough, the Beast may survive, but in a severely weakened state. When the Horror dies, the player rolls the Beast's Stamina + Horrorspawn Potency. Each additional Horrorspawn she has adds one die to the roll. Each success on the roll gives the Beast a single day of life. During that time, she suffers the effects of the Thrall Condition. In that time, she has a chance to restore her Horror by feeding the Horrorspawn sustaining her. If she can gain a number of successes on Satiety Potential rolls equal to $(20 - \text{the Horrorspawn's Potency})$ in the time she has, the Horrorspawn is capable of growing enough to replace her Horror. The Satiety gain does not actually have to give the Beast Satiety, she can feed when completely gorged and still gain successes towards this end. She continues to suffer the Soulless Condition afterwards, because no matter how powerful the Horrorspawn gets, it's never a true replacement for her Horror.

A Beast who has suffered the loss of her Horror in this way never fully recovers her true personality. She loses her sense of self and eschews lessons in favor of fully embracing her bestial nature. She does not often last this way long, as her activities draw Heroes, and other Beasts may find it kinder to put her down than to let her go on in that way. The Beast is also more likely to Merge with her Horror and become the Beast Rampant.





The slot at the bottom of the door slides open, and he gently slips a plate into the room. He? Mike isn't really sure. He's never really seen anything beyond a hand, never heard a voice from his captor.

The plate is, as always, covered in plastic film, steamed up from the heat of the food underneath. He unwraps it, and his mouth waters. Steak, asparagus with garlic, and some kind of creamy rice thing. Risotto, he remembers, that's what it's called. He slices into the steak and realizes that it's a perfectly cooked and rested filet. He takes a bite and can't help but shut his eyes. It's amazing, soft and tender, and the juice it's resting in tastes faintly of red wine.

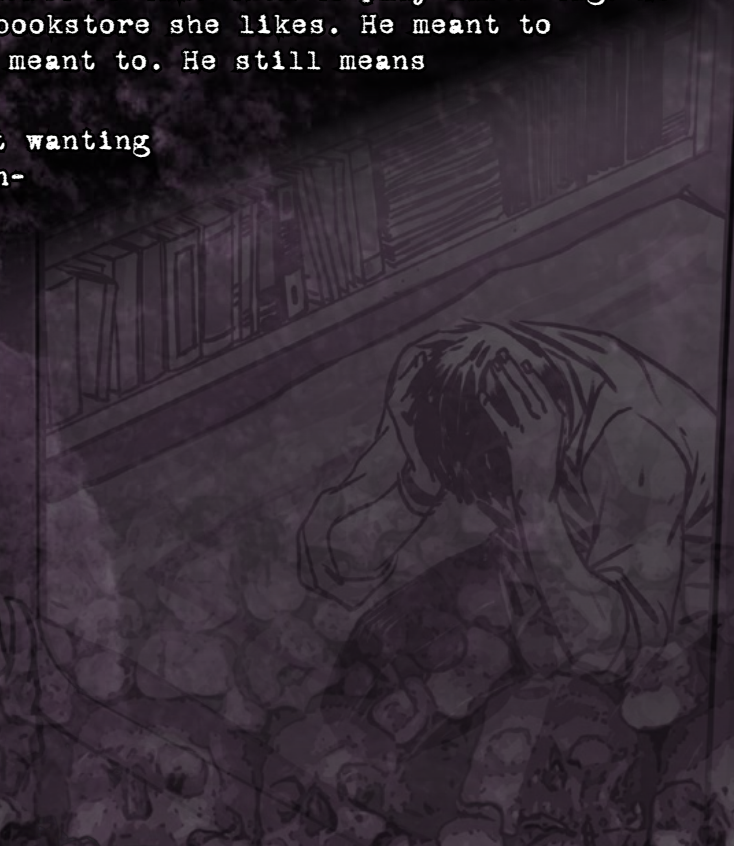
Mike takes another bite, and then stares down at the plate. What am I doing here? He'd refused to eat for the first few days, despite how meticulous and expertly made the food seemed to be. Why kidnap him and then feed him gourmet food? Why supply him with books, video games, movies, everything he'd want?

Mike clears his throat and sets the plate down. He pulls his wallet out of his pocket and looks at the photo of his kids. It's three years out of date; his daughter doesn't have the chubby cheeks or the pigtails, and his son is now growing lean and athletic and likes to keep his hair buzzed. He meant to replace the photo. He meant to take them to play laser tag. He meant to take his daughter to the bookstore she likes. He meant to take his son to the skate park. He meant to. He still means to...but now he's here.

Mike starts to cry, softly, not wanting his captor to hear. He manages to finish his dinner, but as delicious as the food is, he doesn't enjoy it.

Outside the room, Louis leans on the door and breathes slowly. He's enjoying the preparation of his own meal, and it's almost time to feast. One more day, to let Mike really get the point.

He thinks he'll cook quail-egg omelets with shallots and peppers for breakfast. Mike should like that.



CHAPTER FOUR IN THE COMPANY OF MONSTERS

Families are messy.
Immortal families
are eternally messy.
Sometimes the best we
can do is remind each
other that we're related
for better or worse...
and try to keep the
maiming and bloodshed
to a minimum.

— Rick Riordan,
The Sea of Monsters

Beasts are, in large part, defined by their relationships — their nickname, “the Children,” speaks to that. They are the offspring of the Dark Mother, the family to almost all of the supernatural denizens of the world, and the estranged relatives of humanity itself.

They have their own communities, too, of course. This chapter examines the kinds of societies that the Begotten build for themselves: intra-Beast factions, cults of human followers, and their loving but terrifying relationship with the Dark Mother. It also examines the culture of teaching lessons while feeding the Horror, something so prevalent in Beast culture that many Begotten don't even realize it's optional.

COMMUNITY AMONG THE BEGOTTEN

The Begotten are a tightly knit and clannish lot, in keeping with the fundamental nature of their beings. The vast majority of all Beasts find all the companionship — intellectual, emotional, physical — that they require within the bounds of their brood, the found family to which all of their kind feel ineluctably drawn. Some, however, feel compelled to seek a greater communion and from this desire larger societies of the Begotten have been born.

SEEKERS OF THE DARK MOTHER

The Dark Mother is the enigma at the core of all Beasts, the voice that sings sweetly to the creatures that they are and whispers promises of what they could yet become. None among the Children question the actual fact of her existence — they know, at an atavistic level, that the Mother of Monsters is as real as they are. What divides the Children with regard to their progenetrix is not her existence but her *nature*.

The seekers are among the most driven of all the Begotten, animated as they are by a compelling goal beyond even the perfection of their own beings or the education of forgetful humanity. *Something* inside them burns like an ember in the ashes of a dying fire, sometimes flaring, sometimes fading, but never entirely ignorable, not for very long. It is different for each Beast that experiences it, though there may be some commonalities in form or tone.

THE ATHENAEUM OF THE DARK MOTHER

Some Beasts are scholars by nature and their pursuit of the Dark Mother takes a more abstracted and intellectual form. Her myth is woven into the very fabric of reality, emerging in some form in every

culture, in every corner of the world. Among the Begotten, some are ferociously dedicated to unearthing every strand of story, compiling every tale and song, piecing together every shattered bit of pottery or scattered piece of mosaic, the better to comprehend both themselves and her. They are by far the most organized subculture within the greater society of their own kind, sharing a bond that cuts across geographical distance and can even preempt the closer ties and needs of one's broodmates if the circumstances are serious enough to warrant setting them aside, temporarily or even permanently. Spread all over the world, the scholar-Beasts rarely risk meeting in the flesh and also rarely share their findings via potentially insecure methods such as internet-based communication unless they have no other choice. Heroes have, after all, tracked their prey via such methods in the past.

Instead, they have forged, through the shared power of their hunger for knowledge and desire to pursue it, an enormous Athenaeum-hive in the Primordial Dream, which they may access at will. This Athenaeum holds centuries of scholarship and artifacts, both physical and ephemeral, relating to the Dark Mother. Its Chambers are many and drawn from places all over the world where both knowledge and horror came together in ways that left a lasting scar in the depths of the Dream. This one culled from the Great Library of Alexandria, its cracked paving stones still stained with the blood of Hypatia and the soot from centuries of repeated harrowings by fire; that one watched over by the bones and empty-eyed skulls of the scholar-monks who perished defending Nalanda; still another filled with the wreckage of fire-cracked clay shards and pools of still-molten wax that attended the final hours of Ashurbanipal's royal library. More modern additions have included the hastily abandoned library of Pripyat, itself a resonant source of fear slowly birthing new terrors, and the tiny library that once serviced Centralia, Pennsylvania.

Its keepers have taken great care with its creation and preservation over the years, occasionally walling it off completely to prevent random access by others of their own kind who might accidentally stumble upon a Chamber and wreak havoc, whether out of malice or ignorance. At the moment only the innermost core of the hive, where the most delicate artifacts are kept safe from prying eyes, is kept completely secured against random access, and the Pathways that lead to it are known only to the eldest curators. The outer Chambers remain open to younger scholars and their guests, Begotten and otherwise, to congregate for the purpose of sharing findings, conducting additional research, and occasionally merely socializing with others who share their particular obsessions.

The current keeper of the Athenaeum — in essence, its Apex — is Damaris Nikolaides. Those who know her, or who have met her, in the waking world report her to be an elderly woman of the classic rich-widow type who resides alone in a house built and furnished with her late husband's money in one of the wealthiest zip codes in the eastern United States. The house itself is a Chamber for the hive, filled as it is with antiques and tasteful reproductions of the same, many of which pertain to Professor Nikolaides' lifelong obsession with and ongoing research into the mythology of the Divine Feminine and its impact on the development of human religion the world over.





Those who have met her in the Primordial Dream, usually within the precincts of the Athenaeum-hive, know her to be Eshmaki, a riddling-Beast in the darkness who guards the inner wards of the hive with unmatched intellect and ferocity. In the waking world, she still teaches the occasional seminar class at her alma mater, writes and publishes regularly, and mentors young students in her particular fields of archaeological expertise. In the Primordial Dream, questing Beasts seek her out for they recognize her as a font of wisdom with few peers, whose knowledge of the Athenaeum and its contents is without equal and whose counsel has guided more than a few hungry souls safely to their ultimate destinations over the years. Some wonder, given the depth of her wisdom and her compassion for her fellows, why she has not yet sought to attain Incarnation and make her place in the hierarchies of the Begotten almost unassailable. The answer is that she does not wish to go through what is left of her life virtually perfect and so certain of herself that she has no more questions left to ask of either her own soul or the world — because where is the opportunity to grow and learn in that?

The Athenaeum has, at any given time, at least a dozen other scholars calling both its inner and outer Chambers home. Some are there for the purpose of making detailed study of the artifacts contained within, some engage in the instruction of newcomers who have made their way to the Athenaeum either with purpose or by accident, and some — perhaps the majority at any given time — are there for the explicit purpose of defending it against hostile incursions from outside the Begotten family. More than a few have occurred, the most recent a fairly serious incursion by hostile magi who *somehow* managed to forge a strong enough linkage to the Primordial Dream that they and what appeared to be the bound remnants of at least one Beast's shattered soul forced entry into the outer Chambers of the hive. The assault was repelled but it left the scholars of the Athenaeum shaken to the core, led them to evacuate and collapse most of the violated Chambers, and, for a time, completely seal the hive itself against outside entry while its internal defenses were reforged and resecured. The isolation has since been relaxed but the heightened state of awareness when it comes to the possibility of unforeseen vulnerability has not; Damaris has yielded to the wishes of the scholar-brood and permitted a number of their more aggressive kin to share residence for the purposes of increasing the Athenaeum's capacity for both response and retaliation.

The titular “head of security” is Torvald Johannessen, and more or less everyone who meets him in the flesh is at least privately astonished that he is not, in fact, Anakim. He *looks* the part as exactly as anyone could wish: enormously tall, broad enough across the shoulders to imply that he bench presses telephone poles for the amusement value, red of hair and brows and beard, just requiring a small step across the threshold between worlds to let his inner Giant out. To give those observers some credit, he is ex-military, presently a student in his last year of heretofore deferred university, and has come by his impressive physicality honestly. Within the Athenaeum-hive, his presence is rarely seen but frequently felt — the shadow of his wings lying dark over the hive's borders, blowing with it a charnel wind

that tastes of blood and the death of hope, in keeping with his Raptor nature. Despite the circumstances surrounding his ascension within the loose hierarchy of the scholar-brood, he and Damaris have a good working relationship. He respects the depth of her wisdom and the effort she has put into creating a place where the Begotten can meet and commune with the Dark Mother in relative peace; she respects his both his willingness to take on the responsibility of defending the Athenaeum above all other considerations *and* his incisive intelligence when it comes to any number of topics. A recent development that has attracted their concern and attention is what appears to be a theoretically friendly overture from a second group of magi, a band of academics and seekers of knowledge who identified themselves as members of an organization calling itself the Mysterium. They offered a pact of assistance against mutual enemies and an exchange of ideas — the Mysterium, it appears, is as dedicated to the pursuit of understanding their own nature as the questing Beasts of the Athenaeum are dedicated to unlocking the riddle of the Dark Mother, and are refreshingly, bluntly honest about their goals and desires. The partnership is still in its infancy, its strength and dedication not yet seriously tried by tensions either external or internal.

THE EMPUSAE

Some Beasts believe that the best way to commune with the Dark Mother is not to hoard artifacts in the Primordial Dream or spend one's life poring over ethnography textbooks but to seek her in her most primal forms: the fear in the hearts of all living things just before they die, the night with neither moon nor stars, hot blood pouring from torn flesh. Despite their chosen term for themselves — the Empusae being the demon-daughters and heralds of Hecate, whom they hold to be one of the true faces of the Dark Mother as it was revealed to unworthy humanity — they are not wholly matriarchal in either composition or intent, and accept among their ranks any Child who accepts and embodies their ethos. That ethos is simply this: You are no longer human, and humanity can teach you nothing of your Mother than you cannot learn first and best on your own.

That being said, the Empusae do not *hate* where they came from — far from it. They simply see no value in cleaving to what they once were. They maintain few or no relationships with the friends and family they possessed prior to their Devouring, instead turning completely to their new broodmates for companionship and support. They spend the majority of their time refining their understanding of themselves by seeking out the camaraderie of others who share their particular family, or whose hungers align harmoniously, both in the waking world and the Primordial Dream. And when the moon is dark, they hunt for the enlightenment that can only be found in surrender to one's innermost nature, listening in the silence that follows once the screaming is done for the voice of their Mother and the truths she speaks to those who are true to their own hearts.

Though they share a common term for themselves, the Empusae do not possess much in the way of organization. They have no set gathering places either in the waking world or the Primordial Dream, no hierarchy of elders or teachers and sup-

plicants, and only one real preferred time for their activities, which generally take place at the new moon, when the physical and spiritual worlds are both darkest. They have no broods that are solely dedicated to the promulgation of their philosophy and no real intent to develop any, though they do not turn away from bonds of fellowship that develop naturally between like-souled individuals. They are aware of the existence of the Athenaeum of the Dark Mother and, despite their philosophical differences, the relationship between them is not hostile, *per se* — the Empusae feels the adherents of the Athenaeum are pretentious and deluded and the Athenaeum feels the Empusae are callow and unsophisticated in their understanding at best, but they can at least have civilized conversations.

THE GUARDIAN BEASTS

It is axiomatic that all happy families are identical in their happiness and all unhappy families are unique in their misery. The Guardians are proof of that concept among the Begotten.

The Guardians believe that it is entirely natural for the Children to possess an idealized view of their Dark Mother — she did, after all, in some way, some ill-defined, entirely subjective way, give them something resembling life. She birthed their true souls, all of which just happen to resemble or otherwise reflect some aspect of herself. She guides them through some ephemeral means to perfect themselves spiritually, usually in a way that involves advanced forms of self-abnegation, pruning away of parts of oneself that you might not want to lose, or throw away. Mother, after all, knows best. That's why she leaves the deepest scars.

While all Beasts, at a visceral level, remember that the Dark Mother is an elder terror from the dawn of reality, chthonic and hungry in a way that might well rise up to consume them as easily as any lesser prey, this knowledge is generally not their dominant response to her existence. To the Guardians, however, the Dark Mother is the ultimate abusive parent — an absentee whose personal gravity nonetheless distorts the entire world, forcing the children she left on their own to pursue her if they want any chance of knowing her; an emotionally abusive narcissist who requires her children to spiritually twist themselves into shapes she finds pleasing in order to prove themselves worthy in her eyes; a potentially existential threat to any Beast who fails to meet a standard that no one can fully articulate or define. They consider any effort to “know” the Dark Mother more completely an almost entirely self-destructive act, predicated on a willingness to accept abuse if the end result is love, or at least not being regarded as dinner.

And this is completely unacceptable. The only way to break the cycle of spiritual abuse is not to play, and so that is what the Beasts who adhere to this philosophy do. What knowledge they accumulate regarding the Dark Mother, her ways, and her doings, exists specifically to function as an early-warning system, and they are perpetually watchful for signs of her return, the better to alert their kin to the danger. They reject, categorically, the idea that Inheritance is a gift from the Dark Mother, believing instead that the pursuit of Incarnation is an internal process unique to each individual who pursues it — and that

it is the responsibility of any Beast who wishes to protect their kin from the threats of the world, including from among their own kind, to do so for the sake of their own sanity and the collective well-being of their entire extended family.

THE DOMINAE

Some Beasts pursue knowledge for its own sake, the mere act of learning a thing — something about themselves, something about the Dark Mother, something about their other kin and the oddities of their existence — more than sufficient justification for the effort. Some Beasts accumulate enormous libraries of artifacts and lore culled from both human and nonhuman cultures the world over, searching for some lost bit of fluff or some potentially nonexistent bit of ephemera that will finally cause everything to make sense, to make themselves completely whole. Some Beasts are complete idiots because, in this world, knowledge is more than merely power, it is the potential for a dominance so absolute as to remake the world itself in one's image.

The Dominae are not philosophers. They are not seekers after higher wisdom or purer self-knowledge. Instead, they adhere to one very simple principle: There is no compact between the predator and the prey — and everything in the world that isn't them is some sort of prey, including their own kin. The Dominae believe explicitly that Beasts are the firstborn children of the greatest darkness the world has ever known and that all the others, their many scattered broods of cousins, are pale reflections of what they once were. This makes them weak, and this makes them prey — dangerous prey, but prey nonetheless, vulnerable to manipulation through their own self-chosen weaknesses, harvestable for their influence and resources in the mortal and the supernal worlds, but otherwise only dubiously worthy of respect and barely worthy of the name family. The vast, undifferentiated bulk of humanity exists, at most, as a potential chrysalis for other Beasts, at least, a source of sustenance until something meatier comes along to sink one's teeth into. Even other Beasts who fail to meet the Dominae's exacting standards for the proper deportment of an apex predator can expect little better than to be treated as an expendable resource to be used and abused until nothing more can be extracted — though, in the case of the Beast, the “relationship,” such as it is, is likely to end in blood. Dead betrayed and abandoned family members, after all, can tell no tales.

The Dominae are among the most blatantly predatory, the most sleekly amoral of all Beasts, their entire existence built around obtaining and maintaining their own primacy, generally at the expense of all others. They are the sorts of individuals who are experts at reading the social dynamic of any situation and manipulating it to their own advantage in terms both long and short. Among other Beasts, they invariably seek a position of ultimate authority and their every interaction with their kin is part of the complex maneuvering necessary to reach a place of absolute social dominance within the brood. When walking among their cousins, they make themselves useful, if not borderline indispensable, tailoring their approaches to the unique needs of the individuals and the situations involved. The help is never free, however, and their gifts always come with two edges;



any effort they make on behalf of another they expect to see repaid, several times over, and often with interest on top of that. The ultimate goal is, of course, to reach a genuine Apex of their own making, one that yields nothing to the desires or needs of others but rather shapes everything within their domain to serve their will and their will alone. Some of the Dominae have even accomplished this feat; their hives are powerful and vast, reflections of their ruthless will to power, and the first step on their road to Incarnation. For some Dominae, even this ultimate realization of their own beings isn't enough to fully satisfy their hunger for domination, for the submission of others, and it is entirely possible that nothing but the remaking of the supernal world in their own image would even begin to touch it.

CULTS OF THE INCARNATE

Among the Begotten, those who have achieved the perfect union of being that is Incarnation are the legends of the legendary, the myths of the mythic. Only a handful of beings the world over have succeeded on this mentally, physically, and spiritually arduous journey — but whoever they are, and wherever they reside, they are invariably the Apex of Apexes, the eldest children of the Dark Mother, and the Primordial Dream and all their kin respond to them accordingly. In many ways, they achieve simply by existing what the Seekers of the Dark Mother attempt to accomplish with all their scholarship and subtle efforts at cultural construction, as multiple broods in their vicinity tend to coalesce around them, often whether they want them to or not. “Younger,” less spiritually evolved Beasts instinctively recognize the Incarnate as a lodestar for their own souls, both guide and crossroads on the path to their own self-realization. Some Incarnate Beasts recognize this for the responsibility that it is, and willingly choose to take on the task of aiding those who also walk the roads that lead to Incarnation. Others drive them away with fang and claw, construing their younger siblings as a threat to their places of primacy in the mythscape of the Primordial Dream, sometimes triggering vicious rivalries and evolutions of the soul that they have no means through which to control or shape. The most dangerous of all the Children deliberately draw others to them — questing souls are, after all, vulnerable souls — to use them until there is nothing left to use and then devour what remains to feed their own cruel and vicious hungers.

THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAINS

One of the oldest and most powerful of the Incarnate, whose cult is also widespread and influential among the far-flung broods of the Children, resides in the Pacific Northwest of the United States. In fact, he has dwelt there since before the nations that now envelop his enormous Lair even existed, since tales were first told of child-stealing wild things living in the mountains and forests, and whole cultures gave his legend their own name. Sásq'ets. Ts'emekwes. Stiyaha. Kwi-kwiyai. The modern obsession with the fact or fiction of his existence has spawned hundreds of films and thousands of books, podcasts, and reality-television shows, a project attempting to scientifically identify and map his theoretical genome, and internet message board flame wars legendary for their length and ferocity. His

name graces music festivals, consumer goods, and more “no shit, there I was in the woods” stories than could ever hope to be codified or proved. He is, quite literally, the first cryptid, the unknown monster whose legend encompasses both the wise and gentle spiritual guide of modern earth-based religions and also the indie filmmaker shredding found-footage gore of straight-to-DVD horror flicks.

