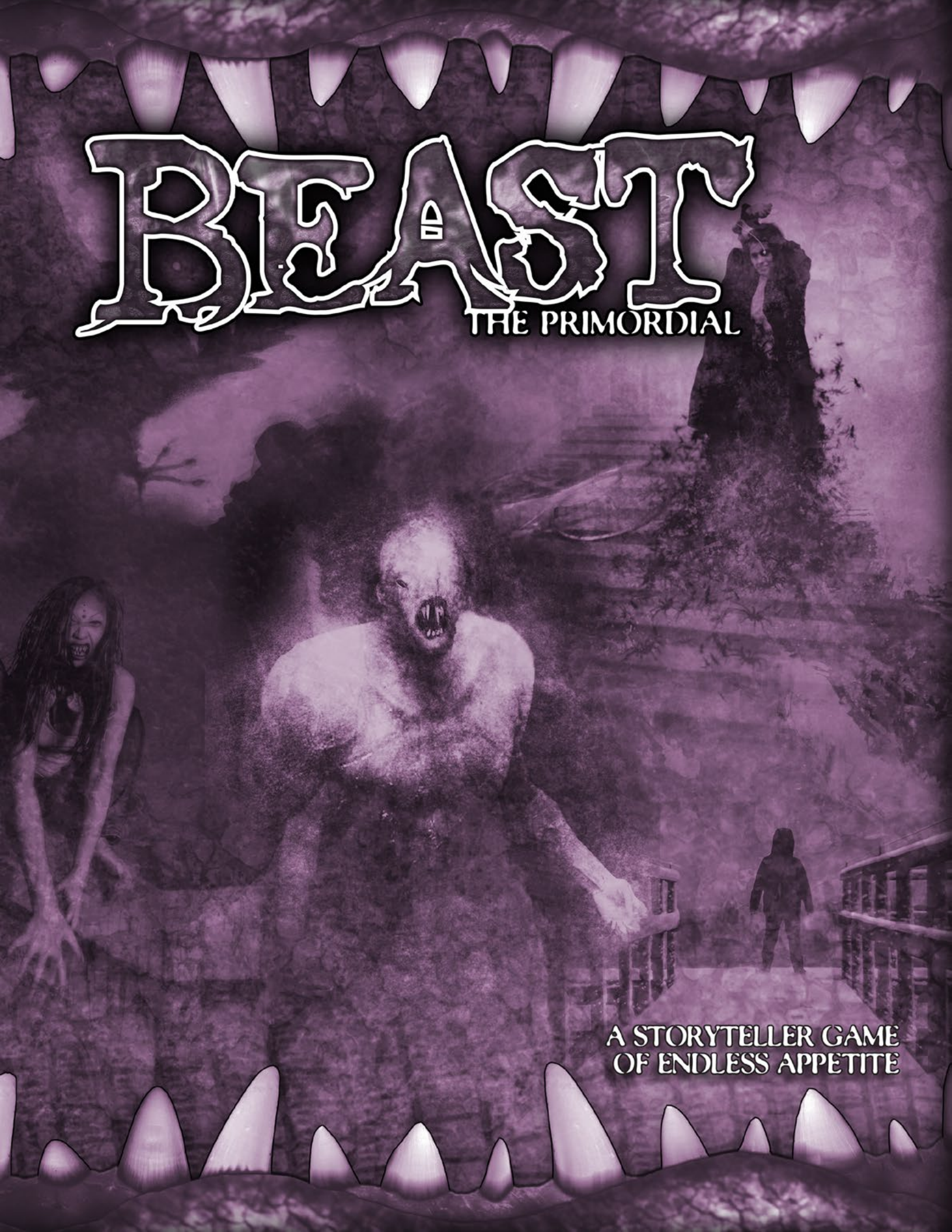
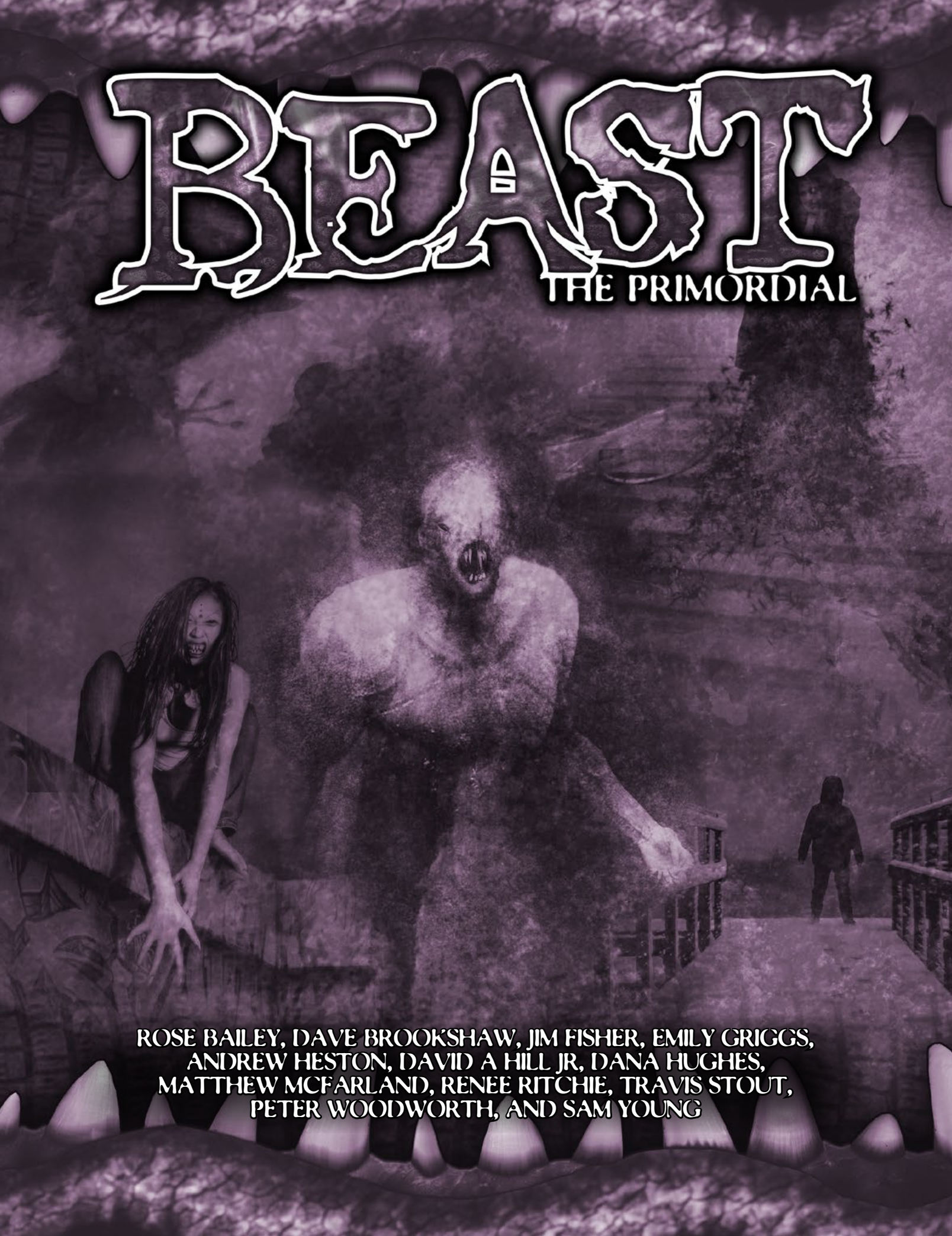