That he truly exists, liminal as twilight and dawn, between these extremes is a fact known mostly to his younger siblings among the Begotten, some of whom are his broodmates and partake of some aspects of his own legend, his own nature, and some of whom are his students. They have come seeking his wisdom in building their myths into the collective psyche of humanity, across vast swaths of space and time. Many who seek after him never do find him — one of the defining elements of his legend, after all, is his elusiveness — and also discover his brood to be generally little help in doing so, since they can usually only reliably contact him in times of extreme necessity. He expects most of his kin to manage for themselves unless a threat is exceedingly dire. Many others give up their search as it leads them to realize the precise extent of the effort required in following his path, the slow and subtle work requiring decades of myth-building, and turn aside to easier ways. Those that find him, however, receive a true master's tutelage in the art of anchoring the essence of one's soul in the human capacity for fear, for horror, for curiosity about those terrifying things that dwell in the dark at the edge of their perception, and how those things can build the strongest of myths, indestructible in the face of nearly any attempt to degrade them. If one is persistent, his cabin can be found in the hills near Lake Chelan in north-central Washington State. If one is lucky, and comes in peace, he will be at home for those who seek his wisdom. He has many names, though those closest to him call him the Old Man. Those who come to take what he has built by force, thinking that the humor that attends some aspects of his modern legend has weakened him or blunted his fangs and claws, will discover why the first peoples to share his territory with him feared speaking his name aloud, lest they be heard and punished for the trespass.

OUR LADY OF THE WATERS

She resides in the places where the sun can still warm the water — not for her are the crushing depths and their unrelieved darkness. Instead, she favors the broad rivers and the long lakes they feed, where hidden depths might lie but, more often than not, danger is just beneath the surface or even entwined in the forest-shadowed banks. Like her favorite brother, she has many names, and on occasion those names bring her waters to the base of his mountains; when they do, they and their broods meet and mingle and add new layers of meaning to their individual and collective legends. Unlike him, she does not make her home in any one place, the entrances to her Lair being many, and like the flowing creature she is, she swims the pathways of the Primordial Dream between them as her whims dictate. At any time, she can be found nurturing a brood of younger siblings — the principal promulgators of her philosophy, a path that embraces as much the terrifying

wonder in the world unseen as it does fear of the things that reside in it — from the high, mountaintop lakes of Korea and Turkey, to the equatorial rivers and swamps of the Congo, to the cold waterways that run the borders between Canada and the United States. Finding her can be quite the task in itself, albeit a rewarding one; it is altogether simpler to locate one of her broodmates and request an introduction. The trials that follow such a meeting exist to weed out the dilettantes who lack the spiritual commitment to truly follow her way. She is less likely than some among the Incarnate to break those who fail to immediately meet her standards. She sees no value in permanently scarring the souls of her own kin. Instead, if they wish it, they become new additions to her far-flung brood and thus do they come to wisdom, and her legend persists. Should one encounter her, she prefers to be addressed respectfully, as Elder Sister, until she feels that one has earned the honor of learning and being permitted the use of her familiar name.

THE GUARDIAN BEAST AND THE HERO WHO PROTECTS HER

It was not entirely by choice that Syenah Ardalan set out on the road that led her to what she has become — but it was by desperate and dire necessity that she took it and she does not regret that she did so. Born in northern Iraq at the tail end of the '80s, in the waning days of the Iran-Iraq War, Syenah had only dim memories of her homeland, and of her mother, who took up arms with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan's *peshmerga* once it became clear that the Iraqi Army intended nothing less than genocide against their people. Her father, a scholar and intellectual who had until the advent of the war worked as a professor of literature at Salahaddin University, fled with Syenah and her younger brothers across the border into Turkey and from there to France, where he had relatives already residing in exile.

Merivan Taramakhi never joined her husband and children, her life one of thousands consumed by the al-Anfal genocide, and Syenah grew to adulthood with the scar of that loss still on her heart, a grief complicated by the attenuation of memory and the slow emergence of her own true nature, the two inextricably linked together in the depths of her soul and the Primordial Dream. Syenah came into herself during her third year of medical school and emerged even more fiercely focused on her chosen purpose in life than she was going into it. The brood who finally found her, some weeks after her emergence, began bending the local hive around the resonant force of her driving ambition, were astonished by both her youth and the incredible strength of her will. Mastering both her own nature and the fundamentals of her profession, Syenah joined an international medical aid organization directly out of medical school and soon found herself in the midst of the world and all its wonders and horrors, human and otherwise.

Eventually, the hour came that her soul had anticipated for nearly entire her life: The situation in Iraqi Kurdistan, unstable for decades between both low-intensity civil war and external struggles, deteriorated to the point that in some places even basic medical care was beyond the provision of the local

authorities. Syenah deployed with the rest of her team to the home she barely remembered, the place that held the bones and spirit of the birth mother she barely remembered, the place where the Dark Mother of her spirit sang to her to come and seek the destiny that must be hers. And there she found it, amid bloodshed and despair, the fear of death and worse than death. Her arrival summoned a widely scattered brood, desperate to shelter beneath her wings — shelter from one of their own who, in rage and desperation, had embraced his soul's darkest hungers and now stalked the mountains and the dark, killing without discrimination, even his own younger kin. His violence rent the hive asunder, shattered the spiritual bonds that held the local broods together, and so they floated painfully disconnected from one another, estranged and vulnerable. Even worse, his depredations had drawn the attention of a hero, a paladin of old, whose attention was now thankfully focused elsewhere, but whose interests could change should she be induced to remain. And so, by day, Syenah stitched together the bodies of those torn by violence and by night hunted the fallen — risen? — Beast whose killing fury twisted both the waking world and the Primordial Dream wherever it tread. Her initial encounters with her feral kinsman were brief things, flurries of contact that ended without serious harm to either, as they felt one another out. Their first true struggle was vicious beyond compare as a result and shook both the Primordial Dream and the real world with its ferocity, spilling out into the streets of the hamlet where they fought and drawing the Hero to them.

Wounded, Syenah retreated to her Lair, pursued by the paladin whose interference had driven away her maddened kin before he could move in for the kill. There they met and for the first time in decades Syenah gazed upon the face of the woman who had given her life, who had never laid down her arms, driven to protect those who had no means of defending themselves, even as her child was driven to heal their wounds and offer them shelter against the storm. Together, they lay a plan to release the feral Beast whose Hunger imperiled so many lives and together they executed it. Syenah summoned the surviving Children back together and began the process of rebuilding the hive, calling together their collective strength and forging it into both a shield and a lure for their enemy, whose desire to dominate was nearly as strong as his desire to destroy. Merivan went forth and harried him wherever he attempted to go to ground. Maddened with rage and the need to slake his Hunger, he turned to the trap-hive and there found himself facing not only the strength of a true Hero but also the combined might of his former brood and the burgeoning power of a newborn Incarnate Ugallu Nemesis.

The nature of Syenah's work has made it impossible to remain in the place where she achieved the pinnacle of her spiritual evolution, where she took upon herself the Legend of the Beast that heals and protects the innocent, but that has not prevented a small but devoted brood of followers from coalescing around her. She attracts those whose own myths resonate in time with her own, who embrace the responsibility to not only teach but also to defend, for the world is dark and full of terrors that even the wisest and most learned among humankind cannot hope to face alone — and some of them



are the Begotten themselves, those who mistake the purpose for which they were made with a license to pursue a path of soulless cruelty. For these individuals, even though they are her own kin, the young Incarnate has no patience and no mercy, and thus it is that her Legend holds a place for the Hero who knows and understands the true heart of the Beast, who can perceive and judge it according to its nature rather than its monstrous face, and those who might otherwise be mortal foes can in safety be mother and daughter, father and son, brothers in arms, and perhaps more.

THE HUNGRY LOVER

Tsukahara Mayumi knew from the start that she was made for better things than the world insisted on giving her. The second of three children born to a working-class family in Sasebo, Mayumi grew up sandwiched firmly between her beautiful, sweet-natured older sister Hitomi (the apple of their mother's eye) and her adorable little brother Ryuichi (by far the favored child of their father), the recipient of her sister's hand-me-down clothes and the few scraps of parental attention not previously allocated to her siblings. Shy and withdrawn in school, where she excelled academically but could never seem to connect properly with other children her own age, and quietly resentful at home, she began having the dreams just after her 13th birthday — dreams of walking home alone in the dark, after a long evening spent at study, and encountering a woman, in the circle of light cast by a streetlamp, a woman wearing a long white kimono streaked in red, with a red scarf wound about the lower half of her face. The woman's voice, when she spoke, was sweetly musical, and she asked but one thing: "Do you think me beautiful?" In the dream, Mayumi, well-raised and well-mannered, always answered yes and for night after night thereafter woke shrieking with the agony of having a face no longer plain, choking on the phantom of her own blood.

It spiraled downward from there. Mayumi, who had always found school a reasonably comforting, if lonely, source of self-worth, became less and less willing to get out of bed in the morning, much less go to class, and even less than that to spend her evenings in cram school that would keep her out long after dark, when she would have to walk home alone. Hitomi, sweet, good-natured Hitomi, did what she could to help, fetching assignments from her sister's teachers and doing her best to help with the lessons, explaining her sister's absence as a nagging illness that refused to let go. Ryuichi brought her his toys and tried to coax her into playing with him. Mayumi slept only when physical exhaustion forced her to do so, staying awake for days at a time in the hope of evading the horror in her dreams, only to encounter it over and over again in slightly different forms. At a loss for what else to do, Mayumi's parents had her institutionalized in the hope that the physicians in the psychiatric ward at the local hospital could restore their daughter to both physical and mental health. Instead, that decision delivered her to her fate.

Initially diagnosed with juvenile-onset paranoid schizophrenia, Mayumi spent her days heavily medicated and her nights heavily sedated, chemically trapped in the outermost edges of the Primordial Dream, nearly insane in truth. It was

a relief when, in the end, her Horror came for her and in its twisted, thwarted desires she found the truest reflection of her own soul. She escaped from the hospital that night, leaving the sadly mutilated not-quite-corpse of the night shift nurse in her bed as a parting gift for the fools who had attempted to "cure" her. Armed with a surgical mask to conceal her face and more than a few pairs of razor-sharp hospital scissors, half-crazed and more than half feral, she stalked both the Primordial Dream and the night-darkened streets of Sasebo for weeks before the Apex and his brood managed to run her to ground and corner her.

For the first time in her life, Mayumi found herself the petted and indulged youngest Namtaru child and likewise found herself enjoying it greatly, thriving in the care of her true kin as she never had in the family of her physical birth. In fact, having attained that intensity of focused devotion, she decided, quite reasonably, to *never lose it again* and began taking action to that effect. Hers was a slow campaign of seduction, conducted across hundreds of nights, in the deepest Chambers of her broodmates' Lairs as well as their minds and hearts, one that finally culminated when she slew the former Apex and took his place. Firmly ensconced at the heart of the hive and firmly in control of the brood, she unleashed a reign of terror among the mortal populace of Nagasaki Prefecture that to this day few have equaled, her Legend spanning the centuries from the faithless, disfigured noblewoman in the bloodstained kimono to the strangely sweet young woman in the surgical mask, her face cut ear to ear, the razor-sharp hospital scissors, one of the first "urban legends" to exist before there was even a term to describe the phenomenon. Her Hunger for Power scarred the collective psyche of her victims so deeply that, to this day, local panics will occasionally and spontaneously arise without the slightest effort on her part, a fact that merely reinforces her power, and her myth has spread throughout Japan and into other nations.

Her cult is one of the most disturbing of them all, consisting as it does almost entirely of predators drawn to the strength of one of the mightiest of their kind and thereafter trapped in the psychic gravity of Mayumi's unappeasable hunger for the love of others. Few who enter her orbit can resist either the force of her personality or the truths that she teaches; even fewer can pull themselves free once captured. Those that do emerge scarred — sometimes literally — but also stronger and wiser than they were before.

THE SHADOWS AT THE EDGE OF THE FIRE

Humans tell stories. It is, in truth, one of the oldest defining elements of humanity, marking the point of separation among the smartest animals. Wherever humans go, wherever they set down roots, they leave the tale-telling markers of their passage: in paint older than the concept of written language layered on cave walls, baked into tablets carved with stylus and cylinder seal, laid out on flat desert plains in lines of carefully arranged stone miles long, gathered around the fire in the middle of the campground or the glow of a computer screen.

The being that now calls itself the Fabulist was one of those who came to warm their hands by the digital fire as

soon as the chance first arose. Rumor among those Begotten who have never encountered the Fabulist suggest that this was a matter of necessity rather than preference, that they were forced by some terrible illness or the consequences of a particularly brutal accident, of birth or otherwise, to seek connection with others through an abstracted, online form. Those who have met them in their Lair can confirm that at least some of this seems to be true, for even in the depths of the Primordial Dream, in their true Eshmaki form, the echo of rage, of an all-consuming fury and bitterness over the betrayal of one's own flesh shapes the world around them in both subtle and terrifying ways. No one, not even the Fabulist's own brood, knows if the injury or accident or illness that twisted them so occurred before or after they awoke to their true nature. Ultimately, the answer to that question does not matter so much as what they chose to do with their existence in the aftermath and how that choice led to their Incarnation.

Humans tell stories. The Fabulist, trapped in the wreckage of its physical body, found release from their torment by telling stories, as well. The first were purely text documents, posted to the profusion of websites devoted to tales of the weird and horrific: stories of creatures that existed at the edges of human physical perception, in the liminal space between sleeping and waking, and the experiments undertaken by an assortment of dubious governmental agencies from all over the world to capture and observe an entity utterly alien to humanity. The stories were well-written, evocative, and with a significantly lower-than-average incidence of grammatical and spelling errors, an immediate hit with audiences wherever they were posted, the subject of countless late-night message-board arguments about whether or not they could possibly be real. Some of those deeply iffy governmental agencies actually exist, after all, and part of the delicious thrill of it all was the lurking possibility that, underneath it all, *this could be true*. Doled out carefully over a period of some months, the stories became so popular among the communities into which they were released that they spawned spin-offs and continuations by other, less skilled authors.

Then came the video and audio: links posted at the end of short text descriptions, leading to a noncommercial server hosting the files themselves. Months, then years' worth of video, of a quality far too high to be the product of enthusiastic amateurs staging a scary story on their cellphones and GoPros and borrowed college film class equipment. It was a slow burn of thoroughly realistic madness unfolding as the research team and their test subjects, all volunteers culled from a selection of inpatient mental health facilities whose pathologies fit a certain extremely specific profile and were otherwise nonresponsive to traditional forms of treatment, went about their experiment inside the closed environment of a government-run medical facility. There were introductory videos for all of the doctors and patients — all of whom were real enough to turn up in web searches of their names, yielding details of friends and

family, birth records, graduating classes, but nothing at all after a certain year. A zip file containing their medical records up to the point of the experiment's beginning, including years' worth of carefully scanned, handwritten documents of their own experiences that closely matched many, if not all, of the details of the earlier stories, all written in different hands, with different levels of skill. Arguments about the veracity and origin of the videos raged even as they were posted, that nothing like that had happened or ever could happen, countered by observations concerning the government's previous habits when it came to medical experimentation on captive populations, not to mention the generally terrible historical treatment of the mentally ill and the current insufficient options when it came to people with intractable conditions. Less socially aware members of the community complained about the general lack of jump-scares but had high praise for the level of special effects work, suggesting the whole thing had to be a superior grade of viral marketing for a forthcoming big-budget film, while others barely acknowledged the effects at all, completely devoured by the slowly ratcheting level of psychological tension.

The video uploads ended, abruptly, just before what everyone realized would be the climax of this particular story, and the entire archive itself was deleted within a month of the final video's appearance. More worryingly, so did all the text stories — not in one archive, but in all of them, any traces expunged completely from the internet, except in the offline archives of those that had downloaded and saved them before the purge. And then those individuals who admitted publically to saving those documents, those videos, began to experience strange disturbances in their lives. Disturbances not at all unlike those detailed in the stories, in the videos. Odd distorted sounds at the edges of their hearing. Strange things halfway visible and halfway not, dancing in the corners of their eyes and at the edges of their vision at odd hours of the day and night. A slowly growing awareness that they were not alone, never alone; waking or sleeping there was always something there just slightly out of sight, out of hearing, out of reach. And slowly, one by one, those individuals began to disappear, consumed by the Horrorspawn nurtured to maturity by the Fabulist in the birthing-chambers of their Lair, shaped and formed by their own story-seed and the specific terrors of those he had marked to be his victims and whose lives and deaths became the foundation of his Legend, a myth spread on digital wings.

Their story, and the stories of the unfortunates they snared, are still in circulation, the entire myth cycle a now self-sustaining vortex of paranoia that feeds the Fabulist's sense of the dramatic and their hunger for the ruin of others' minds and souls. Those who come to learn at their knee find the whole thing almost astonishingly simple, made even simpler by the human propensity to *want* to believe, even if the things they believe in are terrible, are horrific. After all, *anything* can be true on the internet.



THE CULTURE OF LESSONS

Feeding is such an important affair for Beasts, sometimes all consuming, other times the only driving force. Feeding their Horrors is a never-ending cycle — no matter what else she does with herself, sooner or later, a Beast must always satisfy her Hunger. What purpose is there in a life dominated solely by the need to feed? This question haunts the Children, and for many the only answer is the lesson. Lessons form a link between a Beast and humanity, giving her a context in which to exist, and a purpose in life. Not all Beasts buy into the concept of lessons as deeply as others, but all Begotten hear about the concept of lessons shortly after their Devouring, and sometimes before.

WHY DO LESSONS MATTER?

A Beast has the power to take what she wants, to feed when she wants, and to hunt whomever she wants. In that context, lessons seem to have no place, an afterthought to satisfying Hunger. A Beast does not just eat to survive, she is a sapient creature, with many of the same hopes, desires, and flaws as normal people. Even if she doesn't feel the same human impulse of Integrity, she still clings to the things she knows best, the story of the life she lived until she was Devoured. More than that, her Horror

is a creature of myth and legend — *she* is a creature of myth and legend. Everything a Beast does is couched in the narrative of her Legend and her Life. Every Beast has an option: Be the monster and nothing more, allow the Legend to dictate her actions and direct her Life, or be the metaphor the monster creates, directing her Legend with her actions and taking control of the narrative of her Life. Lessons are the way the Beast controls her own narrative. This is the Beast saying, "I'm not an animal. I'm not just a creature. I'm a lesson to be learned."

Even as a Beast's Legend grows, the lessons she presents to the world become a part of that Legend. A Beast who hungers for transgressions may be judgmental to a fault, but when she chooses to use shame to ward people from rash actions based on belief, the judgement seems less harsh — even justified. Many Beasts use the concept of lessons as a way to punish people for their terrible deeds, utilizing their own feeding as a way to improve the lives of the people around them. That isn't the true purpose of the lesson, it is just the framework that the Beast uses. The lesson gives the Beast the ability to create a framework for her Legend and Life, something that puts her own actions into perspective for herself.

Sometimes bad things happen to good people, with no real rhyme or reason. The ultimate show of character is how the person reacts to the situation, if she learns and grows, or just gets angry. A Beast can feed on anyone, but ultimately the measure of her character is the lesson she learns and the way she reacts to her own nightmarish actions.

TEACHING A LESSON

Beasts don't necessarily teach lessons. They tell themselves they are teaching people to fear their own mortality, to not cling desperately to material objects, and that secrets have consequences. A victim may even learn these lessons in the aftermath of the Beast's feeding. The two are not as directly related as the Beast likes to think. A lesson implies the person gains some kind of greater understanding of himself or the world due to the event. Even a long-thought-out, well-executed feeding could result in fear without understanding, while a person may take a lesson from the most senseless and haphazard feeding. People learn lessons from fear — or not — regardless of the Beast's intention for them. The Beast does not require an epiphany to feed, she only needs the shock of fear to sate her Horror's hunger.

Again, the lesson is presenting a context for the Beast. She can introduce a person to the fear of losing his life, but she cannot make him value life. She can try again later, in hopes the lesson sticks eventually, and maybe it will, maybe it won't. If she kills him, then he has no chance of learning the lesson, and that is the Beast's context. It isn't about the person actually learning the lesson she's presenting, it's about telling the story that she's teaching a lesson. If she's teaching a lesson, then she shouldn't kill him, because then he can't learn that lesson. If he does die, then hopefully he serves as a lesson for others.

LESSONS LEARNED

The concept of a lessons is a learned one. Few Beasts come through the other side of a Devouring without any other family around. From the very beginning, other Children begin speaking of the lessons they teach. They tie Hungers to lessons and teach the new Beast to explore the lessons that satisfy her Horror the best. They don't tell each other how the Horror doesn't care about the lesson, how if left unsated it will feed from the nearest and weakest prey available, no lesson learned. Sure, the Children *know* these things are true, but if they talk about it, they make a lie out of their own lessons.

One can imagine the existential crisis that comes from the knowledge that one's own survival depends on causing fear and pain in others, and this pain has no purpose other than base hunger. Pinning a purpose on that pain, creating order within the madness of that fear, puts everything else into perspective. To prevent that kind of emotional breakdown in newly Devoured Beasts, other Children talk about lessons early and often. Even the most nihilistic of Beasts understands the concept of lessons, and understands why they are important to the Children, even if he doesn't consider them necessary for himself.

Some Beasts believe they hear the Dark Mother calling out to them, telling them to fulfill this purpose of teaching lessons to humanity. Others corroborate this idea, saying they too hear the whispers in their sleep. No one needed to tell them about lessons, it is hardwired into their being. The Primordial Dream cries out the fears of humanity, but humans cannot hear the call, do not understand the need for fear. The Beasts hear the call of the Primordial Dream, feel it being rebuffed, and must do something to fix it; this is the source of their Hunger. These

Beasts are not wrong, but they are not exactly right. They feel their Hunger as a driving force, and they apply a context to it immediately, innately, because to not do so would be too terrible to contemplate.

CHECKS AND BALANCES

Lessons are important to all Beasts, even if they don't buy into the idea that lessons provide meaning. Even a Beast who eschews the idea of teaching lessons and completely lets loose while feeding considers the concept of lessons. She is balking against it, maybe even scoffing at it, but she still thinks about it. While the idea of lessons creates a nice narrative frame for Beasts to function in, it serves an additional purpose, just as important. It serves as a shield against Heroes, in more than one way. Every story has two sides, and every argument has a counterargument. If the Children are teaching valuable lessons and reminding humanity that fear has a purpose, then Heroes are homicidal maniacs who don't care about humanity at all. In a way, that's true, regardless of the lesson a Beast teaches. Heroes come to their own narrative decision that Beasts are the embodiment of fear, and the only way to rid humanity of its fear is to kill the monsters that scare them. They do not, or cannot, learn from the fear, and instead strike out against it. A Hero has just enough power to be dangerous, and cannot recognize his own actions as monstrous, even when he risks the very lives he claims to protect to get at his prize.

In another way, following the narrative of lessons makes a Beast more careful, less likely to let her Horror roam unchecked, and less likely to leave a string of bodies in the wake of her feeding — all things that would attract a Hero. Certainly, the lesson doesn't stop Heroes from showing up on the door of a Beast's Lair. No amount of careful feeding and measured action could prevent that. Instead, it allows a Beast to prepare herself for her eventual encounter with a Hero. Her narrative now becomes a primal struggle for ideological dominance. This dominance is essential to the power of the Beast — her tale *must* be ascendant. The Hero now poses the challenges to the Beast's personal narrative. In a way, he becomes the Beast's method of testing herself, proving her dominance, and again taking control over her own Legend. It changes her struggle from one of survival to one of Legend.

FAMILY VALUES

While lessons serve as a great way to frame a narrative, not all Beasts care — or want — to have that kind of higher purpose in their lives. One Begotten accepts the power of the Primordial Dream as a kind of birthright to those who can feel and embrace it. She feels she should be allowed to feed on any fear, satiating her Horror and reveling in the power granted. That is the deal she made: to stop being the underdog, to stop feeling fear, and to instead instill fear in others. She still creates a narrative to define herself, but instead of defining her nature based on her relationship to humans, she defines it based on her relationship to her own power. She more closely follows the story Heroes would tell; she is truly a monster with nearly alien motives and desires. Another simply wants to live without

purpose, afraid of the responsibility that comes from teaching all of humanity a certain lesson. He cannot escape his Hunger, but he can repress it for as long as possible, until it takes control and his Horror runs rampant, or he feeds so deeply as to kill.

While Beasts do not group together in a collective society the way their cousins do, they have formed a culture of how Beasts treat each other and their cousins. The lesson is intricately tied to this cultural collective. Broods keep each other in check, for an entire brood who decides to eschew lessons becomes a threat to not only nearby Beasts, but to any newly Devoured Beasts who may fall into their bad habits.

Beasts are quick to come down hard on unsafe activity, keeping each other in check as best they can, using their sense of family to reinforce the community standard of not going off the deep end. The Begotten do not universally agree on what constitutes unsafe behavior, though. It's hard to measure the collective activity that brings a Hero around. If a Hero's presence does not immediately follow a Begotten's actions, then how unsafe was she being? Heroes are a constant in the Children's life, and no amount of being careful can prevent them from showing up. While certain activities may attract them, judging which activity brought that particular Hero this time is sometimes difficult to gauge. A ravenous Horror wandering about unchecked is a universal problem, but killing during a feeding, or feeding often from the same source are less cut-and-dry issues.

The general sentiment is better safe than sorry. Some Beasts lecture others for feeding too often in small bursts, while others caution against consuming large, elaborate meals, and most caution against killing as a matter of course. Causing big ripples in the Primordial Dream is sometimes an unintended consequence of action — maybe a Beast had issues feeding, her attempts unsatisfying to her Horror until she eventually lost control. Maybe she killed someone by accident, causing a heart failure due to fear or a suicide due to deep depression. Inadvertent consequences are easily forgiven, though they still may come with a lecture. Isolated incidents rarely cause inquiry, or raise the collective community conscience against a Beast. Repeat incidents, or patterns, force the other Begotten into action.

A FRAMEWORK FOR FEEDING

A Beast hangs her lessons on her Hunger. Her Horror has specific desires, and even when nearly starving, she craves specific types of fears. She could just grab the first person she finds and instill the fear of loss of property, loss of control, or his own mortality, but she risks having an unsatisfying meal, leaving her still hungry. She needs to hunt, to plan, and to instill that shock of fear into her victim. Even a quick, less elaborate meal requires these elements, and the more her Horror is already satiated, the harder it is to find a quick meal.

A Beast is best served by letting her Hunger define the kinds of lessons she teaches, but that isn't completely necessary. A Beast who hungers for secrets may decide that her purpose is to teach humanity that keeping secrets can ruin your life, but she may also decide that the real lesson she is teaching is

that nothing is sacred, and life is too short to keep everything to yourself. The truth about lessons is that the content of the lesson matters less than the narrative the Beast follows. She is teaching a lesson and making humanity better for it, and therefore satisfying her Hunger is okay, as long as she continues to serve her purpose. Some Beasts keep the idea of lessons very narrow — she has one purpose, the things she is supposed to make humanity fear, and that drives her. Others take a more open approach, considering any lesson valid, as long as the end result of her feeding is that someone learned something. These Beasts learn to stretch their own definition of lessons to encompass a broader range of actions.

In theory, all of humanity is deaf to their primordial fears, and all are in need of a reminder that these fears are necessary. Some Beasts find it hard to justify instilling the fear of loss of material possessions to a homeless and destitute woman, where a rich woman is clearly guilty of avarice and deserves to learn this lesson. While one may indeed feel the sense of loss more keenly than the other, both are likely to learn something from the encounter.

In game terms, meals require some amount of effort on the part of the Beast. Even meals that require little effort may have a high potential Satiety due to the circumstances of the meal. The Beast's lessons can help her create circumstances that make meals more satisfying, allowing even quick impersonal meals to satisfy a hungry Beast. As the Beast's Satiety increases, her need to create elaborate scenes and circumstances increases, but again, her concept of lessons can help her dictate the kinds of meals she makes. Players should consider how much their Beast character cares about a particular lesson, and then decide how the Beast explores the lesson through her feeding. Maybe she takes satisfaction when more than one person learns a lesson at the same time, exalting in the shock of multiple victims at once. Maybe she doesn't really care what lesson the person learns, as long as she can get the shock her Horror craves. Feeding scenes can be intensely personal both for the Beast and the victim she feeds from.

No matter how carefully a Beast feeds, she is likely to cause some kind of fallout or ripples from her interaction with the victim. In most cases, teaching a lesson is a kind of fallout, but sometimes the victim doesn't learn anything at all, or learns simply that there is something scary out in the world that needs to be taken care of. At the end of a feeding scene, a player may wish to give a narrative of how her character's target reacts to the experience, an epilogue of sorts. The player describes the aftereffects of the lesson, or describes how the lesson creates a problem for the player's character in the future. The Storyteller may then use that person as a problem for the Beast in the future, and the player gains a Beat.

Below are examples of how lessons might play into a game of **Beast** and provide framework for the feeding.

MARKO

Joseph is playing Marko, a Talassii Nemesis who Hungers to punish those who abuse or bully others. Marko doesn't care about particular lessons; he feels that his victims can't help

but take some wisdom away from their experiences with him. Marko's Satiety is 2, and he needs to feed soon or else risk his Horror taking off on its own. At low Satiety, he doesn't need to do much to feed, but he wants the meal to be particularly satisfying so he doesn't have to keep taking small meals. Marko heads to a street with a lot of cafés and foot traffic, looking for people being terrible to each other.

The Storyteller describes a scene with a couple sitting at a table talking in low tones. One man is crying. Joseph decides to listen in on both sides for cues. It turns out the couple is arguing about their finances. As Marko listens, he hears one man berate the other for his spending habits, and to Marko, it goes beyond a tiff — this is emotional abuse and bullying. Looks like a good target.

Marko doesn't have a plan, but instead decides to follow the couple, hoping to find the right moment. He follows them in his car until the bully drops the other off, and Marko follows him home. As the man is getting out of his car, Marco grabs him and throws him in his trunk. He drives him to an abandoned lot, pulls him out of the trunk, and takes his phone. Marko hits the man, and threatens to leave him there if he doesn't call his boyfriend and apologize for the way he acted. The man, terrified, agrees to Marko's demands, though it is clear he is confused. Marko doesn't really care what lesson the man learns from the event, so he simply leaves him there when the call is finished.

Joseph describes an epilogue in which the man calls his boyfriend to pick him up and describes Marko to him. Now both men are on the hunt to find Marko and teach him a lesson. This gives Joseph a Beat.

Once the scene is over, Joseph and the Storyteller figure out the Satiety roll. Marko didn't have a plan, so his base potential is one. He adds one because the hunt required Marko to follow the man for an extended amount of time, and one more for feeding in accordance with his Horror's preferences. Joseph's final Satiety potential is 3, and he rolls one success, bringing Marko's Satiety to 3. Another snack rather than a truly satisfying meal. Marko decides that he really needs a plan, and starts thinking that maybe if he focuses on teaching his victim something, he might get more out of the experience, too.

KAORI

Hana's character, Kaori, is a Makara Whisper. Kaori believes her Hunger revolves around teaching others the value of honor and integrity, and holds herself to a high standard when it comes to teaching her lessons. She prefers to feed before she reaches low Satiety, always keeping her Horror in check. Kaori's Satiety is 4, and she needs to plan a meal to satisfy her Horror. Her Hunger specifically calls for exposing conspiracies, finding the truths people hide from their own friends and families out of some strange sense of loyalty. She has a lead on a shell company that serves as a front for an illegal arms dealer.

Hana has Kaori hack the company's files and gain home addresses and phone numbers for each of the organization's highest members. She then downloads emails, photographs, and bank transactions exposing all the people involved in the illegal activity. She takes these files and carries them personally

to each home. When she gets there, she poses as a member of the CIA, and asks the spouse, or family members, if they are aware of the illegal activity. She shows them the files and asks pointed questions about how much they know about his activities — how much can they really trust him? She waits with them until he gets home, enjoying the revelation when he realizes his family now knows his worst secrets. She leaves and goes on to the next, spending enough time with each family to prove they cannot trust the person they thought they knew. She has taught each of them the lesson of trusting one another, for it they can't trust family, who can they trust?

Hana describes an epilogue of one of Kaori's victims. Janet is the company's accountant. Her husband left her when he found out she was dealing in illegal arms. Devastated and regretful, she quits the company and sends all of their actual financial reports anonymously to the police. The Storyteller asks Hana if she wants Janet to become a problem later, but Hana feels that Kaori already has enough on her plate (she's got a Hero looking for her, and her broodmate Marko going around randomly throwing people in trunks isn't helping matters), so she declines the Beat.

At the end of the chapter, the Storyteller tells Hana she has 6 Satiety potential. She has 3 base, since she had a plan, and he gives her one for being in line with her Horror's preferences and another two for multiple meals in the same scene. Hana points out that Kaori has a long-term Aspiration related to taking down a corrupt corporation; this feeding doesn't fulfill it (since the corporation will survive this scandal), but it's enough to add one more to the Satiety potential, for a total of 7. She rolls four successes, bringing her Satiety to 8.

LAWRENCE

Andre plays Lawrence, an Inguma Predator who particularly enjoy feeding on sentiment. Lawrence reserves his lessons for people who believe they are untouchable due to money or power. His lessons tend toward showing people that money can't buy peace of mind, redemption, or love. Lawrence's Satiety is 6, a moderate level, and he doesn't really need to feed, but earlier in the chapter, the Storyteller presented Andre with an opportunity to set up an elaborate lesson targeting a local millionaire, Jason Park. Park has had money all his life, and believes money solves all problems. He has a penchant for violence and tends to take out his frustrations on sex workers, and then pays a team of lawyers to keep him safe from repercussions. If he goes too far and accidentally kills someone — which has happened at least once — the lawyers step in and make it all go away. Otherwise, he simply pays his victims outrageous settlements to keep them quiet.

Lawrence has been insinuating himself into Park's staff, starting out as a second-string driver for the family, now working as a door attendant. He remains out of contact with Jason, but started up friendly relations with the rest of the family members.

He has worked slowly over the course of the chapter to poison each of Jason's family members against him — seducing his wife and convincing the children their father resents them. He heightens the children's fears that their father doesn't like

them through the use of his Nightmares, making them feel alone and isolated. He is there for the wife when Jason isn't and feeds her suspicions that he is cheating on her (Lawrence could of course provide concrete proof, but he would rather prolong the meal). Lawrence has also been tormenting Jason, preventing him from sleeping and driving him to the verge of a nervous breakdown. All the while, Lawrence is a relative stranger to Jason, the man barely even registering him as an employee.

Andre is now ready to execute the final piece of Lawrence's plan, turning Jason's family away from him completely and showing him what exactly his money can and can't do. Lawrence goes to the Park estate and stands quietly in the hallway as Park and his wife argue, heightening his fears and causing him to lash out at his family, spending Satiety on his You Will Never Rest Nightmare (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 138) to ensure Jason is afraid of his own family. The tension breaks between them, and as the children look on, Jason strikes his wife, knocking her to the floor. Shocked and appalled, the entire family leaves, leaving Jason broken and alone. Lawrence fixes Jason a drink and asks him, "Do you think you can buy them back?" before leaving him to suffer alone.

The Storyteller asks Andre for an epilogue for Jason, and Andre says he pictures Jason downing a handful of pills with his drink, unable to face the guilt of what he's done. That's bleak, but of course, Jason is a murderer, and those facts might very well die with Jason, so Andre doesn't ask for a Beat. The Storyteller tells Andre to go ahead and take one anyway — Lawrence doesn't know it, but one of Jason's children is becoming a Hero, and so the Inguma's dealings with the Park family aren't over yet.

At the end of the scene, Andre and the Storyteller determine Lawrence's Satiety potential. His base potential is 5, as the feeding took several sessions to set up. They add one for the point of Satiety Lawrence spent, one for fitting with the Beast's preference, and one for being a unique example of the feeding. Andre asks if, since Park died, that +4 bonus applies, and the Storyteller agrees. The final Satiety potential is 12, and Andre rolls an impressive six successes, bringing Lawrence's Satiety from 5 (after spending one in the scene) to 10. Since he rolled an exceptional success, however, Andre can choose to keep Lawrence's Satiety at 9 (Gorged rather than Slumbering). Andre ponders this. Obviously going to 10 presents a host of complications, but then again, it's a story hook, and it seems appropriate after all the work Lawrence put in.

CULTS AND CULTISTS

Monsters have minions. What's a giant in his keep without his hordes? Begotten are happy to live up to this stereotype, and it takes little effort to employ or press-gang people into service. Not every Beast is so flippant, though. Sometimes it's better to have an ally than a meat shield. Beasts form cults when they want human relationships that run deeper than monster versus prey. Many are genuine spiritual movements, meant to

teach lessons or build up Legends for Inheritance. Others are just practical extensions of longstanding feeding habits, but they're never formed without care. Beasts open their souls to their cultists, and that intimacy grants great power.

But openness gets so messy. Begotten trick themselves into thinking their cultists are family, and that they can ask their followers to behave in ways that Beasts wouldn't blink at, yet fracture mortal souls. Handling a cult is delicate, but given enough push, it's not wont to break. It pushes back.

THE CULT

Cults help Beasts feed. Whatever else they do, they aid the hunt. Beasts like to dress that up with pageantry, but the most sincere monster still concedes that the feast is paramount. Cults that ignore this truth don't last long, and neither do their Beasts. Then again, if it were just about hurrying the next meal, Beasts wouldn't bother with all the effort. Ritualism gives feeding purpose. It refines Hunger into something more sophisticated than a monster's appetite.

Often, it's about touchstones. Beasts grow alienated from humanity at the top of the food chain, and cults offer a closer connection. This isn't without mythical precedent. Long ago, goblins called *domovoi* enjoyed such relationships with the Russian people. Each home was a cult in miniature, with families offering gifts to the *domovoi* in exchange for chores and good luck. Without these creatures, households would fall into irreversible decline. However, if Beasts don't care about mutuality, then cults can at least provide safety. The Cyclopes of ancient Greece were patrons to smiths, and used cult-like guilds to amass wealth and arms to war on Heroes. Their disciples wore eyepatches as emblems (and prudent tools) of their worship.

To create a true Primordial cult, the Beast must gather special supplicants. The Begotten starves herself, letting her Horror sniff out people who skim the Primordial Dream, yet who can't dive in as Beasts, or get lost in Heroism. When the Horror finds them, it bestows a sign of the Beast's favor, summoning them to her cause. Once the Beast forms her circle, she can recruit more mundanely; interacting with Primordial cults awakens a gnawing need for purpose in some people. Indeed, a Beast's former victims might build her cult spontaneously, whether she likes it or not.

Beasts have many reasons to build their cults. While none are mutually exclusive, neither are their vulnerabilities:

Fronts: Even Beasts with innocuous tastes tend to run afoul of the law. Begotten use cults to cover up their feeding, whether by hiding in the system with tax forms and mission statements, or creating false leads with meaningless rites. If a Beast manages this kind of cult well, it can become profitable in its own right, but Begotten have to be careful not to rely too much on human resources. Some Heroes have no qualms about liquidating people power.

Research & Recovery Inc. falls in a vector between secret society and transnational detective agency. In addition to keeping the Monitor's Hunger semi-legal, his agents help his

supernatural clients by investigating weird phenomena and retrieving stolen relics. The Monitor uses these investigations to spread fear of surveillance among would-be occultists, warning off those who aren't prepared to face the shadows.

Lessons: One of the uncomfortable truths of the Begotten is that their lessons are cultural, not inherent. Better, then, to solidify their teachings with more humane teachers. These cults give context to their Beasts' victims, even recruiting prey who take the lesson well. Heroes find this difficult to deal with, as it puts lie to the idea that the Children are purely destructive. Smart Heroes undercut lessons with their own helpers. Daring ones infiltrate, and sow doubt directly.

The Lodge of the Red Owl is dedicated to reverence and mastery of the hunt. The Final Peace serves as the de facto totem of an Iron Master pack, and teaches her human followers how to hunt with a werewolf's savage efficiency and cunning. Her flock's greatest calling is to pass these methods on to fellow hunters, even if that means making them prey first.

Mysteries: Beasts often build their faiths around occult study, pressing their cults to immerse themselves in all things weird. Their followers research places that cause human breaking points (scouting Chambers to expand Lairs), or dive into the maw of the strange just to see what happens. That said, Heroes are perfectly willing to destroy rare or unique mysteries to deny Begotten such treasures. Some Beast slayers claim them as their own, wrapping them into their own Legends and killing cultists who dare to share in them.

History is a living, breathing thing, and the Classics Society is going to kill it. The Curator believes the past is plague, not prologue, and the further back humans go, the more likely they are to catch something they should've forgotten. Cursed relics, malicious entities, pieces of the Dark Mother herself... For each artifact they destroy, the Society hopes to stem the march of time.

Worship: Some Beasts just want to be adored. Many play god to stroke their egos, but farseeing cult leaders use religion to pave the road to Inheritance. This type of cult has the most potential for abuse, but they aren't *always* negative relationships, even led by vain Beasts. Churches offer community, and if nothing else, the Children know how to care for their own. However, these cults are also the most vulnerable to Heroes. Faith is a simple thing to break when a mortal bleeds a god.

WHAT IS A CULT?

Everything from New-Age spiritualism to political movements can qualify as cults by some standards. Pop culture favors false religions with Svengali gurus, but many real-life cults are egalitarian, or secular. While a simple definition is elusive, many researchers distinguish between "destructive cults" and benign ones, but even that has critics. Primordial cults are a slightly more specific phenomenon, but they mostly run the same gamut human ones do.

Befriend Your Fears! implore the bus-shelter ads. The F.R.I.E.N.D. Method is the latest fad therapy taking the city by storm. The "Friends" and their radical exposure technique have hundreds of patients and, with their impending book tour, that number's set to explode. Fans will finally get a chance to meet the genius behind the program, and learn his ultimate technique: You can't really befriend fear — but there's power in serving it.

THE HUNGERS

Each of the Hungers shapes a cult's goals and followers in particular ways:

Collector cultists are sacred thieves, exalting their Beasts with ill-gotten offerings. These cults have karmic ideas about who should own what, robbing from the rich to give to themselves, and saying a prayer to gods like Loki for good measure. Even legitimately spiritual Collector cults end up resembling organized crime. It's an effective model to feed the Hunger for the Hoard, and a decent ground game can save a lot of trouble if authorities come snooping over jewel heists. Collectors foster plausible deniability with their cults; their followers might not even know they worship a single Beast. These cults also provide agents to feel out potential acquisitions, without revealing Collectors to their enemies.

Enabler cults are dens of sin and excess, at least on the surface. These cults present a front of hedonism to lure victims in, but they often have a high degree of discipline. That doesn't mean they never cut loose, but they don't let outsiders get the better of them for it. Depending on how ambitious they are, Enablers can use their cults to create closed loops of temptation and transgression. They press their followers to sin against their own religion, either gaining Satiety when followers fail to live up to arbitrary standards, or building up servants with iron resolve.

Nemesis cults hide in plain sight, feeding their masters just by doing their jobs. They worm their way into police departments, gangs, religions, revolutions, and any other groups with authority over others. They legitimize their punishments with formal power, and worship their Beasts as living gods of retribution. Nemeses teach their followers that snitching is a kind of oblation, or that they should bring reprobates to confess before the Beast so he can correct them.

Predators have bloody cults built around instinct and strength. The Beast shows her followers how to give in to primal desire, then teaches them how to channel it. Hunt clubs and survivalist cliques are common, and while some fall into the "most dangerous game" cliché, Predators will use animal hunts to train their disciples, and to instill spiritual purity. Because of their violent Hunger, Predator cults are often front groups, cultivating a public veneer of normality. To expand, they test recruits with incremental challenges, using a frog in boiling water style of initiation: They escalate the violence of a recruit's trials until he's too deep to back out...or turn him over as prey if he balks.

Ravager cults are underground fighting rings and nihilist think tanks who take their philosophies to the utmost extreme. The Beast teaches her followers to embrace entropy rather than fear it, and molds them into living embodiments of *memento*

mori. Unlike Collectors and Predators, Ravagers bask in their bad press, and use cults to promote their exploits, spreading fear and attracting new followers. The cult builds up the Beast's Legend with their own wanton destruction, so much so that locals start blaming them for things they didn't do. So much the better. Becoming a fixture of urban myth means that if a Nemesis uses the cult for something big, she can still hide in the noise of rumor and hearsay.

The **Tyrant** sits atop a pyramid, exalted by bishops, priests, and laymen. Her followers are her tentacles, spreading her influence and recording her deeds in sacred texts. The Tyrants are the most likely Beasts to build cults, but, despite appearances, they can't directly feed off them. Having a cult at all means the Beast has reached an apex of sorts. Instead, Tyrant religions practice hard-sell conversions, proselytizing and brainwashing to recruit new members (particularly skeptics, who provide extra sweet Satiety). Tyrant cultists will also pillage members of other religions, or competing Primordial cults. Not only does this sate the Beast, it means his cult is self-perpetuating, constantly expanding to feed his Hunger.

Whispers favor secret societies, from Greco-Roman mysteries to sacred pyramid schemes. These cults usually glom on to some supernatural puzzle, but Whispers are more than capable of producing their own mysteries for supplicants. Naturally, Whispers use their cults as spy networks, but espionage is like breathing to the Hunger for Secrets. The mystery-religion conceit gives Whispers a carrot to encourage their followers. Cultists who think gnosis can be earned with high-grade intel make driven servants, and they come at a discount, as they don't require payment the way secular spies do.

THE CULTIST

It starts with a dream.

Most nights, her dreams are echoes — broken symbols and half words. At times she sees monsters, and she knows enough to flee, just not the reason why. But tonight, in this dream, and with this monster, she doesn't need to run. The creature whispers in her ear. It scrawls in the sand with its claws. Maybe it dances. Whatever it does, the message is clear: The dreamer is chosen.

Or maybe it isn't a dream. One day, she meets a serpent in a man's skin, and he drowns her in his honey eyes. When she can breathe again, she doesn't seek revenge. She learns, and understands her life in a way she never thought she could. She meets others with the same story, students of the same serpent in the same skin. They realize they want to be part of something. They want to *start* something.

The cult's inner circle is made up of dreamers who glimpse the Primordial Dream. Portent and synchronicity follow in their wakes, but their lodestars are aimless. They aren't quite Heroes, and they don't become Beasts, but the Dark Dream calls them nonetheless, and they spend their lives in search of a meaning that never really comes. Once, Heroes took such people as companions (Herakles to Iolaus, Moses to Aaron), but modern Beast slayers have largely abdicated their lessons, and the Children were left to pick up the pieces. In cults, these dreamers find the destiny they've always lacked, albeit in a form they didn't expect. In exchange for a guiding light, cultists

PLAYING THE CULT

The cast of your chronicle might consist of a Beast and her favored cultists, or even cultists alone. Do they fanatically sate their mistress's Hunger? Are they chafing under increasingly inhuman desires? Or are they searching out a traitor in their midst? If mechanics are needed, cultists can take the Mystery Cult Initiation Merit (**Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 51).

keep Begotten fed. Their vague destinies take focus in a Beast's Hunger, whether they know her for what she is, or believe that fate calls them to serve a higher purpose.

THE HERALD

The Beast is the soul of the cult, but she's still a living nightmare. The cult's purpose needs a human hand, and a voice that speaks for the Horror with more nuance than a roar. For this, the Dark Mother taught her Children to send forth Heralds.

Heralds are cultists gifted with Primordial power, anchors of the cult who straddle the Dream and the flesh. Drawn from the cult's initial followers, the Herald has the humane touch Begotten lack, and can channel the Horror's mastery over fear into direction instead of terror. With the Beast's Legend as her guide, she puts Hunger in terms even mortals can understand.

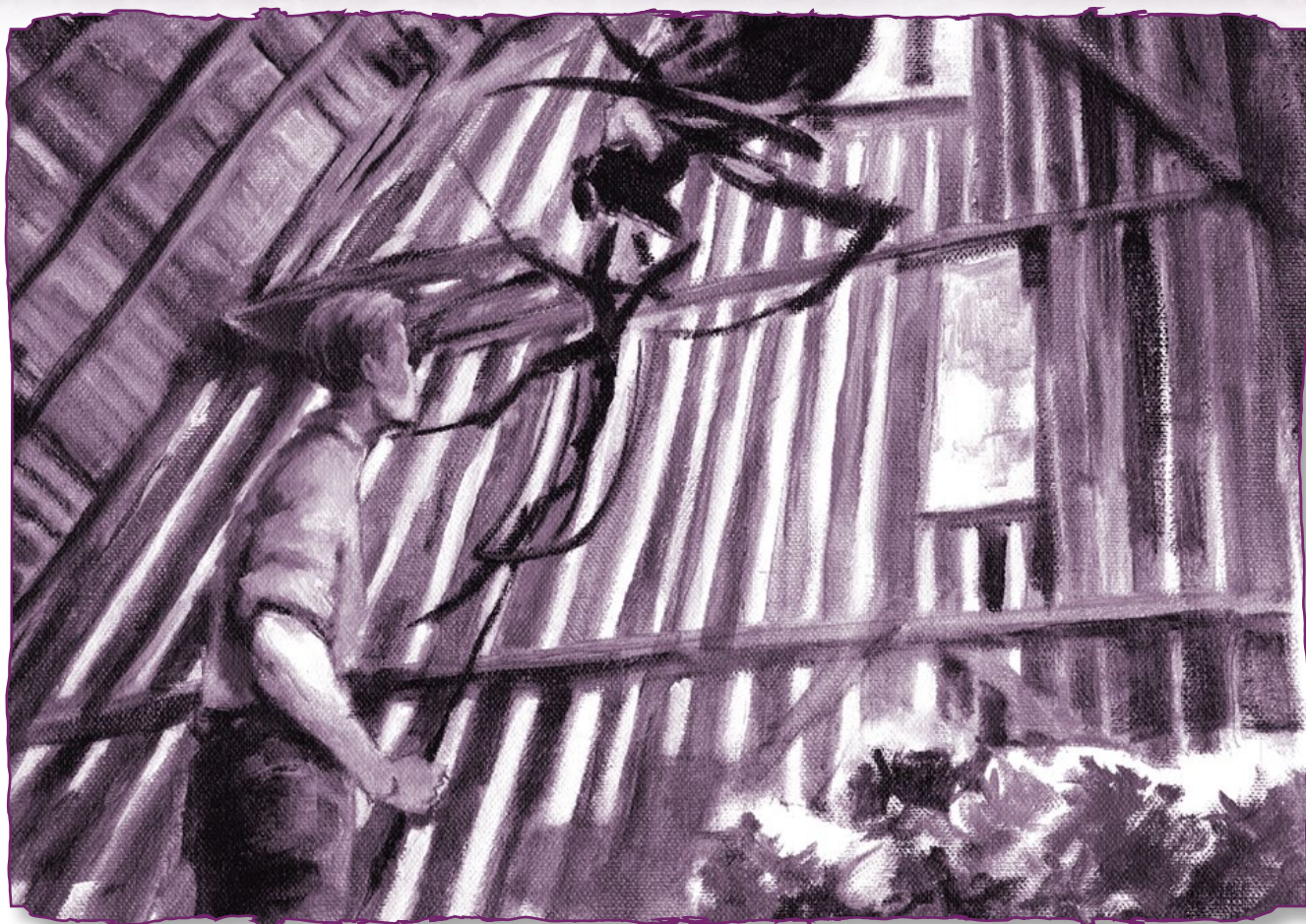
In the nebulous myths of the Begotten, Beasts consider Gilgamesh to be the first Herald, and perhaps the greatest. His dreams of Enkidu were portents of great friendship, and the creature eventually reformed the king from tyranny. Heroes tend to think of Gilgamesh as one of their own, but then they've always had an odd fascination with Heralds, possibly recalling their old relationship with dreamers. Figures like Ariadne, Marya Morevna, Sita, and other so-called damsels in distress are sometimes thought of as Heralds, whose stories were either misinterpreted, or who really did betray their Beasts.

System: To empower a Herald, the Beast holds a gruesome rite in the Heart of his Lair. Mechanically, he spends a point of Satiety and inflicts a point of lethal damage on the cultist. This damage can take any form appropriate to the cult's rituals (scarification, ecstatic dancing, amputation) as long as the subject exposes her blood to the Primordial Dream. The new Herald suffers a breaking point as her body takes on a touch of the Horror, and her soul shifts to house the Beast's Legend.

THE BREAKING-POINT

Spreading fear to feed Beasts can wear thin on cultists. Some abandon their purpose, content to remain restless but innocent. The Beast doesn't have to like it, but she should respect it. An unhappy cult will look for new directions. It fractures as members grow disillusioned with the purpose they so desperately craved, seeing all the awful things they've done in the name of a monster's id.

Nor are Heralds immune to doubt. Tales of the monster's double-crossing right hand aren't always Heroic pro-



paganda. A Herald pushed to the brink sees the creature she's become and recoils, and her doubts flow into a deep, dark resentment.

Smart Beasts see dissent in the ranks and ease off, or forsake cults altogether. Begotten aren't always equipped to guide people the way the ancient Heroes did. Arrogant Beasts take a hard line. They pressure their cults to give in to the Primordial Dream, to bathe in its blood...but that's when the search for purpose becomes a quest.

Systems: The cult has a collective and maximum Integrity of 5. When appropriate, the Storyteller can roll for breaking points, using the Beast's Resolve + Composure. The Beast or Herald can spend Experiences to regain lost dots. On a dramatic failure, the Beast takes a Beat, and loses a purchased Primordial Cult benefit (p. 100) as one of her cultists becomes a Hero. If she has no benefits, the cult collapses. Integrity 0 cults dramatically fail all breaking points.

If a Herald dramatically fails a breaking point, he becomes a Hero, gaining his own Legend but retaining all other Herald benefits (see below). The Beast takes a Beat and loses half her purchased Primordial Cult benefits, rounded down. The new Hero gains equivalent dots in Allies, Contacts, and/or Resources. The Beast has no innate awareness of this change unless the new Hero strikes. She must then designate a new Herald within (10 - Lair dots) days, or the cult will disband. This also applies if the Herald quits, or dies.

The Beast's player can choose to dramatically fail these breaking points for an additional Beat. In either case, the Storyteller chooses lost benefits, but Sanctity of Merits applies.

HERALD CHARACTERS

Heralds fill the narrative role of the monster's trusted lieutenant (or secret betrayer), but some players might want to take on their duties in mixed Beast/cultist chronicles. Build a Herald using the rules for human characters starting on p. 24 of the **Chronicles of Darkness Rulebook**, with the following additions:

- Heralds gain Unseen Sense: Primordial Dream for free, or a permutation relating to their Beasts' Family Ties.
- Heralds replace Vice and Virtue with Legend and Life, but a character's Legend must be the same as her Beast's. A Herald can also indulge her Beast's Hunger like a Vice.
- Heralds are immune to their Beasts' Minor Lair Traits, and can gain immunity to Major Traits with one-dot Merits (one dot per Trait).
- Herald characters start play with 10 Merit dots, and must purchase a single Advanced Merit. Do not ignore prerequisites. Alternatively, they can take a Kinship Merit (pp. 102-103), using their Beasts' traits where needed, and assuming appropriate Family Ties. Heralds can spend Experiences for additional Advanced Merits, as well as Epic ones.

ON HERALDS – MR. ONAKA, NAMTARU TYRANT

You think Heroes are deluded? Look at what we do to these poor bastards. We mutilate them and call it a blessing. We even believe it. We twist them into half-things and bid them partake of a feast some call obscenity. Worse, we tell them they can have a speck of our power, and that one day they could be just like us. Trickle-down economics. What narcissism! And we wonder why they turn on us.

Don't use them? You're not paying attention. One does not cast off a tool because it may break. But one must be honest with oneself. And one's tools.

- Heralds gain a subtle physical quirk based around their initial Advanced Merits and their Beasts' Horrors: A Herald with Advanced Striking Looks might have a complexion that hints at her Collector's silver scales. If she gains an Epic Merit, this becomes a Persistent Condition.

A Herald cannot be Devoured unless the Beast undergoes Inheritance, in which case the Devouring is automatic. She joins his Family, but takes her own Legend and Hunger.

To sever the link with the Horror, a Herald sheds a dot of Integrity, losing all supernatural qualities. Sanctity of Merits applies. Heroic Heralds cannot break this link.

If a player's Herald character dramatically fails a breaking point, she doesn't turn into a Hero unless the player consents, in which case she becomes a Storyteller character. Otherwise, she takes the Paranoid Condition, with her Beast as the object of her fixation.

THE DARK MOTHER

Not every dream of darkness is a nightmare, and not every smothering hold is something to escape.

It's as old as time — the warm, wet comfort of the womb, the heartbeat of something that is biologically programmed to care for you. You look for little fragments of it for the rest of your life, wrapped up in blankets, ear pressed to a loved one's chest.

Children sometimes describe the feeling of being unborn. They talk about redness, criss-crossing veins, the thud of something far away. They shouldn't remember any of this; the human brain isn't built to retain memories until well after birth. They're usually inventing a memory based on things they've learned about where babies come from, but what about the ones who are too young, even for that?

Chances are, they're remembering something deeper. Something primal. Something stitched into the fabric of their consciousness that they can barely comprehend.

They're remembering the Dark Mother.

MOTHER KNOWS BEST

Nearly every culture has some concept of a cosmic Mother, from Nut, who gave birth to the ancient Egyptian sun every morning and spread her starred body out to make the sky, to Mary, who carried a piece of God in her body. This Mother has been interpreted infinite ways, viewed through every religion and philosophy, but Her shape stays roughly the same. She is the progenitor of all life, the nurturer of the universe — and just because She brought you into this world doesn't mean She won't take you back out of it.

Though this mythological Mother often takes a human form, She is, fundamentally, an idea, and She echoes in every corner of the globe. You can feel Her influence wherever you go.

Some feel Her more directly than others.

One of the most profound parts of becoming a Beast is realizing that this Mother, this iconic symbol of life and death — She's *your* Mother. You may have been born human, but before anything else, you were born to Her. She watches over you, now and forever. Just like the universe She encompasses, Her love for you is boundless.

It's not like the love you feel for your parents, or your friends, or even your children. You can't love the way the Dark Mother loves, because you're human. You're caught in the frame of reference that is your birthright, limited to chronological time, a finite lifespan, only so much capacity for memory and perception.

The Dark Mother exists in every inch of your world. She was watching when the planet you live on coalesced from rocks and dust. She's buried in the atoms that make up your body. From every point in time and space, She sees you, and She protects, nurtures, holds. Nothing you do escapes Her notice, and She feels each of your emotions as Her own, knows your thoughts before they ever cross your mind. When She helps you, She is raising you up, shaping you into the child She knows you can be. When She punishes you, She is teaching you strength, discipline, casting you out of Her arms so you can learn to walk on your own.

She loves you the way an ocean hits the horizon. You can feel it all around you, get dizzy from the way it stretches out as far as you can see.

Beasts debate whether their Mother would embrace or devour them if She ever came to them in the flesh. But for all their special knowledge of Her, they still fail to wonder if, to the Dark Mother, embracing and devouring might be the same thing.

DREAMS BEFORE BIRTH

Most Beasts believe that the Dark Mother is tied to the Primordial Dream; it's the details that get murky. Some insist She drew the Dream into existence to exert Her influence and give Her Children a home, while others believe She is a manifestation of the Dream itself, and that moving through the Dream is like moving through Her body. A few wonder if their Mother and the Dream are both children of some other force, perhaps one they believed in before they were Devoured. It's impossible

to know without asking, and if the Dark Mother has given any of Her Children an answer, they haven't passed it along.

In the absence of any clear information, Beasts have plenty of room to imagine a form for their Mother that suits their understanding of the world. Though there's plenty of variation within Families, Beasts of a similar disposition tend to see their Mother through a similar lens — and more importantly, they hear Her voice with similar ears.

ANAKIM

The Giants cannot imagine their Mother without imagining impossible strength. The First Woman towers over the world, birthing it as She destroys it, leaving Her mightiest Children in Her wake to continue Her work. Anakim picture their Mother as a physical being, too vast to comprehend but present all the same, shaping reality with Her hands. They tend to think of the Primordial Dream as a dimension of Her tangible form, and many Anakim believe that their links to their Horrors, and their power to shape the Dream, are the result of a physical connection with the Dark Mother.

Anakim hear their Mother with their bodies. Their muscles flex and sing with Her voice, and no matter what She tells them, they're driven to action. Once She gives Giants a task, they are an unstoppable force, confident in Her wisdom. Anakim may be the brashest family of Beasts, but they are among the most loyal to their Mother. She knows this, and takes pride in their trust.

ESHMAKI

The Eshmaki believe their Mother birthed them in the dark, and that She can still be found there by those who know where to look. Their Mother is too great to be limited by the physical. She exists in the space between objects, where light cannot reach. She Who Lives in Her Shadow taught Her Children that all darkness is welcoming, because all darkness is the shadow She casts as She blankets the world, heavy and warm, protecting them. When they sleep in the darkness, they're sleeping in their Mother's arms, and there's nowhere safer in the world.

The Dark Mother speaks to Her Lurkers in whispers, soft hums at the very edge of hearing. Eshmaki are measured and patient when spoken to, always sure that they understand their Mother's message to them as best they can before they act. More than any other family, they value their quiet moments with Her, and many see communion as the closest thing a Beast can have to a spiritual experience.

INGUMA

The Mother's youngest Children know that She is just as much of a stranger as they are, and that Her wisdom comes from viewing the world through a pane of glass. She is able to love and guide because She is something separate, something greater. The Overseer moves Her pawns with care; She is wise enough to know the needs of each of Her children, and kind enough to meet them whenever She can. If an Inguma suffers, it is only because their Mother had no choice but to allow it.

Inguma hear the Dark Mother in the voices of others. She has no language of her own, but She can bend language in Her Children's minds and build epiphanies. Sometimes, She shapes the words of their companions — sometimes, their enemies. She might call Her Outsider to look at a sign, or open a book, and use those words to guide them. She gives Inguma the gift of Her objectivity, love through the lens of logic, and they put their faith in Her plans.

MAKARA

The Queen of the Deep is nothing short of the foundation of the world. Makara believe that their Mother's ocean stretches beneath all of her creation, cradling the world in Her arms and holding it safe to Her breast. She built existence from the ground up, and stays beneath it, carrying it on Her back. The deep pressure of water is Her embrace, and the Leviathans are born to seek it out. They take comfort in the knowledge that even if they can't see their Mother, She is with them, lifting them up. She gives all of Her Children unfailing support, and if they fall, She will always catch them and pull them back to the surface.

The Mother speaks to Makara in ebbs and flows. Her wisdom pools at the base of a Makara's spine and crawls through their veins until they're filled to the brim with Her love and certainty. She tends to speak to them in general impressions that they can mold to their specific circumstance; She trusts their adaptability and their own wisdom.

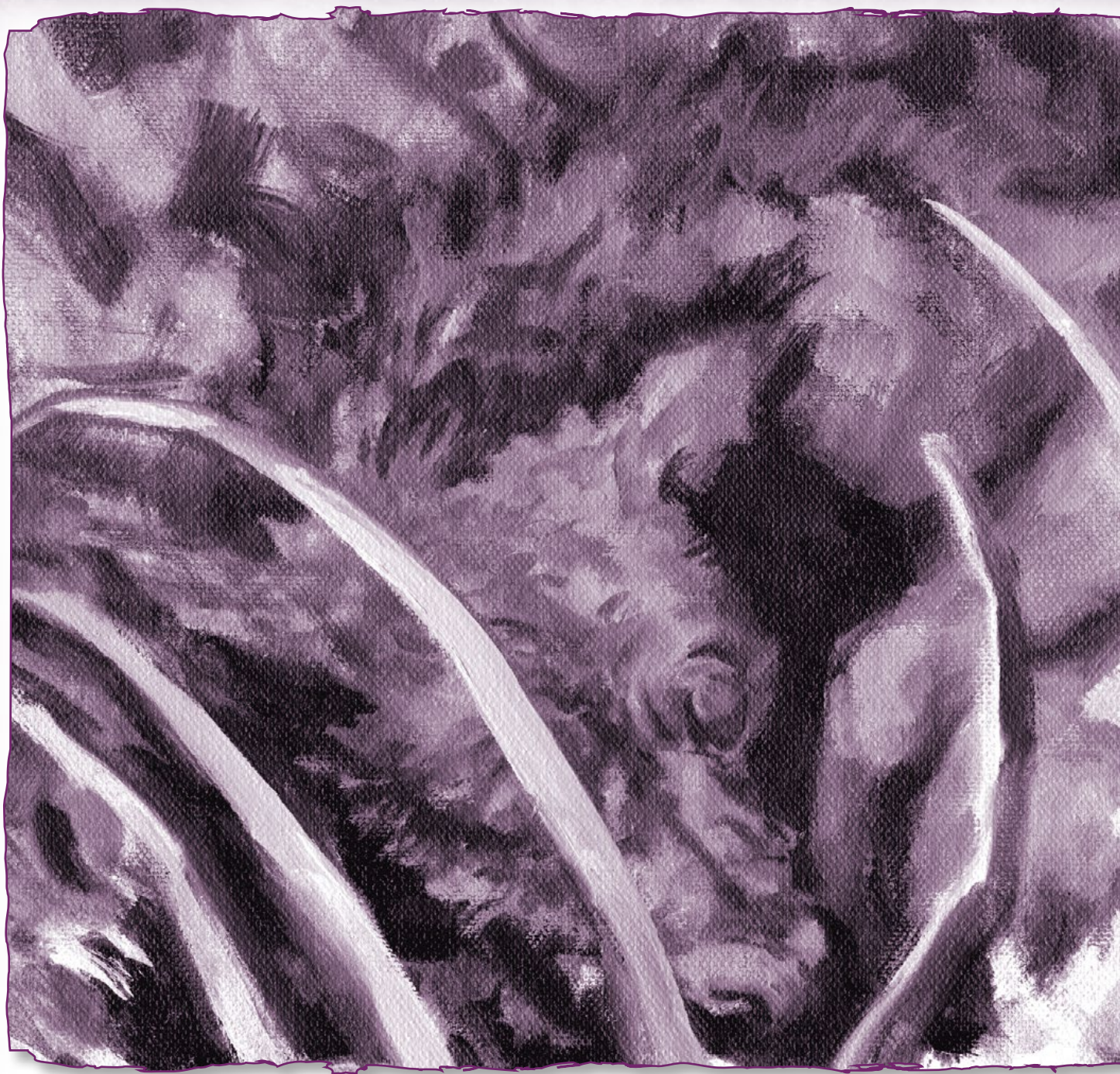
NAMTARU

Namtaru know that the Mother of Monsters is radiant beyond the comprehension of any of Her Children. She whelped Her Gorgons and nursed them to their full strength, and that act of creation alone held more beauty than any of the works that came after it. Nature is not elegant, and the world is not painted with a forgiving brush — such a messy, chaotic, perfect system could only be born of their hideous, magnificent Mother. They set no store in depictions of Her as a delicate goddess, unable to imagine anything other than heaving flesh, swinging jowls, the all-encompassing warmth and safety of a mother's breast.

The Gorgons hear their Mother in shocks of gut feeling, visceral urges without any immediate source. The Dark Mother guides them on instinct, rarely stopping to appeal to their reason. If their Mother thinks a course of action is best, it must be; She is the source of all life, and She alone knows what course it will take.

TALASSII

The Talassii see no need to worry about being consumed by the Dark Mother — they and the rest of the world are already within Her. When the World-Bearer first looked upon Her Children, She was so consumed with perfect love that She took them back into Her body, the best place She knew to watch over them and keep them safe. She holds Her Captors in the cage of Her ribs, next to Her beating heart, coiled together with Her innards. The Material world, Primordial Dream, and every other plane of existence are contained in Her, and they pulse with Her breath. But Her captivity is not cruel, and Talassii know the difference between a prison and a hearth.



The Mother speaks to the Captors through their bones. She carries their bodies for them, propelling them forward, holding them back. They feel Her hands on them and follow where She guides them; they know that wherever She leads them will still be within Her, always somewhere She can protect them.

UGALLU

Mama Crow is the sky, the heavens, everything above, enveloping the world in Her endless wings. Ugallu believe the Dark Mother has risen to the highest peak of creation and watches Her Children from impossible heights, but Her distance does not detach Her — Her perch lets Her see any threat, no mat-

ter how distant, and She guides her Raptors accordingly. She circles endlessly, stirring the eddies of existence, an ever-shifting presence at the borders of reality. The Mother is everywhere, and Her Children need only look upward to remember that they are not alone.

The Dark Mother gives Her Raptors knowledge. They make connections, have new ideas, even realize things they would have no way of knowing without their Mother's intercession. Ugallu learn quickly that they should trust these bursts of insight, because they come from the source of all wisdom, and they're given in good faith and love.



of the Dark Mother, too, before they branched away and lost touch with Her. Though Beasts are perfectly happy to cooperate with their brethren, there will always be a rift of belief. Once you feel the presence of the Dark Mother, it's often difficult to comprehend that you're one of the only ones who can.

GUIDANCE

It's impossible to predict when the Dark Mother will have something to say to you, much less whether or not the things She says will have any clear relevance to your concerns. The Beasts who put the most faith in their Mother believe that She always knows when they need her — even when they *think* they need Her, if they don't feel her touch, they accept Her absence as gentle encouragement to stand on their own. Even those who wish they could reach out understand that their Mother has a wisdom beyond their comprehension, and that even when the silence feels oppressive, they are never alone.

The Dark Mother comes to the aid of Her Children when She sees them suffering. She rarely speaks in words; She gives feelings, bursts of knowledge and purpose. A Beast who is wounded will feel the warmth of his Mother's arms as he tries to fight through the pain. A lost Beast suddenly knows the way home as though she always had, with the lingering feeling of a hand in hers. If one of Her Children is grieving, the Mother reminds him of the depth of Her love, and that She still waits for him at the end of his journey.

Mechanically, communing with the Dark Mother has benefits and drawbacks. Generally, intercession by the Dark Mother is up to Storyteller discretion; however, under certain conditions, you may ask your Storyteller to let your character hear from the Mother. Most importantly, the Dark Mother tends to save Her intervention for Her Children's most desperate moments — your character must have drained his entire pool of Willpower. Though you could conceivably end up without Willpower multiple times, you may only ask for contact from the Dark Mother once per story.

Even when a Beast is at his worst, he may not hear from the Mother — rather than a mark of abandonment, Her Children know that this is Her way of telling them that She believes they're strong enough to handle the situation alone.

To call out to the Mother, roll Wits + Composure modified according to the character's Satiety. The less active the character's Horror is, the more difficult it will be for a Beast to hear his Mother's voice.

Satiety Condition	Modifier
Ravenous	-
Starving	-1
Sated	-2
Gorged	-3
Slumbering	-4

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Beast hears nothing from his Mother. If anything, he feels more alone than ever. He

THE FAMILY TREE

Other theories about the Dark Mother exist beyond the ones shared by Families: wayward spirits, a coordinated lie for the illusion of power, a shared psychosis brought on by the Primordial Dream. None of these theories come from Beasts — Beasts know without a doubt is that their Mother is alive and well, and that She's watching over them. But the hand they feel guiding their lives is only for them. Other supernatural beings are, at best, dubious of the Dark Mother's existence.

Beasts believe that they are their Mother's Children, closest in form to Her, but the Kindred, the Uratha, Sin-Eaters, and all the other creatures they share the world with were once part

knows instinctively that this was not the time to ask for Her guidance, and that She is disappointed by his self-doubt. Regardless of the circumstances of his next attempt to call out to Her, or the success of his player's roll, She will not answer — he needs to learn to carry himself back into Her arms. The player takes a Beat.

Failure: The Beast hears nothing from his Mother. He may realize the reason for Her silence immediately, or it may come to him later, as he looks back on how he overcame the struggle on his own. Either way, his question is met with resounding silence. The character takes the Deprived Condition (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 323), and resolves it when next he spends Satiety.

Success: As the Beast opens his mind, he feels his Mother's guiding hand reach out to him. He regains his full Willpower pool — nothing is more invigorating to a Beast than the reminder that he is cherished even at his lowest point. Her instructions for him are not specific, perhaps not even comprehensible, but they guide him all the same, and he moves forward with renewed confidence and purpose.

Exceptional Success: The Beast reaps all the benefits of a regular success, but his advice from the Mother is much more pointed than he's used to. She communicates specific instructions or information, and while the Beast might not understand the relevance right away, he trusts She has given him the tools he needs.

The Dark Mother always gives her Children exactly the gift they need, whether it's knowledge, courage, or simply love — and it's not always the gift they're expecting. Along with that gift often comes a lesson; not the kind Beasts teach their prey, but a gentle nudge, a loving redirection. If your character hasn't been playing to his strengths, or if he's been careless in the way he's handled a situation, his Mother will use Her moment of intercession to remind him that even when he fails and needs Her help, he's strong and thoughtful enough to learn from his mistakes.

For a Beast, contact with the Mother is the ultimate happiness. It's a feeling of perfect love and belonging like nothing else, and coming down from it is always jarring. Suddenly bereft of the Mother's warm embrace, the character is left with an abrupt return to normalcy, along with whatever wisdom She's left him to think about. It's almost impossible for a Beast to resume business as usual after a moment shared with his Mother, and an integral part of the experience is the decompression and reflection that comes afterward.

If your character replenishes his Willpower through communion with the Mother, he is unable to gain Willpower again through any means until he spends a number of consecutive hours in the Heart of his Lair equal to his Satiety at the moment he first reached out to Her. The more active his Horror, the more likely it is to help him center himself after feeling such overwhelming emotions. A Beast whose Horror is Slumbering will have the hardest time processing what's just happened to him, cut off from his only consistent tether to the Dream.

Once a character has received guidance from the Dark Mother, the player is encouraged to speak about the Beast's

feelings and thoughts on the matter. The Storyteller can, if she wishes, just tell the player what the Dark Mother says, but it might be more interesting to give the player a series of feelings and images and let him decide how the character interprets these feelings. The mechanical effect is the same in any case (the Beast regains Willpower), but the experience of feeling the Dark Mother's attention so closely should be a moving one. Let the player have the spotlight for a moment and soliloquize a little about the character's thoughts.

VIVIAN

Ethan's character, an Anakim named Vivian, is in a tight spot. She's six turns into combat with a Hero, and she just spent the last of her already depleted Willpower on a poorly planned attack that didn't do enough damage to kill her enemy. She's injured and desperate, her reserves exhausted, forced to acknowledge that this might be the fight that ends her life.

Because Vivian's Willpower is gone, and because he hasn't already done so during the story, Ethan tells his Storyteller that he wants Vivian to hear from the Dark Mother. He gets two successes on his roll, enough to guarantee that the Mother comes to Vivian's aid. He describes Vivian's relief at the sudden burst of energy that fills her body, and the strength she draws from the knowledge that even when she has given up on herself, her Mother still believes that she's capable of incredible things. She spends one of her new Willpower on an attack that kills the Hero and ends the combat.

In the wake of her triumph, still reeling from the reminder of her Mother's unfaltering faith in her, she retreats to the Heart of her Lair. Her Satiety is 3, so in order for her to be able to gain Willpower again normally later in the chapter, she stays there for three hours. Alone and removed from any distractions, she is forced to acknowledge that in her fight with this Hero, she ignored her better instincts and overtaxed herself in a head-on fight. Maybe if the Hero hadn't taunted her the way he did, calling her weak and goading her into proving him wrong — but that, she realizes, was her fatal error. She let her anger get the best of her, and in doing so, she gave her enemy the advantage. Next time, she decides, she will disregard petty words like the ones the Hero threw at her. After all, if she has the love and support of her Mother, what validation does she need from a pitiful Hero?

RUTH

Dionne plays Ruth, an Eshmaki Collector who daylights as a bodyguard. Ruth is currently employed by a young software designer whose company has gotten on the bad side of the mob, and Ruth is doing her best to fight off three men sent to kidnap her charge. She's exhausted her Willpower killing one of the men, and the other two are closing in on the designer.

Dionne rolls an exceptional success, and as Ruth hoists her aching body off the ground, she's hit with the sudden knowledge that although she is strong, fighting these men is the wrong way to keep herself and her charge safe. Her Mother is proud of her for how well she's done, but it's time to try something else — specifically, a strategic exit. Ruth is flooded with a rush

of energy that she uses to knock past the kidnappers, throw the injured designer over her shoulder, and take off running through the maze of company offices. Ruth uses her familiarity with the building to escape the kidnappers, and she takes her designer to a safe location to regroup.

Because she's in the middle of a stressful situation, Ruth can't retreat to her Lair and take a moment for herself right away. She's buzzing with nervous energy, the world seeming simultaneously too bright and hollow. When she finally gets her designer settled and taken care of, Ruth uses her own injuries as an excuse to step out and rest.

She spends four hours in the Heart of her Lair, one for each point of Satiety she had when she first heard from her Mother. She asks herself why she was so unwilling to retreat when, even without her Mother's intercession, she should have known that it was the best way for both her and the designer to leave the conflict alive. After all, a Eshmaki's strength is in stealth as much as it is in physical might. For the first time, she admits to herself that she places more value in flashy shows of violence than she does clever strategy, a stubborn holdover from her life as a human trying to prove her worth to her employers. Her Mother stepped in to remind her that she is beyond that, now. She has a dozen weapons at her disposal, and each is valuable. Outsmarting is no less venerable than outfighting — if it keeps her alive, it is the right choice, and the one her Mother would want her to make.

In any case, there's a better use for humans that get in her way than to kill them and have done with it. That night, the two men she let escape dream of the impenetrable dark, and her Horror feasts.

MARKO

Marko (whom we last saw on p. 133) is having a rough time of it. The two men from his lackluster feeding have found him, and after a series of bad rolls from Joseph, his player, Marko is suffering from the Leg Wrack Tilt and the Confused Condition. He's burned through his Willpower trying to best and then escape from these men, who, it turns out, are quite capable of defending themselves when necessary.

Marko runs toward his car, but he can't move very quickly and he hears his enemies coming up behind him. Joseph asks for guidance from the Dark Mother, and his Storyteller agrees that's probably a good idea. Marko has fed since his last encounter with these folks, and his Satiety is now at 6, meaning Joseph takes a -2 penalty on the roll. Worse, the Confused Condition makes it hard to focus, which incurs *another* -2, which drops the roll to a single die. Joseph fails, and the Dark Mother does not answer Marko's plea.

The men catch up with Marko and beat him up, zip tie his hands, and throw him in the trunk of his own car. Marko is alive, but humiliated and hurt. He knows his brood will find him soon, but lying there in the dark, he realizes that the Dark Mother didn't answer him for a reason — she's angry because he treats his gifts cavalierly. He doesn't use them for instruction or even for gratification, he simply coasts along, not really putting effort into anything. Marko thinks about revenge on the men who managed to imprison him, a Captor, but as the trunk opens and his broodmate Kaori frees him, he decides that the two men have earned his respect. Marko's Life is Merciful, and indulging that even when his brood — and his Horror — might expect him to take bloody retribution lets him regain a point of Willpower.





The whispers had already started up around town. He'd had a reputation before, but not like this. It wasn't the dirty, disparaging looks and insults muttered to his back. People actively avoided his gaze now, moved out of his way on the sidewalk, and deferred to him in other subtle ways.

While it didn't sate him the way it once had, even those little displays of power made his Tyrant heart happy.

While the subservient reactions of the mortals around him were amusing, it was the shift in the atmosphere that tickled him most. When he'd first set foot in his old stomping grounds, it had been apparent that something had changed. Someone had decided to take his place. The Chambers he briefly wandered smelled of animals, and had grown thick with vines and brambles. Howling echoed forever, soft and distant, but present enough to mark the new Apex as a werewolf.

Well, he thought, scoffing to himself. Even wild dogs can be tamed.

He let out his own shriek into the Hive, letting the other Begotten and their various Kin know he had returned. Echoing cries and roars came back to him, his misbegotten brethren about the town answering his call. It didn't take long for him to get the answers he was looking for. The werewolf in question wasn't much loved as a leader, it seemed, but had proved particularly difficult to displace.

The shift in atmosphere hadn't been lost on her. She'd left her house dark, working by moonlight. A suitcase flung open wide sat on her bed, half stuffed with clothes and other belongings, and she frantically moved about the room as she crammed it with more. The entire time, she gave hushed, clipped orders into a phone, organizing a retreat.

With a thought, he shorted the phone out, and seconds later robbed the room of even the feeble moonlight. Aided by his Horror's wings, he launched himself through the window, catching her midway through her shift to a different form. They tumbled together to the floor, but instead of hitting the nearby wall, kept rolling. She lost hold of him as his coat turned to something softer, leaving her puzzling over the enormous white feather she was left with. Lifting her head, she was struck with another mystery as she realized they were no longer in her home. On the heels of that revelation came another: she was being hunted down. The thought froze her in place as she cast desperately about for cover and found there was none.

He dove again from behind her, meeting her back with his talons and sending her sprawling in the dirt. He landed all his weight on her chest, one set of claws spread over her ribcage, the other resting across her neck. She lifted her chin with a whimper, away from the vicious claw at her throat, baring it to him, the fight in her gone. Satisfied, he fluttered his wings, driving his talon through her neck.



CHAPTER FIVE THE LEGEND & THE DREAM

The strange, surreal, and deadly paths through the Dark Dream feel more like home than anything ever has to a Beast, and the Lair she carves out for herself there is the legacy she leaves. Her Legend, the story of her terrible existence, spreads through the Chambers she claims, each marking her finest moments of triumph and conquest. As her power grows, the Beast and her Horror crave more. The answers lie deeper in the Primordial Dream, perhaps even in the mind of the Dark Mother herself, waiting to be shared. She seeks them eagerly, fettered by one concern.

Is her Legend truly worth telling?

THE LAIR

The Lair is the biggest asset a Beast has. It is her home in the Primordial Dream, where she is at once most powerful and most vulnerable. Her Horror stalks the familiar Chambers and Burrows unprotected except by its environment, testing its boundaries as it hungers or dozing in the

Heart when sated. Whether her Lair is composed entirely of Chambers she has claimed herself, shares some Chambers with the local Hive, or is part of a larger brood Lair, each and every pathway and room carries some significance to the Beast that has claimed it. Her Lair is colored by the Traits that fill it and create the environment most comfortable for her...or most uncomfortable for intruders.

WELCOME HOME

A Beast's Lair is her own personal corner of the Dark Dream, and she can use it for any number of things to make her life easier. A quick escape from an unpleasant situation in the mortal world is almost always within reach if the area resonates with her Lair, and a savvy Beast always has an eye out for locations that pass closely enough to facilitate entrance. This is especially useful when sating her Hunger catches unwanted attention, allowing her opportunities both to escape any pursuers, or trap them in the Primordial Dream to be tormented by her Horror. Likewise, any incriminating evidence — the weapon used by a Nemesis to torture her quarry, the priceless antiquity stolen by a Collector, the body left behind by a Predator — can “vanish” if deposited into the Lair, leaving the Beast empty handed in the face of scrutiny and with ample time later to dispose of or store her prize. Of course, this still leaves behind any mess she has made; simply throwing an object into her Lair won't remove the blood from her hands or her surroundings, or erase her fingerprints from a vault door.

As Chambers correspond directly with locations in the material world, Beasts can use them to travel long distances in short amounts of time. The physical locations of her Chambers provide anchor points the Beast can travel between using her Lair as a shortcut, especially as moving from one Chamber to the next might be a difference of miles or even continents if the Beast has trav-

“What he saw then was terrible enough to make his worst imaginings of the thing in the cellar look like sweet dreams; what he saw destroyed his sanity in one clawing stroke.”

—Stephen King, *It*

eled widely enough. If she absolutely must go somewhere but has never been there before, she can always attempt to open a Pathway from her Lair leading outward. Without a clear destination in mind or knowledge of if it resonates with her Lair, the Pathway is substantially harder to find and open, but desperate times call for desperate measures.

GUESTS AND INTRUDERS

Occasionally, a Beast needs or wants to allow a friend or ally to enter her Lair. While this is not particularly uncommon amongst the Begotten, especially with the advantages of brood Lairs, granting unimpeded access to an outsider is not something done lightly. Even other, unfamiliar Beasts can be a threat to an unwary target, and even Beasts sharing a brood Lair may not grant each other unimpeded access to their individual Chambers.

The Lair is a deeply personal place for many Beasts, and allowing someone inside is always a matter of careful consideration. Anyone entering a Beast's Lair with her sees her Horror laid bare as she merges with it, and learns the story of the Beast's conquests through the Chambers she has claimed. Many may not wish to show these secrets to mere acquaintances, and the Beast's closest ally may only be ever granted access if the Beast chooses to Hold the Door. Others may prickle at this constant case-by-case permission, but the Beast knows this is the easiest way to protect herself from ambushes where she is arguably most vulnerable. If the guest manages to change his host's mind, he may face the full power of her Lair suddenly turning on him.

While a Beast can open a Pathway and invite an ally inside, it's not the only way to gain access to her Lair. A Hero looking to do battle with a Beast and end her once and for all can force his way inside, and other beings with the ability to walk between worlds may stumble upon a Lair entirely by accident. Not all unwanted visitors break in or enter intentionally, though; clever Beasts may trick their quarry into entering their Lairs, content to wait for the hostile environment and their Horrors to take care of the rest.

Those that enter a Beast's Lair without gaining her trust (and hopefully with it, immunity to her Lair Traits) must contend with whatever conditions they find there. Her Lair is built to be confusing and deadly to those that wish to intrude upon it, offering a distinct advantage to the Beast and Horror that call the Lair home. A Beast at or above the Sated Condition may be entirely content to let her Lair do the work of destroying an opponent, particularly if the meal would be outside her Horror's appetite. No sense getting her own hands dirty when time will do the job just as well.

Of course, while unsuspecting victims or unprepared assailants are easy fodder, a dedicated adversary with the ability to withstand the ill effects brought on by the Lair or a lucky foe chasing a wounded Beast to her home in the Primordial Dream can press their own advantage. A Beast already fleeing faces her last stand when she is pursued to her safe haven, and once merged with her Horror, she has nowhere else to run.

A cornered Beast has all the advantages of her Lair, but her Lair itself can be the subject of attack. Intruders looking to weaken a Beast's resources can break her Chambers down one by one, forcing her to watch everything she's built crumble

before her, all the while narrowing her weapons and options for escape one by one.

IMMUNITY

A Beast is immune to the effects and Tilts of the Traits she chooses for her Lair. She may choose to extend (or withhold) this immunity when she invites someone into her Lair, as well as when she imposes their associated Tilts on the material world. An Eshmaki with the Darkness Trait can see just as well in pitch dark as she can on a sunny day, and a Namtaru at home in a Stinging Lair is untroubled by chemicals or other irritants. If the Trait has the potential to vary in severity as Diseased or Electrified (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 105), the Beast is unaffected by conditions up to and equal to the severity of her Lair Trait and will not suffer ill effects from anything higher until after being exposed for her Lair rating in hours. If a Beast has been offered immunity to a Trait present in a brood lair, but not her personal Chambers, she is still vulnerable to it outside the shared Lair.

In the event that Beasts do battle with each other, they may attempt to apply Tilts as usual. However, if the two Beasts share the same Trait, their respective immunities still apply. In rare cases, Beasts may find themselves evenly matched, unable to rely on their Traits to aid them, as their foe can dance around the effects just as easily. In these cases, the Traits applied are still functional in keeping others from interfering on their opponent's behalf.

While a Beast's immunity extends to passive occurrences of the Traits she can incur, others can and often will attempt to use them against her. While the Begotten can't bypass each other's immunities, other supernatural beings that draw from a different source of power may attempt to muscle through the Beast's natural inclination. In the event that a Beast is met with a foe attempting to impede her with a Tilt she is immune to, her immunity grants the Beast a +2 bonus to resist the effects. If the effect offers no chance for resistance, it instead provokes a Clash of Wills. If the Beast successfully resists, they are immune to similar attempts for the rest of the scene.

Example: Kara, a vampire, seeks to deafen Eric, a Beast, with her Touch of Deprivation Devotion. Kara has three dots of Intelligence, three of Medicine, and Auspex 4, so her player will roll nine dice. Eric has a Resolve of four and five dots of Lair (his Supernatural Resistance Trait, instead of Blood Potency), for a total of nine dice as well. However, because Eric's Lair has the Deafening Trait, his player adds two more dice to his pool, and rolls eleven dice. Kara's player has three successes, and Eric's has four. He retains his sense of hearing, and Kara will not be able to deafen him in the near future.

MINOR LAIR TRAITS

BAD ANGLES

The way the walls, floors, and ceilings of the Lair meet in odd ways that don't match up from one corner to the next. Structures seem to shift and swell or contract as they are observed, creating a creeping sense of unease that descends





into madness. Characters subjected to this Lair Trait take a -2 penalty to Composure and Initiative, and for every hour spent in the Lair take a -1 penalty to Resolve, to maximum of -5.

INFECTED

The air reeks of sickness and disease, and everything in the Lair is clearly irritated and raw, oozing half-congealed pus and slick with sweat and bile. Wood is rotted, stone is pitted and porous, and plant matter is choked in fungus. Characters take a -3 penalty to Stamina rolls, and feel feverish and lethargic while exposed to this Lair Trait. Regenerating Health takes twice as long in an Infected Lair.

ISOLATED

No matter how many others are present, characters subjected to this Trait are utterly convinced they are completely alone. They take a -3 penalty to Resolve rolls, and after spending a number of hours equal to their Presence in the Lair take on the Insensate Tilt, paralyzed by fear and doubt. The character cannot regain Willpower will under the effect of this Trait.

MINIONS

The Lair is full of small creatures that are capable of carrying out a number of tasks for the Beast. These include breaking down and clearing out unwanted debris, intercepting intruders, and maintaining or breaking down Chambers as the Beast desires. If an intruder attempts to destroy a Chamber while a Beast is unable to resist, minions attempt to bolster the Chamber, resisting with half the Beast's Resolve. If a Beast is trying to break her own Chamber down, minions reduce the time by half, rounded

up. While they can do no damage to intruders, minions can attempt to apply the Knocked Down, Stunned, or Immobilized Tilts. Minions inhabiting a Chamber are Actors (p. XX).

MIRRORED

The surfaces of the Lair are highly reflective, showing fractured images from every angle and splitting any light source into a blinding glare. Characters take a -2 penalty to all Perception rolls relying on eyesight. Anything other than ambient, diffuse light increases this penalty to -3.

STALKING-GROUND

This Lair Trait can only be applied to a single Chamber and its analogue in the material world. The locations are of particular note or use to the Beast and Horror. Anyone that spends significant time in the space is tagged, and becomes an easy target for a starving Horror. These favored targets are not subject to the additional risks of being targeted multiple times (see Repeated Feeding, p. 100 of **Beast: The Primordial**). The nightmares tagged individuals suffer are cryptic, but reveal a way to shield from this targeting. The Storyteller then selects the preventative measure, which, when applied, works for a number of days equal to (10 - the Beast's Lair rating) before it needs to be renewed.

MAJOR LAIR TRAITS

BOTTOMLESS

The floor of the Lair is unstable and gives way to a drop that simply doesn't end, and Burrows fly by on the way down,

offering hope to a hapless explorer. When entering a Chamber, players must succeed on a Dexterity + Composure roll. On a failure, the character loses his footing and falls. Arresting this fall (catching some dangling vines, falling onto a jutting path) inflicts two points of lethal damage, and nearby Burrows branch off to unknown Chambers. The player must roll a die to determine which Chamber of the Lair the character finds next.

HOARD

The Lair is filled with an enticing collection of valuables. Every minute a character spends touching or interacting with a piece of this hoard draws the Horror one Chamber closer to the character's location. Attempting to destroy any piece of the hoard draws the Horror at twice the speed, and successfully destroying a piece wakes a Slumbering Horror. Items can be removed from the Lair, but vanish after the Beast's (Lair dots) in hours. The Horror can track pieces of its Hoard, and will target a sleeping subject that possesses one if suitably hungry.

HUNTING-GROUND

This Lair Trait functions as the Minor Lair Trait Stalking Ground, with some exceptions: It can be applied to the Lair and resonant areas as any other Lair Trait, and cannot be guarded against except by Heroes.

MURMURS

Soft voices echo around the Lair, confusing and disorienting characters and attempting to lead them astray. Characters suffer a -1 penalty to aural Perception rolls and a -2 to Wits. After an hour in the Lair, players must roll Resolve + Composure to resist the Insane Tilt. Failure applies the Tilt. Success buys the character another hour, at which point the roll is attempted again at a cumulative -1 penalty, to a maximum of -5.

THRALLS

Along with the Horror, the Lair is home to a small force dedicated to protecting their host. A Beast may have a number of thralls equal to half his Lair rating, rounded down. These may engage in combat as normal and are immune to the Beast's Lair Traits. As dream creatures, the thrall's Traits are half the Horror's, rounded down, and each thrall may use one of the Beast's Atavisms. Thralls, unlike Minions, are Dreamborn (p. 157).

THE PRIMORDIAL DREAM

The Begotten roam through many strange worlds in search of their Legends, following kin and slipping through portals, but all Beasts share one in particular, the one their Horrors inhabit. It's called "Primordial" despite being ever-changing and of the moment, new Chambers spawning from fresh trauma and old ones fading away. It's called a "Dream" despite being formed largely from the terrors of waking humanity, and its far removal from the fantasies of sleep. Every Beast is irrevocably tied to it through their Lair, but many never venture beyond their own Chambers into the

rest of the Hive, or out into the wider Dream. Fewer still master all its hidden rules and secrets, but those that do have the penultimate home ground advantage, second only to the Unfettered.

SOULS, CHAMBERS, AND THE DREAM

The Primordial Dream is no dream at all. It's much deeper in the human psyche than that.

Imagine a plant with branching roots, turned upside down and buried again. To a casual observer, it looks like dozens of tiny, individual tubules, but below the surface they join, and join again, until they meet at the main body of the plant.

Human souls are like the root endings. They *appear* individual to a being in the material world capable of perceiving them, but in truth there's really only one human soul: a spiritual level of connection all people share, which branches into their isolated lives. Although human beings are the only creatures to bear souls as supernatural powers detect them, at some level that communal spiritual layer joins with *everything else*. Deep within the collective human spirit, there's a barrier, a gap, a gulf separating humanity from the "souls" of other animals, of the world itself, and of the universe. What Beasts call the Primordial Dream surrounds that demarcation, the deepest part of shared human spirituality. "Above" it lies the Bright Dream, the myriad realms of stories, emotions, and concepts. Above those are the individual soul-realms of living people, and on the very surface the waking thoughts and sleeping dreams of humanity play out where the soul meets the living mind.

Most dreams don't affect the soul at all. Beasts who explore to the very limits of the Bright Dream can witness dreams and thoughts come and go from within the souls of those experiencing them, like sunlight seen from under water. Beasts can even influence those dreams and thoughts from within, but it's like touching something through a membrane. On rare occasions, a person experiences something profound enough that their dreams or thoughts do warp the Bright Dream, pushing "in" and leaving an impression. Only the very rarest "dream deep" enough to affect the Primordial Dream itself, their nightmares ripping through the collective human soul like the ripples of an earthquake.

Most change to the Primordial regions comes through trauma. As described on p. 94 of **Beast**, two things offer a potential Chamber:

- An exceptionally powerful Nightmare manifested by a Beast, flooding an area of the material world with the stuff of the Primordial Dream and reshaping the Dream with the nature of that area in return. Beasts within the Dream when this happens experience the Dream gradually reshaping into the potential Chamber like a flower blooming, the changes growing outward from the place in the Dream corresponding to the Nightmare's victim.
- A human (or supernatural being with a human-like psychology) is shaken to their very core by a traumatic experience. Beasts within that person's individual soul or looking on in the Primordial Dream experience the new Chamber ripping itself into the Dream in a violent, sudden fashion.

DREAMQUAKE

Environmental

Description: The dreamscape of the Primordial Dream is forming a new chamber so suddenly it poses a risk to characters caught up in it. The faster the chamber forms, the greater the risk to those caught up in its creation.

Effect: A Dreamquake has a strength rating equal to 10 + the Dreamquake's duration. While the quake is in effect, characters within suffer penalties to Finesse rolls equal to half the Dreamquake's strength, rounded up. At the start of the quake, every character within suffers its strength in bashing damage. If this amount is greater than a character's Size, that character also suffers the Knocked Down Tilt.

Causing the Tilt: A new Chamber was formed by Integrity loss. Sometimes, destroying a Chamber also causes a Dreamquake, and certain Unfettered have the power to cause the Tilt deliberately.

A Chamber forming isn't necessarily dangerous to onlookers in the dream, though once it fully forms it has a Lair Trait even when unclaimed, so cautious Beasts retreat from a blooming Chamber until they know what its nature is.

Unless a Beast adds the fresh Chamber to her Lair, and therefore to the Hive of local Chambers, the potential Chamber slowly fades from the communal landscape of the Primordial Dream like a wound gradually healing. The Chamber isn't destroyed by falling away from the dreamscape like this — it falls into the Mists, the furthest part of the Primordial Dream, where it might attract a nascent Horror and eventually become a Beast's Heart. As it fades, a Chamber leaves signs of its passing on the dreamscape; a former Chamber has no associated Lair trait, but still *looks* like the material-world location that prompted its creation.

The rate at which a potential Chamber fades into the Mists greatly varies depending on how strong the trauma that made it was (Nightmare-induced Chambers tend to fade faster) and whether the person who made them is still affected by their experience or even still alive. A new Chamber-creating event in the same place will "overwrite" any unclaimed Chambers and push them into the Mists, though if a Beast has already included the scene in her Lair any further Chambers overlaid onto it result in the two Lairs being merged as per **Beast: The Primordial** p. 96. When a Beast dies, her Chambers begin fading into the Mists as they lose the binding force of the Lair.

Outside the sudden appearances of potential Chambers, the Primordial Dream is still part of the collective human soul, and the thoughts and dreams of humanity do shape it on a subtler but longer-lasting basis. Anywhere anyone has ever thought or dreamt about in the context of fear is reflected in the Dream, carving it into a rough facsimile of material reality by the pressure of millions of tiny changes, like water shaping rock. Over 100 billion modern humans have lived on Earth since the species first evolved, and some Beasts tell stories about preying on earlier hominids. Only those few wildernesses no one has ever been to — the ocean depths, much of Antarctica — don't reflect the material world with their Dreaming equivalents.

The dreamscape outside a Chamber, though, is *empty*. No people or animals disturb its silence, although the buildings,

possessions, and garbage of human habitation are all present. Vehicles sit, driverless, on packed but motionless freeways. The clouds move in the sky, and water flows, but the sky is always dark, as though the sun has just set. The surroundings seem fragile, giving the impression a concerted effort could blow them away like smoke.

Despite the apparent tranquility, travelers have a definite sense of being watched, observed, even *stalked*. (something many Eshmaki point to as evidence that their family is a more Primordial one than the others). The only "wildlife" exists within Chambers, where they formed as part of a Lair's theme or have been imported via Primordial Pathway by the Beast. And at the Heart of every Lair, the true native beings of the Primordial Dream lurk: the Horrors.

Systems: An unclaimed potential Chamber has a single Lair Trait based on its nature, any local Hive Trait caused by the presence of an Apex, no Burrows connecting it to other parts of the Hive, and fades gradually over time. If a Chamber was created by a Nightmare, it fades after any effects caused by the Nightmare (including any Conditions) are resolved. If a Chamber was caused by Integrity or related Trait loss, it fades after the victim dies or regains the lost Trait dot. These rates are only guidelines, however, and particularly potent events might cause potential Chambers that last for months or years, waiting for a Beast to track them down.

The creation of a Chamber via exceptional success takes a scene to complete within the Dream — slow enough to be safe for any onlookers in the dreamscape caught up in its creation, as long as they aren't affected by its Lair or Hive Trait. Chambers ripped into the dreamscape by Integrity Trait loss are more dangerous. They form in the Trait's new level in turns, and if the roll to avoid Trait loss (for example, a breaking point roll for Integrity, or an Act of Hubris roll for Wisdom) resulted in a dramatic failure, the Chamber's formation completes in a single turn. Anyone within the area of the dreamscape caught up in the transformation is subject to the Dreamquake Tilt.

The dreamscape outside the Chamber is easy to disrupt. While objects within a Chamber follow all the usual rules for Durability and Structure, players of travelers in the wider Primordial Dream add any Supernatural Tolerance Trait (Lair

THE CALL OF HOME

One thing remains constant for beasts who leave their Lairs. No matter where they are in the myriad realms of the soul, from the loudest cultural story in the Bright Dream to the deepest reaches of the Mother's Land, they can always find their way back to their Lair. Whenever presented by any choice of routes, a successful Wits + Lair roll by the Beast's player reveals which way will lead back to the Primordial Dream, and once in the dreamscape which way leads to the nearest Chamber of her Lair.

This uncanny homing sense also serves as a warning when a Beast really wanders off the beaten track — it only functions within the Astral Realms, so a Beast who follows a Primordial Pathway out into an unknown part of the universe is instantly aware that she isn't in the Dream or its neighbors any more. That the homing sense doesn't work in the Hedge tells Beasts exploring Kinship with changelings that while they may both explore dreams and nightmares, wherever the fae escaped from isn't in the Dream.

for Beasts) as successes to any attempt to damage the surroundings, as long as they roll a single success. In the Bright Dream, this extends to attempts to injure Actors, but does not apply to full Dreamborn, Horrors, travelers who are physically present or the Dream Forms of beings hailing from outside the astral.

LEAVING THE LAIR

When a Beast leaves her Lair without using a Primordial Pathway, she separates from her Horror and leaves it behind in her Chambers while she wanders the wider dreamscape as a Dream Form. Once out, she may travel in the Dream as though she were in the material world. For example, a Beast whose Chamber is a church next to a shopping mall may leave her Lair to explore the Primordial Dream's fragile version of the mall. A Beast always knows when she has entered a Chamber, and whether or not it's already part of another Beast's Lair. She only merges with her Horror again if a Chamber she enters is linked to her *own* Lair, either directly or as part of a Brood Lair. The merger is not always instantaneous, but is usually swift, as the Horror instantly realizes she is back in the Lair and merges with her upon entering the same Chamber. Some cunning opponents (other Beasts, Heroes, kin who know too much) invading a Lair attempt to seal Burrows ahead of the Beast's arrival, denying the Begotten the advantage of taking on her Horror's form.

Unlike Chambers, Burrows do not appear in the wider dreamscape. If a Beast has two Chambers across the region from one another and uses a Burrow to travel between them, he does not appear in the dreamscape in transit, and a second Beast waiting in the emptiness between will not be able to ambush him. The terrain of a Burrow does not have to conform to what's "really" between the places that served as inspiration for the connected Chambers, either. In fact, they usually don't. Dream-logic transitions, such as opening a door and walking down a corridor to reach the bottom of the ocean, are much more common.

Beasts who explore Kinship with other supernatural beings quickly learn that the Begotten experience of the Primordial Dream is not universal. Mages (perhaps the most likely kin found exploring the dreamscape) navigate almost as though

using a Burrow no matter where they go, appearing and disappearing as they hop from scene to scene along thematic or symbolic lines. Once kin enter a Lair, though, they're forced to use the Burrows like everyone else or leave. Mixed groups travel according to whoever's leading the way.

HIVES AND HEARTS

Beasts call the sum total of all claimed and unclaimed Chambers in a region, plus the network of Burrows linking the claimed ones into Lairs, the region's Hive. Many Begotten describe the relationship between dreamscape and Hive as being like the surface world and underground tunnels, hence the names "Chamber" and "Burrow." When asked by guests why Chambers seem so much more "real" than the Primordial Dream at large, traditional Beasts like to say that the Hive is deeper in the soul than the dreamscape, closer to the Dark Mother. To these Beasts, the Hive Trait is the result of proximity to the very bedrock of spiritual reality, like deep caves being warmed by geothermal vents. The Apex is merely the face those Primordial energies take, which is why the position can be usurped so easily; the Hive naturally takes on an aspect of the biggest, scariest monster in the regions making up its Chambers.

Although it is wide-reaching, the Hive is not all encompassing. Every Beast has at least one Chamber that has no earthly reflection; their Heart, the original Chamber of their Horror. The Apex has no sway within the Hearts of the Hive's Lairs, unless the position is held by one of the Beasts themselves. Begotten are also quite capable of forming Chambers from far-flung locations well away from their local Hive's reach. If these Chambers fall within another Hive, they take on the local Hive Trait. In the case of clashes, such as when a Beast has multiple Chambers not based on material reality and linked to more than one Hive, or when two or more Apexes of the Hives affecting a Lair are Beasts themselves so can all affect the Heart, the Beast chooses one Hive Trait from the available options for each Chamber affected, but may change her mind at any time as a reflexive action.

Last, Begotten who explore their kinship with other supernatural beings often find themselves in strange realms of existence far removed from material reality. These pose no





FILLING IN THE MAP

Beast assumes that a Begotten character putting in a modicum of effort can identify unclaimed Chambers in their locality, as a means of linking the Beast to local horror stories and exploring their legends. Famous Chambers might last years before fading into the Mists, allowing Beasts to investigate and claim the Chamber as a reward. To make life easier on the Storyteller in defining a setting's Chambers, consider going around the table at the start of the chronicle, and having each player invent one or two Chambers their characters will later get the chance to encounter. For more details on how to populate the dreamscape of your setting, see **Building A Legend**.

impediment to forming Chambers given a suitable trigger, and as explained on p. 96 of **Beast: The Primordial**, Beasts can add locations in the Shadow, Underworld, Hedge, or stranger places to their Lairs. These Chambers lack a Hive Trait, as they aren't within a Hive.

Newly devoured Beasts exploring the Dream might wonder about where the Hearts of Horrors waiting to devour new Beasts are, or where Chambers formed from esoteric realms relate to the dreamscape they explore between the Chambers of a Hive. Beasts may leave the Lair via a Chamber that doesn't correspond to a material world location (including the Heart,) and when doing so always find themselves in the Mists, described later in this chapter. Some Beasts take this to mean that otherworldly Chambers are closer to the Mother than the Hives, or even that such Chambers are how new Horrors arise, and make a practice of shunning material inspirations for their Lairs.

THE HORIZONS

The Primordial Dream is only one part of a much greater astral landscape, one the Begotten are uniquely equipped to explore. Other supernatural beings must go through arduous meditation to wander the inner realms if they can enter at all, while they're just a step out of the Lair for a Beast.

P. 67 of **Beast: The Primordial** describes the astral worlds using the terms Awakened mages use for them, and as mages greatly outnumber the Begotten many Beasts find it simpler to use words like "Temenos" and "Oneiros." Beasts are not mages, however, and experience the dream realms differently than their sorcerous cousins. Where mages experience the astral as a set of clearly defined layers that take effort to cross, Beasts experience the Temenos, Anima Mundi, and Oneiros as extensions to the dreamscape surrounding their Lairs.

The Primordial Dream sits at the boundary between human thought and the Primordial soul of the world. Accordingly, when wandering the dreamscape, a Beast has two options for further travel: outward or inward. Toward humanity, or away from it.

The "edge" of the dreamscape begins to reflect the realms a traveler is heading toward, the Primordial blurring into the

Temenos or Anima Mundi. Beasts call these phenomena the two *Horizons*: the Day and the Mists.

THE DAY

Entrance to the Bright Dream, the Day, is immediately obvious to a traveler. To reach it, a Beast must wander the dreamscape and seek civilization or community, places where humanity *should* concentrate in greater numbers relative to wherever they are now. To reach the Day in the countryside, walk toward a city. To find it in a city, seek out train stations, airports, sports fields, anywhere more people should be.

The first sign of the Day is simple. As the traveler moves through the dreamscape, the sun comes up. In daylight, the terrain and contents of the dreamscape seem especially fragile and gossamer. As the traveler continues, the dreamscape becomes inhabited. At this stage, the "animals" and "people" are gray and featureless, and no more solid than any other part of the dreamscape, but the feeling of being observed that permeates the Primordial Dream gives way to one of being *surrounded*. As the traveler continues her journey, the world around her becomes louder and louder, and the surroundings lose all relation to the material world as the traveler passes into the Bright Dream.

Systems: While "populated," the human and animal forms found in the Day are strictly Actors (p. 157) rather than full Dreamborn or Horrors. Although no Chambers form here through action in the waking world, a Beast using a Nightmare within the Day or another astral traveler suffering a breaking point can cause a Chamber's creation. Such Chambers may be incorporated into Begotten Lairs just like those in the Primordial Dream, allowing Beasts to populate their Lairs with Actors. A Chamber in the Day fades at the same rate as one in the dreamscape, but does so twice — first, it fades into the regular dreamscape, and then after another interval of the same time, it fades into the Mists.

THE MISTS

Deeper into the soul than the dreamscape, though still part of the Primordial Dream as Beasts reckon it, the Mists is the place (or, more properly, the no-place) that surrounds Chambers faded from the dreamscape, Chambers based on locations outside material reality, and Hearts. Being housed in the Mists doesn't affect a Chamber compared to one in the dreamscape, but anyone leaving without using a Burrow quickly realizes the difference. Instead of the dreamscape's thin facsimile of the waking world, travelers into the Mists find themselves in a thick fog that will not yield or shift to any supernatural power, with only bare stone underfoot. Travelers in the dreamscape may also reach the Mists by deliberately seeking out quiet, untouched places, anywhere with less impact by humanity, relative to their current surroundings.

Wandering the Mists is an exercise in frustration. Some travelers walk for subjective days without finding anything, while others stumble through into a Chamber almost immediately. The lack of any navigable signposts makes it a dangerous proposition for anyone except the Begotten, who all have their

innate sense of how to reach their own Lair. Worse than the risk of simply finding nothing, however, is the risk of intruding on another Beast's Lair at random, or entering what will one day be a Heart and being attacked by a Horror that has not yet claimed its human half.

For some Beasts, the Mists are worth the risk. Any Chamber that has faded, or been lost in the collapse of a dead Beast's Lair, lies waiting to be rediscovered in the fog. Begotten seeking to interfere with or help with a Devouring search for unclaimed Chambers in the Mists, as these are where Horrors are born by primal fears crawling out of the Mother's Land. Finally, entering another Beasts' Lair through the Mists is possible even when Primordial Pathway, brood Lair, or walking across the dreamscape fail. Travelers attempting to find a specific location must focus their mind on it while wandering; not just the appearance of the place, but its emotional resonance too.

Systems: Begotten seeking a specific Chamber in the Mists that isn't available through a Burrow usually use a Primordial Pathway, but if they have no shared Lair Trait with their destination they must walk the Mists and try to focus on it.

Dice Pool: Resolve + Empathy

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The traveler becomes hopelessly lost and enters a Chamber she did not intend, attracting the attention of its Horror if one exists.

Failure: The traveler encounters no Chambers. She may try again with a -2 penalty with another scene of traveling the Mists. The penalty is cumulative with successive failures.

Success: The traveler finds her way to the Chamber she seeks if it is disconnected, or to a Chamber connected to it if it is part of a Lair.

Exceptional Success: The traveler finds the Chamber she seeks even if it is part of a Lair, and is aware of its Lair Trait upon reaching the boundary, giving her the option to turn back if unprepared.

Suggested Modifiers

Character knows the Hunger of the target Chamber's Horror	+2
Character starts into the Mists from a dreamscape location the target Chamber faded from	+1
Character shares the same Hunger or Family as the target Chamber's Horror	+1
Beast seeking the Cave (see p. 155)	0+Lair
Character knows what event triggered the Chamber's creation	+1
Character only suspects (but does not know) that the target Chamber exists	-2
Target Chamber has been claimed by another Beast	-3
Target Chamber is an unDevoured Heart	-2

BEYOND THE PRIMORDIAL DREAM

Past the Day and the Mists, a Beast is outside the comfort of the Primordial Dream. She walks either through the realms of conscious thought or the deeper, alien worlds beyond humanity's soul.

THE BRIGHT DREAM

The myriad realms of human thought, story, and emotion as reflected into the soul, the Bright Dream seems like sensory overload to a Beast used to the comforting, forboding quiet of the Primordial dreamscape. Even when a scene seems quiet, travelers have a constant feeling of being surrounded and pulled at, which can set a Beast not used to it on edge. The worlds of the Bright Dream range in size from single rooms to landscapes as large as the Primordial Dream itself, although they often bear no relation to any locations found in the waking world. Every concept shared by more than one person has its own realm, ranging from grand, powerful realms like Death or Cities to smaller, quieter ones like a particular family, a work of fiction, or even the shared human concept of a famous individual. Navigation through the Bright Dream works by association; a traveler's means of egress from one realm determines where they might end up. For example, leaving the realm of Death by hiking out into the desert surrounding it might lead a wanderer to Deserts, a particular Desert, or even Loneliness.

Successfully navigating this web of theme-association toward "fear" leads back to the Primordial Dream, while at the "far" end of the shared realms, travelers who follow routes to a particular person can enter that individuals' personal soul, comprising realms of their memories, thoughts, virtues, vices, desires, individual fears, and dreams. If the press of the shared realms is claustrophobic, these individual realms are downright oppressive to a Beast — travelers feel like they are under constant, deep scrutiny. Actors and Dreamborn attack them as intruders if they draw attention to themselves or randomly address them as though they were the person whose soul they are in. The realms of a person's soul shift and warp constantly with their waking or sleeping thoughts, posing real risk to travelers even if they avoid the soul's guardians. The rewards for journeying this far are great, however; by opening a Primordial Pathway back to their Lair in a soul realm, a Beast can deliberately target an individual for their Horror to feed from.

DISCONNECTED DREAMS

What happens to a story when no one remembers it? Some mages have successfully used magic to enter Bright realms with no connections to any other, leading Beasts aware of the feat to believe that the Bright Dream must have its own form of the Mists, housing realms of concepts lost to history... Or perhaps yet to be discovered. If one of these realms shared a theme with a Chamber, a Beast could open a Primordial Pathway to it.



Systems: Where Chambers have Lair and Apex Traits, realms in the Bright Dream have Themes, the concepts they are based on and that form their appearance. Begotten have an advantage as natives of the human soul, and always know the Theme of a Bright realm once they set foot in it. In this way, opening Primordial Pathways back to the Lair is as easy as finding a realm whose Theme matches a Lair Trait.

Deliberate navigation in the Bright Dream requires correctly determining the nature of a connection between realms, based on the similarity of concept between the realm sought and the realm being left.

Dice Pool: Wits + Investigation

Action: Instant, although the process takes half an hour per -1 penalty.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The traveler becomes trapped in the current realm, and attracts the attention of hostile Dreamborn.

Failure: The traveler fails to find her desired route, and enters a realm she did not intend.

Success: The traveler successfully crosses into the realm she sought after hours equal to the penalty on this roll.

Exceptional Success: The traveler crosses into the realm she sought after 15 minutes per -1 on this roll.

Suggested Modifiers

Relation	Dice Penalty
The two realms are almost identical (different interpretations of an ideology or place)	0
The two realms are closely related (a city and all cities, a disaster and suffering)	-1
The two realms are associated (a war and death, the moon and madness, an actor and their most famous film)	-3
The two realms are distantly related (Christianity and books, history and kings)	-5

While the shared realms are relatively stable, the realms of a singular person's soul shift and warp with their thoughts, only reaching something like stability when that person undergoes deep meditation. This is mostly cosmetic, except in the realm corresponding to their active thoughts (or dreams, if they're asleep at the time). Anyone staying in this realm longer than a scene becomes subject to the Dreamquake Tilt, which has a strength of the person's Integrity.

As the reflection of humanity's thoughts through their collective soul, cunning travelers in the Bright Dream sometimes attempt to alter opinions and beliefs in the physical world by manipulating the realms corresponding to those ideas. This is both easier and more difficult than many newly Devoured Begotten might imagine. No special powers are required (beyond being within the Bright Dream), but the noosphere of humanity is surprisingly elastic and resistant, large-scale changes returning to "normal" quickly if they take at all. No one has

ever destroyed a major religion by rampaging through its Bright Dream realm, or caused the population of a city to abandon it by ruining its part of the realm of Cities. Beasts who choose their subject with more focus, however, can get results; making the population of a small town dislike their mayor, for example, or implanting the suggestion in a small group of witnesses to a feeding that they must never speak of it.

Systems: Affecting beliefs or opinions by affecting the Bright Dream is handled by an extended action (**Beast: The Primordial**, p. 158) with a target number of successes depending on how many people hold the belief and a penalty to the dice pool depending on how important that belief is to the average member of that population.

Population	Target Number
99 or fewer	5
100 to 999	10
1000 to 9,999	15
10,000 to 99,999	20
100,000 to 1 million	25

Degree of Belief	Dice Penalty
Casual: no investment on the part of the belief's holder. A person's favorite brand of cereal, fashion choices, which fast food outlet to eat at, opinions about casual acquaintances.	None
Mild: opinions held that a person could be swayed from easily. Idle entertainment preferences, voting choices for apolitical people, opinions about coworkers the person isn't particularly close to.	-1
Moderate: firm opinions that could be swayed over time. Secondary religious beliefs (such as a Christian's denomination or attitude to homosexuality,) opinions about close coworkers, friends, celebrities, and other public figures, voting preferences for politically minded people.	-2
Significant: deeply invested beliefs. A favorite food, a best friend or lover, opinions about other races or religions. Religious beliefs for the majority of people.	-3
Intense: the core parts of a person's belief system. Devout religious belief, racism, a hated or loved individual.	-5

When multiple people hold different levels of belief on a subject, use the average, but anyone holding a stronger opinion than that is unaffected by the changes to the Bright Dream. In addition, manipulating the Bright Dream only works on human beings that possess their own souls at the time of the changes; supernatural beings and humans who have had their souls stolen are unaffected.

The actual dice pool used depends entirely on what the traveler is doing in the Bright Dream to affect the desired change; a Beast might turn a local election around by removing posters for the opposition (Wits + Streetwise,) spreading rumors in the Dream (Manipulation + Subterfuge) or just plain killing the opposition candidate's Actor. The actions she takes, however, have bearing on the outcome, and what actually happens in the material world reflects the Beast's choices. The rumormonger may find that the lies she told spread like wildfire, while killing the representation of a person might make people "blank" him, ignoring him unless forced, until that representation reforms.

Human belief is an ever-shifting thing, and no Beast can hold back its tides. An opinion changed in the Bright Dream may change again in response to events, and unless a Beast backs her psychic strategies up with physical action, the same things that caused people to hold their former beliefs will naturally reassert them over time. Guiding people to vote for a crooked candidate won't prevent them from realizing his perfidy and not voting for him again.

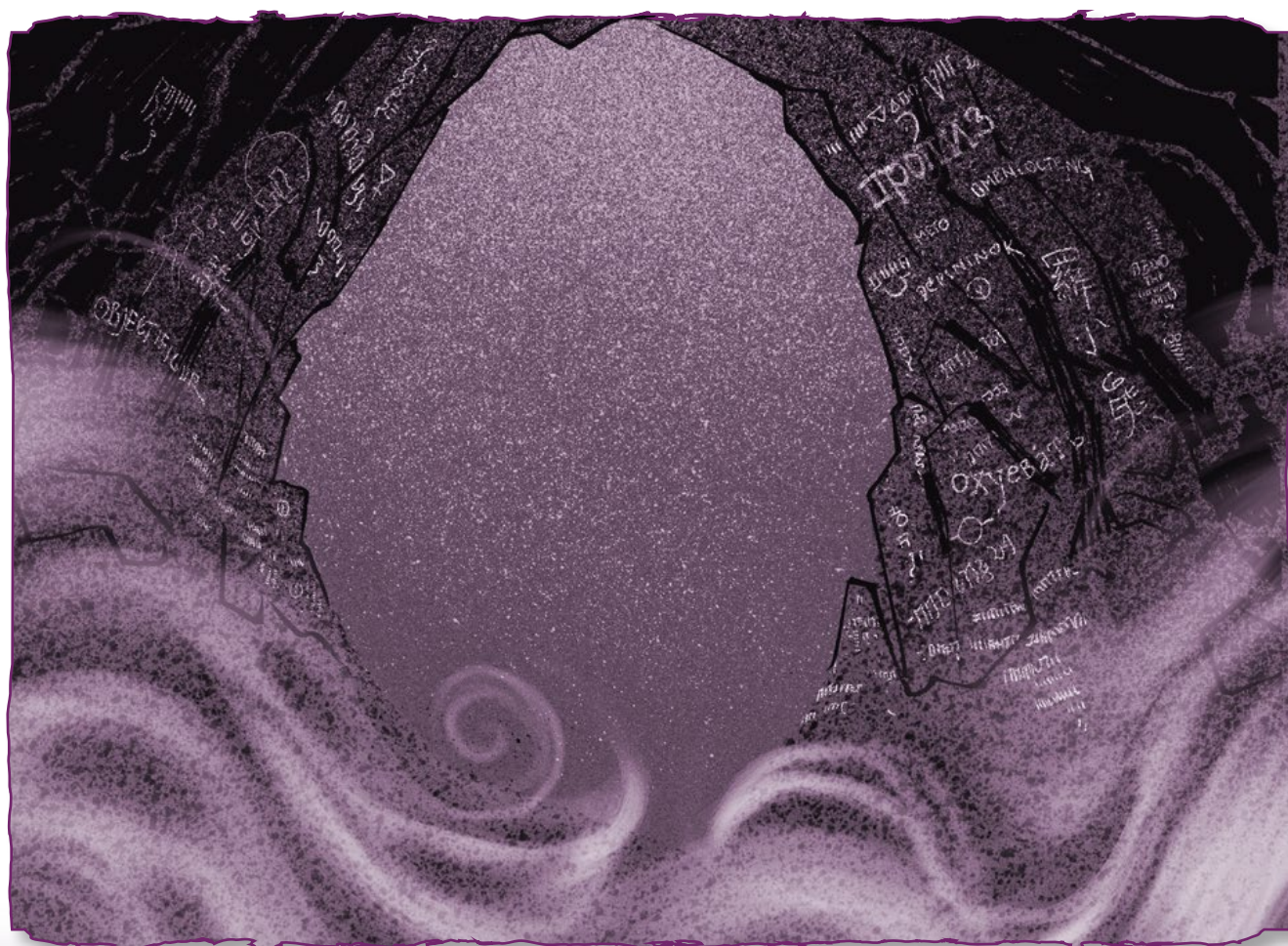
THE CAVE AND THE MOTHER'S LAND

The Primordial Dream is deep in the collective soul, but it lies this side of the gulf between humanity and the wider astral world. Animals, rocks, planets, even the stars themselves may not

have souls Horrors can feed from, but perhaps it's like seeing a forest for the trees. Supernatural beings in the waking world can't discern the soul of the Earth because it surrounds them, and only humanity is broken enough to have a separate Dream of its own.

Mages talk about an *Anima Mundi* lying beyond a Boundary Stone, but to Beasts the astral world beyond humanity is simply the Mother's Land, to the Primordial Dream as their own Lairs are to the waking world. To reach it, Begotten must find the most fundamental part of the human psyche, deep within the Mists. Begotten with extensive Lairs stand the most chance, as the Primordial forces in their Horrors call to their source. While wandering the Mists, travelers sometimes hear snatches of conversation, song, and poetry, muffled so they can't make out the exact words. Following these deeper and deeper into the Mists leads to the Cave.

The stony ground of the Mists rears up into a cliff, and set into this infinitely high edifice is a ragged cave mouth. Within sight of the Cave, two things immediately become apparent. Anyone breathing the Mists in or around it becomes able to understand any language ever known to a human being, living or dead. Beasts feel a transition as though passing into a Chamber, but much stronger — the sign of the Mother. Within the Cave, every surface is coated in writing, from modern graffiti to older and older examples until the markings give way to cave paintings and fresh, bloody handprints.





THE MOTHER'S HEART

If the Mother's Land is the Lair of the Dark Mother, some Beasts ask, then where is her Heart, or her Horror? What form might the avatar of fear itself take? Some stories about the Progenitor-Beasts place them on the shores of a great black ocean, which matches descriptions mages have of the very limit of the astral worlds. Some of the beings the Awakened encounter out there might be the Mother, or might be to mages as the Progenitor-Beasts are to their Families. Other possible sightings of the Mother in her Land turn out to be powerful Unfettered, protected somehow from being consumed like other travelers. If anyone has met the Dark Mother and survived, they haven't said anything.

The Cave is a tunnel, a passageway (perhaps, some Beasts say, a Burrow?) and leads out of another cave mouth into the Mother's Land, the soul of the Earth itself. The Mother's Land is a wild, untamed landscape, devoid of humanity or the impact it has had on the world. Where the Primordial dreamscape is thin and fragile, everything in the Mother's Land seems large, solid, and somehow more real than waking reality. Forests long since logged as farmland stretch for miles, animals watch travelers with too-intelligent eyes, and rivers flow free of any dams.

The Mother's Land isn't just a nature lover's paradise, it is the birthplace of Horrors. In dark corners, deep forests, and high mountains, Dreamborn formed out of basic animal terrors dwell, protean monsters that stalk, threaten, repulse,

trap, or expose the animal Dreamborn wandering the Land. These monsters are unborn, larval Horrors. Sometimes, a Beast entering the Land catches sight of one moving the other way, driven by some unknowable instinct to move through the Cave. As they travel into the Primordial Dream, the fear-Dreamborn take shape, absorbing human legend as they enter the Mists and eventually find an unclaimed Chamber to settle in, turning it into a nascent Heart. A handful of legends speak of great Progenitor-Beasts Laired somewhere within the Mother's Land, the originating Horrors of each Family.

The Begotten are Primordial, but still creatures of human fears, and in the Mother's Land are out of their habitat. Their Horrors were born of its energies, formed into shape by the pressure of the human soul, and without that pressure they escape like air released into a vacuum. Travelers in the Mother's Land feel themselves being consumed by it, their individual sapient existence blurring and breaking down until they vanish from the Land, waking wherever they first took on Dream Form, suffering as though a Horror had consumed them, and (for Beasts so consumed) starving. A few Beasts believe this is the Dark Mother herself feeding on intruders into her Land and repeatedly offer themselves up as a sign of devotion.

Systems: No shortcuts, Burrows, or travel along thematic lines work in the Mother's Land, and the only Primordial Pathways a Beast can open lead back to more comfortable planes of existence. The Land imposes itself on travelers. To get anywhere, a Beast must walk.

Most travelers within the Mother's Land risk being consumed by the Primordial forces at work in such a deep layer of the soul, and unfortunately for Beasts the more connection a wanderer has to the Dark Mother the worse the effect. Every hour a character spends in the Land, roll Lair + 2 and apply

KIN AND THE MOTHER'S LAND

Exploring the worlds beyond the Cave with a mixed group of companions is unpredictable. Human beings and supernatural creatures who have human-like spiritualities suffer similar effects to Beasts through exposure to the Mother's Land. Substitute their Supernatural Tolerance trait for Lair (or just roll two dice for characters without one.) This includes mages, mummies, vampires, changelings, Bound, skin changers, and immortals. Mages "killed" by the Land suffer a Paradox Condition. Changelings lose any current oaths. Arisen mummies immediately die and enter a new death cycle. Vampires awaken in frenzy.

Beings with spiritual links to the world as a whole — especially those who relate to animals — are entirely immune to the Land's effects. This includes werewolves. Some werewolves experience prophetic "dreams" that actually take place in the Primordial wilderness of the Land.

Some beings were never human and don't belong in the outer Astral at all. The Land strips away their pretenses. Demons and Prometheans use Cover and Pilgrimage instead of Supernatural Tolerance, and lose a dot of the trait instead of Willpower if "killed" by the Land.

The +2 modifier to the Supernatural Tolerance Trait roll and the hourly interval for that roll can both vary depending on what the being is and where they are in the Mother's Land. Some beings find relatively safe areas in the far reaches of the astral worlds — for Beasts, the spawning Lairs of larval Horrors might only prompt the roll once a day, if a character found them.

Finally, some supernatural entities have means of protecting themselves from the Land. Mages can summon a protective shield of their own will that grants an armor rating against the Land's effects. Demons in their demonic form do not suffer injury from the Land.

successes as lethal wounds to Dream Health. Characters “killed” by the Land through these forces wake with the Soul Shocked Condition and lose one Willpower dot, which may be regained for one Experience. Beasts also lose one Chamber from their Lair and any Burrows connected to it, although they do not lose the capacity granted by Lair and may incorporate a new Chamber in its place in the usual ways.

HERE BE MONSTERS

The Primordial Dream and its adjacent astral worlds aren’t empty. Horrors, Dreamborn, and Actors all move through the dream worlds as natives, and Unfettered, other Beasts, and other supernatural beings all have reasons for exploring, too.

ACTORS

The majority of beings found in the heavily populated areas of the Bright Dream and Day aren’t full Dreamborn, but instead mobile parts of the scenery, which Beasts call Actors. They’re the background extras in the Bright Dream’s crowd scenes, the press of humanity in the astral streets. Actors ignore travelers or treat them as part of whatever story they’re playing out, and if killed reform quickly. They are unfortunately unsatisfying fare for a Horror, who need something with a little more psychic “meat.”

Systems: Actors have the three simplified Dream Form traits of Power, Finesse, and Resistance, plus a Dream Health rating. They have no further powers, and if killed reform at the end of the scene. They do not provide Satiety in any way, and aren’t fully sapient, ignoring anything that doesn’t fit into the theme of the dream realm that spawned them. Travelers attacking Actors add their Supernatural Tolerance Trait as a weapon rating, in addition to any weapons they’re using.

DREAMBORN

Inhabitants of the Bright Dream and Mother’s Land, Dreamborn (also called *Goetia*) are the true natives of the astral, as spirits are to Shadow. They vary wildly in power depending on their importance to the collective soul and the individual realm they’re in, from Dreamborn corresponding to an obscure literary character or named characters in populated areas, barely more than Actors, to the mighty astral reflections of gods and fundamental concepts.

Systems: Dreamborn use the rules for spirits found in **Beast: The Primordial**, pp. 182-195, with the following exceptions.

THE INSATIABLE

Some larval horrors don’t take on the shape of human fears by joining with a Chamber, but instead Devour a host while still in their Primordial state. Beasts call the resulting monsters “the Insatiable,” avatars of the Hunger and danger of the Mother’s Land without the focus of a Family. For more on these twisted cousins of the Begotten, see **Night Horrors: Conquering Heroes**.

- No matter where they are in the astral worlds, Dreamborn regain their Rank in Essence per day.
- If they somehow escape into the material world (perhaps through a Primordial Pathway) Dreamborn have a unique state of Twilight separate from those of spirits, ghosts, or angels. They may be sustained by the presence of suitable resonance in the manner of a spirit, and bleed one point of Essence per hour if not.
- Dreamborn speak human languages, not spirit tongue; those originating in the individual soul speak whatever their host speaks, those from the communal Bright Dream speak anything appropriate to their concept, and those from the Mother’s Land speak any language ever known by a sapient being.
- Unlike spirits, ghosts, or angels, Dreamborn do not have Manifestations other than Twilight Form, and although they do have Numina they may not reduce their Influences to buy extra Numina above those provided by Rank.

HORRORS

Deep in the Mists, the larval spawn of the Primordial Mother find nests in Chambers faded from the dreamscape after their migration through the Cave. Once bonded with a Chamber, the Dreamborn transforms into a nascent Horror and gestates, slowly building the power needed to open a Primordial Pathway to a suitable host and perform the Devouring. Unless its Beast becomes Unfettered, a Horror is unable to leave its Lair after it sheds its formless larval nature, but by superimposing that Lair on other realms (even material reality) through Primordial Pathways, the Horror feeds.

Left to their own devices, Horrors instinctively seek out the most potent source of food for their particular Hunger — the individual soul of a human being who is dreaming of a suitable narrative or experiencing one in the waking world. To dreamers fed from in this way, the process feels like a particularly vivid night terror, and unlike a normal dream the memory of it doesn’t fade after waking. To those fed on from within while awake, the situation that provoked a Horror’s attention seems all-important and terror-inducing. It looks, to onlookers in the waking world, like the victim is suffering a panic attack.

Horrors usually die when their Beasts do, leaving the former Chambers of their Lair vacant and fading back into the Mists, where they may become Hearts to new larval Horrors entering the Primordial Dream. Some Begotten believe themselves heirs to ancient Horrors, or find evidence in their Lairs of prior occupation. Beasts argue about whether a new Horror entering a Chamber that was once in a Lair naturally takes the shape of the former occupant, or if Horrors can somehow survive the death of their Beast and Devour a new one.

Systems: Larval Horrors still in the Mother’s Land or in the Mists before finding a Heart are Rank 2 Dreamborn (see above) with Influence over their Family’s type of fear. After they find a Heart, they develop into true Horrors, losing their Influence, Numina, Essence, and other Dreamborn traits but gaining Nightmares, Atavisms, Satiety, a Hunger, and a dot of



Lair. They retain the Dream Form Attributes from their larval stage until they Devour a host, after which their Attributes are based on those of the mortal they are now part of.

Horrors that have no human host open Primordial Pathways to the Oneiros/personal soul without the -1 penalty fully devoured Begotten suffer, and instinctively seek out the souls of people experiencing or dreaming about situations that will allow them to feed.

INHERITANCE

Inheritance brings a Beast closer to the Dark Mother's ideals — the seamless merger of Horror soul with human body. The Devouring is the first step towards this, but the rest is up to the Beast. The Dark Mother establishes the story, but the Beast fills the pages.

Communion with the Dark Mother is the primary motivator to Beasts pursuing Inheritance. They want to live up to the expectations, to the ideal, yet what each ultimately wants is to fill the pages of her Legend. Every Beast feels the Legend from the moment of Devouring. Though she has no words for it, she sees an impression of what is to come. With the first page of her Legend written, the Beast knows she will craft the middle, and that there must logically be an ending. Though inevitable, she wants to make this ending her own. She may end in a blaze of glory between deluded Hero and Rampant Beast, or she may have other, more patient designs. These Beasts who think about their final chapters are the ones for whom the various Inheritances call.

Inheritance is generally the endgame for a **Beast** chronicle. While characters who undergo Inheritance might technically be playable, the changes to the themes, style, and experience of the game mean that they're poorly suited to ongoing play in a group. Rich, powerful stories can be played with Inherited Beasts, but these are more suited to limited games between a Storyteller and a single player, rather than alongside a normal brood of Beasts. This doesn't mean that Inheritance is the end for the character. Inherited Beasts of all types can be powerful secondary characters or antagonists — or unexpected mysteries for lesser Beasts to explore.

LOSS OF SOUL

The Inheritances presented in **Beast: The Primordial** are the most commonly known, but they're not the only options. Not every Inheritance has a positive outcome for the Horror. Retreat and Merger remove the Beast's human element. Perhaps the human feels an ongoing torment to her existence, but she may also feel the Dark Mother's influence so strongly that she wants the Horror to have full access to the world. This Child may strive for Incarnation, but it feels too far beyond her grasp. Instead, she sacrifices herself for the Dark Mother's glory.

The Horror doesn't experience this existential angst. It doesn't think about the impact of its Hunger on others. Its hierarchy of needs is simple — it hungers, it feeds. Humans are more complicated, and carry their own dark impulses from millennia of evolution. The Dark Mother's call inflames these

Beasts in other ways. They reject the Horror's supremacy, finding other Inheritances in these dark paths.

The Inheritances presented here complete the spectrum of the Beast's evolution. Erasure and Inversion come from when the human isn't willing to surrender to the Horror. Conceptually, Erasure is the opposite of Retreat, and Inversion is the antithesis of Merger. Similarly, Divergence contrasts Incarnation. Rather than bringing Horror and human together, Divergence separates both, giving them freedom, but resulting in two lesser beings.

Beasts must quest for knowledge of these paths. Though the Dark Mother doesn't hide them, she does make discovery a challenge. Scholarly Beasts delve through stories and mythology of their own kind, sifting through Heroes' tales to find the Dark Mother's truth beneath the surface of the story. Social monsters interact with other Beasts and kin, exploring the mysteries of their existences to discover the means. Some swim the Primordial Dream's currents, touching upon its truths to construct their own path.

DIVERGENCE — THE BEAST DIVIDED

Divergence separates the Beast from her Horror. Divergence is simultaneously a merger and severance of body and soul. Before, the Horror always watches over the Beast; afterward, Beast and Horror are forever apart. Though they'll always share a connection, the Beast never again feels the Horror's Hunger, and the Horror need never wait for permission to be fed. Divergence is attractive to these Beasts who want respite from the Horror's constant Hunger, but aren't prepared to destroy their soul for this peace.

INITIATING DIVERGENCE

Undertaking Divergence can be difficult for the Beast to commit to. First, the Child forces her Horror into starvation, spending Satiety to achieve the Ravenous Condition. Once Ravenous, she spends a point of Willpower to initiate the Divergence and makes her way into the Lair to become one with the Ravenous Horror.

Though famished, the Beast resists the urge to feed, keeping her Horror enraged and confused. Every day that she maintains the Ravenous state, she spends a point of Willpower and suffers a level of lethal damage. She must be in her Lair when she spends her final point of Willpower or the process automatically fails.

Assuming the Beast hasn't died, the Horror tears itself away, operating on savage survival instinct and certain that the human intends to kill them both. The Horror launches itself on the immediate source of food — the Beast — going beyond its usual diet and feasting on her raw, bloody flesh. Despite the agony, the Beast reciprocates the action. She grabs at the Horror and consumes its corpus to restore the flesh she has lost. The feast continues with neither half dying, as they each replenish what was lost through the cyclical consumption. The Horror becomes imbued with flesh as it eats, while the



Beast steals the Horror's essence to infuse her whole being. The desperate feast may take mere moments or hours, but once complete both the Horror and Beast fall away from each other, sated but exhausted.

The player rolls Resolve + the Horror's Power to determine if she successfully completed the Divergence.

Roll Result

Dramatic Failure: The Divergence fails. Though Beast and Horror narrowly survive, they suffer crippling after effects. Reduce all Attributes to one dot — these can't increase to greater than half the Beast's Lair (rounded down). The ongoing existence of such a diminished Beast is almost inevitably brief and miserable.

Failure: One half kills the other in the feeding frenzy. The surviving half lingers for (Lair) days before following her body or soul into death.

Success: The Beast achieves Divergence. The Horror becomes a creature of flesh, able to leave the Lair and move into the physical world. The Beast becomes half spirit and can enter the Lair as usual. The Beast never need feed the Horror's Hunger again.

Exceptional Success: The Beast absorbs more of her Horror's aspect in the feeding. Pick one Atavism that continues to function despite the Divergence. The Horror also maintains its link to the Primordial Dream, and chooses one Nightmare that it may continue to use.

MESSY DIVORCE

Divergence isn't a free release from ever-present hunger; the Beast sacrifices power for freedom. She also loses control over the Horror, which is free to pursue its own alien goals with the glee of an entity with no remorse, guilt, or empathy.

- The Beast loses access to Atavisms, the physical extensions of the Horror's presence in the physical world.
- The Horror may not inflict Nightmares, as its spiritual connection to the Primordial Dream is severely weakened.
- The Horror no longer welcomes the Beast's presence. It won't kill the Beast (it can't without killing itself), but it will intimidate and bully what it views as its weaker sibling. This may include non-fatally injuring the Beast if the Horror is sufficiently angered.
- The Beast draws from the Horror's Satiety, which affects how any remaining Atavisms and Nightmares work. This also annoys the Horror. Its antagonism towards the Beast is largely dictated by how much Satiety the Beast has spent since they last met.
- The Horror is Storyteller controlled. It can physically leave the Lair in either its monstrous Horror form or as a copy of the Beast's human form. Even in human form its eyes remain that of the Horror, and can never be mistaken for human. The Horror can change between forms as an instant action — this can be freely done within the Lair, but costs a point of Satiety elsewhere.

- The Horror's activities tend to draw hunters, even if they aren't Heroes. Those tracking the Horror instead often seem to find the Beast, who must deal with the Horror's enemies.

ERASURE – THE HORROR ELIMINATED

When life as a Beast is unbearable, some seek solace through extreme acts of feeding, pushing the Horror to slumber and leave them in peace. This temporary solution isn't enough for all. Some commit suicide, either killing both human and Horror, or pursuing Retreat or Merger. In any case, the human aspect of the Beast is gone and only the Horror remains.

Other Beasts want solace from the Horror, but selfishly intend to cling to life. These Beasts follow the path of Erasure, hunting for the means to murder their Horror while saving themselves.

INITIATING ERASURE

Erasure is difficult to accomplish. It requires no particular strength of Lair or epic Legend, but most Beasts need help to succeed, as entering the Lair to confront the Horror almost inevitably ends with merger between the two.

As the death of Horror or Beast usually leads to death of the other, the first challenge for the Beast is avoiding this fate by obtaining a replacement soul. In this she has numerous options, most of which involve making deals and doing favors for other monsters. However the Beast obtains it, her player spends a dot of Willpower to temporarily attune the soul to her. This keeps the soul close to her heart, where it waits to take the place of the hungry darkness of the Horror. Once she has the soul, all the Beast needs to do is kill her Horror. Though each Beast may have a different way to achieve this, like all aspects of Erasure, the task is easier said than done.

The murderous Beast who chooses to commit the deed herself must circumvent merging with her Horror the instant she enters the Lair. One solution is to force-feed the Horror to inflict the Slumbering Condition upon it. Though she avoids merger, she is vulnerable to her own Lair Traits while making her way to the Heart Chamber, and must have a way to unleash destruction upon the sleeping Horror without the benefit of her Primordially derived gifts. The violent assault must be devastating; the Beast has to destroy the Horror in a single blow or it will wake from the slumber and merge with the Beast. This destroys the soul, forcing the Beast to acquire another if she wishes to make another attempt at Erasure.

Other Beasts prefer to outsource this aspect of Erasure. Through links like Family Ties they may be able to ask for the unthinkable, and mages, werewolves, changelings, or other creatures may agree to enter the Lair and kill the Horror. Pacifying the Horror can help here as well. What the allies gain in return from the Beast depends entirely on the relationship.

Some desperate Beasts go beyond enlisting the aid of kin, seeking help from Heroes. Such narratives fit within the Hero's expectations; the Horror possessed the poor victim Beast, and the Hero must save her. Such Heroes may believe they're seeing

WHAT ABOUT THE SOUL?

In the *Chronicles of Darkness*, souls are vital but individuals don't necessarily keep the same soul their entire lives. Beasts replace their souls with Horrors through the Devouring, but many other creatures can also remove and replace souls without long-term ill effects.

The difference between Horror and soul means that — in theory — a Beast might return to humanity by simply removing her Horror and replacing it with a human soul, essentially reversing the Devouring. In practice, the Horror is a tenacious tenant, and refuses all attempts to dislodge it. Whether powerful magic could perform such a feat is left to the Storyteller's discretion.

beyond the surface of the Primordial Dream, into the tragedy that befalls all Beasts as they undergo the Devouring.

Regardless of the method used, Erasure doesn't guarantee survival. The moment the Horror dies, the player rolls to check if the Beast follows it into death's darkness. The character rolls her highest Finesse + Resistance Attributes – Lair versus the Horror's Power + Resistance – Satiety. The Horrors of Beasts with high Lair ratings are firmly embedded in the Primordial Dream — their destruction threatens to drag the Beast down with them. Similarly, the more sated the Horror, the less able it is to rouse its rage and fight oblivion. If the Beast wins this contested roll, she is free of the Horror and her stolen soul takes its place. If the Horror wins the contest, or both fail the roll, the Beast dies with the Horror.

ALMOST HUMAN

Irrespective of the Beast's survival, her connection to the Primordial Dream is shattered and the Lair begins to disintegrate. Chambers collapse at the rate of one every (Lair) minutes, as per **Beast: The Primordial**, p. 100. Any survivors trapped within a Chamber when it collapses are forever lost within the Primordial Dream.

What was once a Beast is now all but indistinguishable from human. Most Erased retain some traces of their previous existence, which tend to fade in time. The Erased experience the following effects:

- The Erased retains whatever Satiety remained when the Horror died.
- The Erased loses her Atavisms. If she achieved an exceptional success on her contested roll, she retains one Atavism of her choice. As long as she has Satiety, she retains her Birthright and Nightmares. If her Satiety ever reaches zero, she immediately loses these last traces of existence as a Beast.
- The character can never regain Satiety through feeding the Horror. She must take it from other Beasts by consuming

their flesh or blood. The Erased gains one point of Satiety for each point of lethal damage inflicted on the victim.

- The Beast's Lair is gone. She can never make another, though she can enter the Lairs of other Beasts if invited. Horrors can sense an Erased's betrayal. If their own Beasts aren't present in the Lair to control them, they immediately attack the Erased with lethal intent.
- The Erased can't ever become another type of supernatural being. The Dark Mother precludes any kin from claiming the ungrateful Child. The God-Machine's servants may find a use for her, as they are beyond the Dark Mother's purview.

INVERSION — THE HERO'S REBIRTH

Perhaps the most insidious form of Inheritance is Inversion. The Inverted turn their pain into punishment toward their former cousins. A Beast who pursues Inversion is disgusted by his own existence. The Devouring was a lingering trauma; his existence as a Beast an ongoing nightmare.

Though a prospective Inverted loathes his existence, he's not suicidal. He blames the Horror for the pain, but understands it is merely an extension of the Dark Mother, for whom he reserves his true hatred. As he has no way of confronting Her directly, he turns to slaughtering Her children, hoping to draw Her out for a final, Heroic, stand.

The path to Inversion is much like the path of Erasure, but the Inverted has no desire to return to simple, weak humanity. The Inverted needs a tiny portion of his Horror to retain the smallest connection to the Primordial Dream.

Unlike Heroes, the Inverted don't feel disturbances to the Primordial Dream as a sense of unease. They know what causes disturbances, and they know how to find them. The Inverted's crippled Horror reaches out towards the presence of its former siblings.

INITIATING INVERSION

To subdue the Horror, the Beast undergoes a spiritual journey exploring the link between Beast, Primordial Dream, and Heroes. Through this, the pre-Inverted better understands how Anathema tear at Beasts. Though the pre-Inverted can't place Anathema on others, he learns how to craft and place a unique Anathema on his own Horror to hurt and slice away at it until the point of death. An Inverted's Anathema is always a physical item that must be crafted by her own hands using the secrets revealed by her journey.

To discover her Anathema, the Beast leaves the safety of her Lair in the Primordial Dream and heads towards the Bright Dream (p. 153). Here she must find and study the impact of her actions on the thoughts and emotions of the people around her, from her closest human friends, to the checkout operator where she does her weekly shopping. Though it can't be seen in the waking world, the Beast's story changes everyone around him, and understanding these changes shows him the shape

of his Anathema. While the player and Storyteller should explore the Beast's impact through the story, the player makes an Extended Intelligence + Occult roll requiring 20 successes to discover the Beast's Anathema, with each roll covering a week of daily exploration.

This journey doesn't go unnoticed. The Horror grows uneasy and restless. It pushes at the Beast to understand what is happening. Contact with the Horror weakens the Beast's ability to find his Anathema. Until he achieves the required number of successes, he subtracts one from his accumulated successes each time he uses his Birthright or Atavisms, and subtracts (Lair dots) if he merges with the Horror.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: In addition to the effects of a failure, the character suffers -2 dice to his next roll.

Failure: The Primordial Dream punishes the character for his insolence. He either gains the Abruption Condition, or forever abandons his attempt at Inversion.

Success: Successes are accumulated towards unlocking the secrets in crafting his Anathema.

Exceptional Success: The character either reduces total successes by his Occult, reduces the time per roll to five days, or gains the Inspired Condition in crafting or using the Anathema, should he succeed in discovering it.

The Beast must gather the materials and craft the discovered Anathema with his own hands. The Anathema requires (Lair dots) in components — often uncommon or difficult to locate, but never impossible to find. Once gathered, building the Anathema simply requires succeeding on a Wits + Crafts roll as the components assemble as if in a dream. However it appears, the Anathema is a melee weapon with a weapon rating equal to the Beast's Strength and an Initiative of 0. Should someone other than the Beast wield it — including non-Heroes — it counts as a Weaponbound Anathema against the Beast.

Armed with the Anathema, the Beast confronts his Horror. He doesn't merge with the Horror while wielding the Anathema. The Horror, in turn, matches the betrayal with furious hostility. Beast and Horror fight to the death. Both are immune to the Lair's Traits, but both can use powers against the other, drawing from the same Satiety pool. The Storyteller determines the Horror's Traits, referring to The Horror Itself (p. 99), Other Traits (p. 187), — the Horror's Size is equal to Lair dots for determining Corpus — and Combat (p. 188) in **Beast: The Primordial**.

If the Horror wins, the player rolls to see if it undergoes the Retreat (**Beast: The Primordial** p.234). If the Beast wins, the final blow doesn't kill the Horror. Instead, it binds the Anathema to the Horror's form, leaving it lingering near death where it fell. The Anathema can't be removed by the Inverted or any other Beast, but can be removed by a Hero by simply grasping the weapon's hilt and drawing it from the Horror's carcass. Removing the Anathema instantly kills the Horror and the Inverted.





AVATAR OF VENGEANCE

The Inverted pursues his vendetta with a single-mindedness that even the most psychotically focused Hero would admire. His time is likely short, as his most dangerous ability — tracking Beasts — works both ways.

- The Inverted loses his Satiety pool, but keeps his Birthright, Atavisms, and Nightmares. He only ever benefits from the normal effect. He loses all Satiety Conditions — his Horror is beyond feeding.
- The Inverted's Lair persists, though he can't make it larger. He retains his immunity to relevant Lair traits — even in the Lairs of his prey.
- A Perception roll tells the Inverted if any Beast was present in an area within (Lair) days. Should he detect a Beast, he knows the direction in which they are located. With an exceptional success he also knows the approximate distance in miles. If a Beast survives an attack from an Inverted, she also gains access to this power against him.
- The Inverted can place Anathema, just like a Hero, but these Anathema attach themselves to the Inverted as well as the Beast. The Inverted always suffers the middle Satiety effect, and can't shed the Anathema until his quarry is dead.

BEAST TRIUMPHANT — THE INCARNATE

Incarnation stands apart from the other forms of Inheritance, as it requires significantly greater investment to achieve. Incarnation is a lofty goal that should be out of reach of young, inexperienced Beasts. Incarnation is for Beasts with significant resonance within the Primordial Dream, with eight Lair dots minimum before even attempting to transform Legend into Myth. For a starting character who hasn't invested Merit dots into additional Lair dots, this requires 35 Experiences. A player who takes full advantage of Beat-generation, with a generous Storyteller, will need around 40 sessions of play to earn these Experiences. Such a character might have a high Lair rating, but she'll be ill-prepared to face Incarnation's other challenges — or most other challenges a Beast faces.

A character that aspires to Incarnation can take steps to help towards that goal. She can walk paths towards Incarnation, learning about herself and her Legend as she goes. She achieves greater understanding to eventually help her transform Legend into Myth, and can reduce Incarnation's Lair requirement. Players should talk to their Storyteller to introduce path elements into her Beast's experience. Exploring the paths is compatible with existing with her brood. Some choices may increase life's difficulties, which may impact her broodmates, but they're also likely to make choices that challenge her adherence to the paths.

UNNATURAL SELECTION

It's inevitable that some hives will have multiple Beasts seeking Incarnation. This is rarely noticeable for those beginning their journey, but competition increases as they tread closer to their goal. Limited ways exist to transform Legend into Myth. While these catalysts for solidifying Legend aren't incompatible, they do tend to strain the Primordial Dream and make it more difficult for anyone to reach the goal.

Beast: The **Primordial** presents several suggestions for how Beasts can turn Legend into Myth. Some are limited to one Beast per area — there can only be one Apex in a hive. Others are focused on individuals in ways that aren't mutually exclusive. Multiple Beasts could subvert their own Heroes, or spawn their Legend through grandiose displays. Each attempt makes duplications more difficult, but not impossible. Heroes learn to avoid the subversion, and populations will only be awed (or cowed) by grand displays so many times before hubris sets in.

The most likely way multiple Beasts will reach Incarnation is through cooperation. The Primordial Dream is vast, with enough room for every conceivable Legend. Beasts don't have to compete if they can find compatible niches to explore. For every story of a terrifying monster oppressing the land, a tale exists of the grand dark vizier pulling the puppet king's strings. Indeed, collaborative Beasts can impact the Primordial Dream in ways that a singular Incarnate could never realize.

THE FOUR PATHS

Proactive Beasts who want to attune their Legends with eventual Incarnation devote their actions to four paths — Family, Hunger, Nightmare, and Legend. Every Beast treads these paths, though most do so ad hoc. Focusing on one path at a time brings benefits. These Beasts resonate with the Primordial Dream, infiltrating their Legends into humanity's subconscious. The world expects them to Incarnate, and paves the way.

As the character explores his connection to the Dark Mother, his place in the Primordial Dream, and his Legend, he learns what he is, and what he is not. He learns what he has in common with other Beasts, but more importantly, what makes his Legend unique.

Beasts need not complete every path. Priorities can change, or he may discover aspects that he no longer wants to emphasize — Beasts aren't immune to the discomfort of self-inspection. A Beast who voluntarily steps from the path can try again as long as he didn't try to attune his resonance with the path. Once he has attempted attunement, he is committed. He either succeeds or fails. If he fails, that path is forever closed to him. This doesn't stop him from seeking Incarnation, but that aspect won't give him an advantage.

WALKING THE PATHS

The Primordial Dream builds a journey through Family, Hunger, Nightmare, and Legend, though a Beast can tread the paths in any order, or avoid some if she chooses. No checklist exists of what a Beast must do to succeed on a path. Player and Storyteller should prepare key lessons appropriate to the

character, and develop opportunities for the character to be challenged to question what he knows about these. Further aspects will likely be revealed in play and added to the list.

The **Family** path explores how the key fears are rooted deep within humanity's collective soul. The Beast on the path works to understand how his manifestation of Family establishes its own terrifying niche. What one human finds revolting may be tolerable — even pleasing — to another. How does hopelessness differ between the rich woman and the poor man? Does a human raised in the arctic circle, with entire days of darkness, have different fears than an equatorial tropics dweller?

The Begotten must test the edges of what she believes is her specialty; she expands it to see how far she can go, and defines what is best left to others. She should abandon her comfortable niche and try others, for only then will she know how to shape her Myth. She can only truly understand her role in the family after pushing the boundaries; by succeeding, and more often learning through failure. With her place defined, she embodies the aspect in all that she does. The Incarnate shouldn't be afraid to rule its domain.

Hunger is the other side of the coin for every Beast. This is no exploration of why the Horror is eternally hungry — that is fact. Instead, she explores *how* Horrors hunger, both hers and others. Why does one Horror demand spilled blood and pain, while another collects rare items? What differences exist between these — apart from the obvious — and what does each have in common? The Beast searches the underlying condition of hunger, especially how the relationship between hunger and humanity's fears.

Hunger isn't an intellectual experience. The Beast needs to understand how hunger feels. She deliberately examines each Satiety Condition by forcing herself to stay within a Condition until she gains understanding, no matter the inconvenience. She is mindful to the transition between Conditions. The slow, excruciatingly delightful change from Starving to Sated; the sick, overfull move from Gorged to Slumbering; or the painful, soul-wracking privation of Starving to Ravenous.

The **Nightmare** path explores how Beasts channel Family and Hunger as unique expressions of the Primordial Dream. The Beast studies the apparently symbiotic relationship between the Primordial Dream and humanity. This is superficially simple; the Primordial Dream gathers and pools humanity's collective fears, humans tap into this pool and experience the fears of their ancestors. It's called the *Primordial* Dream because of the ancient fears contained within. Experienced Beasts see that courage is an expression of the conscious mind, as nightmares come when the subconscious walks unchecked through thoughts and fears.

Beneath the surface, those exploring the path of Nightmares find something more troubling that they must try to understand. At some stage in human evolution — especially social evolution — the balance shifted. The fear added to the Primordial Dream was less than what humans took from it. Certainly, some Beasts have more modern aspects to their Horrors — the serial killers, the escaped asylum patients, the

grinding gears of progress — but most still represent the old terrors of giants and darkness and unseen depths. Those on this path wonder why humans still dream of hungry predators creeping from the darkness to snatch the unwary from caves, when modern fears of industrial revolutions, choking pollution, and the inhumanity of crushing populations are all-pervasive on nightly news and social media. If the Dark Mother knows, she's not revealed it, but Beasts contemplating their transcendent nature need to find meaning in the mystery of how humanity experiences fear.

A Beast walking the path of **Legend** casts a spotlight on himself. She examines everything she's done as a Beast and how she intends to continue. The path of Legend is somewhat like Incarnation in miniature, as the Beast rehearses similar challenges. This highlights areas she needs to improve to increase her chances, or callously demonstrates that she may be unsuitable to ever Incarnate.

Part of the Legend is understanding the relationship between Hero and Beast. Many Beasts think Heroes are deluded fools, but this is a simplification. Heroes may be wrong, but they're also products of the Primordial Dream. Legends weave familiar shapes that almost demand the presence of a Hero. The Hero's mistake is believing he's the focus of the story. While this isn't true, too many Beasts believe the Hero has no part in their Legend, which is also untrue.

Many Beasts falter on this path. The honest, critical look reveals shortcomings but rarely gives guidance on how to improve. The Beast devotes additional effort into fixing the flaws she's found, if she has the stomach and motivation to do so. Some see how long the journey before them is, and simply stop. Others reach an epiphany of sudden understanding, and understand that their Legend is unlikely to reach Incarnation. This doesn't imply weakness, simply that fate intends a different goal for them. These Children are perhaps the Dark Mother's most faithful disciples, as they sacrifice their dreams for what they believe are her wishes. None can say for certain whether this is the Dark Mother's intervention.

DANGERS ON THE PATH

Increasing resonance with the Primordial Dream isn't without risks. Resonance amplifies ripples that attract attention. A Beast on the path disturbs the dreamscapes of Heroes, making it far more likely that one will set out to stop her.

Walking the paths also attracts larval Horrors to the Beast's Lair, drawn from the Mother's Land (p. 155) by the ripples the Beast leaves in her wake. Her Horror usually resents these intruders, who bicker and war among themselves. These larvae aren't hostile by default, but they are hungry. Beasts with the Sated or Gorged Conditions are prime targets for the interlopers; players whose characters have either of these Conditions must roll Presence + Intimidation – current Satiety. Success indicates the Horror has cowed other rogues into submission. Failure means an intruder steals a point of Satiety from the Beast; on a dramatic failure, the larvae swarm the Horror, devouring half the Beast's current Satiety (rounded up) before it can fight them off.



A Slumbering Horror is particularly vulnerable. Unless the Beast arranges protection for her Horror while in this state, the lesser creatures will kill and consume it, inadvertently killing the Beast in turn.

RESONATING WITH THE PRIMORDIAL DREAM

Mechanically determining a character's progress on a path is simple. The Storyteller awards the character a die at the end of each chapter where the character sought knowledge and learned something significant about her place on the path. A character can only tread one path at time, if she chooses to learn about another path, she forfeits any accumulated dice.

At the end of each story, the player chooses whether to roll the dice. She is not required to roll, but once she does, she is locked into the path. She either completes it or fails. Either way, she can never attempt that path again.

Dramatic Failure: The character's failure upsets her resonance with the Primordial Dream. She has fundamentally failed to understand this path, and increases the Lair requirement for Incarnation by one, to a maximum of nine.

Failure: The character fails to understand how this path contributes to her Legend. She steps from the path and can't gain further understanding of it. The player may turn this into a dramatic failure and take a Beat.

Success: The character gains an understanding of how the current path aids her Incarnation goal; her Legend more closely resonates with the Primordial Dream. She completes this path and reduces the Incarnation Lair requirement by one.

Exceptional Success: The character has greater understanding of the path's role, and gains insight into the other paths she has not yet trod. In addition to the benefits of success, the character begins her next path with two dice already in her pool, or can reattempt a previously failed path



You know what's out there?

No, you don't. Stop trying to list them off.
Yeah, yeah, you've met the vampires and the werewolves
and the ghosts and so forth, but you haven't seen
a hundredth of what's really there.

Look, I'm not shaming you. I'm trying to make a point.
You don't know. You never will. There's no complete
picture, no magic moment where you see the whole truth
and get to yell "ah-ha!"

You don't know. I don't
know. We never will.

That's really a good thing,
my sister, because it means
there's so much yet to see.

—Zmei

The Beast Player's Guide expands on the material presented in *Beast: The Primordial*, with additional information on the Families and Hungers, what it feels like to be a Beast and experience the Devouring, and how to commune with the Dark Mother. You'll also find two new Families and two new Hungers!

The book also includes a plethora of new Atavisms, Nightmares, Merits, and Birthrights, as well as systems for creating smaller, subservient versions of the Horror, new forms of Inheritance, and details on the mysterious Obcasus Rites.

BEAST

THE PRIMORDIAL