BEAST
THE PRIMORDIAL
A STORYTELLER GAME
OF ENDLESS APPETITE

BEAST

THE PRIMORDIAL



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THE PRIMORDIAL

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LINEAGE

"Mom? Ben's acting weird."

Laurie started guiltily out of her doze, sending the paperback in her lap tumbling into the sand. She shielded her eyes from the noonday glare and followed where Jessica was pointing. Her son stood a little ways away with his back to her, swaying in that unsteady way toddlers have, but otherwise unmoving. Ben was well away from the water line, but something about the way he stood there sent a chill down Laurie's back.

"You were supposed to be watching him!" Laurie snapped as she stood up, fear shifting to irritation. She brushed the sand from her legs and glared down at her eldest daughter, who spread her hands in surrender.

"I was!" Jessica said. "He was building sandcastles until *literally* just now. Then he just got up, turned around, and walked to that spot. It's not like I would let him get anywhere near the water, Mom. Relax."

"Nice, Jess," Laurie said, but the irritation was already evaporating, leaving behind a film of guilt for falling asleep in the first place. She didn't ask why Jess hadn't simply gone and checked on Ben herself. Ben was often got in moods where only Laurie could console him.

Today he'd been especially fussy. She'd been forced to swap with Jess and sit in the backseat with him to quiet him down on the drive from Philadelphia, and even then he'd been so unruly that Matt had joked about leaving him to be raised by coyotes in the Pine Barrens. Laurie suspected taking the twins mini-golfing was his way of recovering. He never said it, but she knew Ben's insistence on her and only her bothered Matt sometimes.

"Hey, punkin," Laurie said, standing over Ben with her legs on either side of him. Normally it made him giggle and swing around her legs like tree trunks, but he didn't so much as look up. "Whatcha doin'?"

Ben didn't answer.

"Are you OK, sweetie?" Laurie tousled his hair. Still no response. Ben was staring straight ahead, eyes focused, lips moving without sound, little hands clenching and unclenching. She sat down beside him. "What do you see?"

"Mama," Ben said.

Laurie frowned. That wasn't his name for her. She was always Mommy. "Mommy's right here, honey." She reached down and took one of his hands.

At last he looked at her, eyes bright and happy, smiling shyly like he was sharing a secret. He pointed a pudgy finger. "Mama in the water."

Laurie looked at the waves, but they were empty, as far as she could see. She forced a cheer she didn't quite feel into her voice. "Well, you say goodbye to her, buddy, because it's time for lunch. Past time, actually. Let's go get sandwiches, OK?"

Ben nodded and took her hand. "Bye, Mama," he said, waving at the sea.

That night Laurie lay awake for hours, telling herself that the dark shape she saw when Ben said goodbye had been a trick of the sunlight on the ocean. That there was nothing in the ocean so impossibly enormous, much less so close to the shoreline, right beneath the surface.

Nothing at all.

TALES OF THE DARK MOTHER
SABIA

The sword rammed through Sabia's back is awkward. A vicious square peg in a round hole. Awkward. Awkward to be surprised by a Hero in her own home, awkward to let herself neglect her Hunger. That's the word she keeps turning over in her head, and it almost makes her laugh as she loses all her air. She wonders if she can turn her body. She wonders if she can take a step or take a breath, or any other motion she takes for granted. But she wonders, if she goes too fast, if she won't cut herself in two.

Sabia falls in an ugly, graceless kind of way as Isolde, the Hero wrenches the sword back. Its curve hooks a rib like a prize bass, and Sabia thrashes uselessly. Agony turns to memory. She's six-years-old with sleep paralysis, being weighed down by a nothing in the dark, calling out without a word for her mother to Please help! Please help! Only later would she understand what the nothing was trying to tell her about fear. How she could make it her friend.

But fear isn't her friend right now, as Isolde rolls Sabia onto her back. "I'm actually sorry. A bit."

"I know," Sabia says, surprised she believes such bullshit, but the pain whites out all cynicism. She should feel hate and spite, but vengeance seems like such a waste of energy. All she wants is to fall into the Dream, but the Dream won't take her in this state.

Isolde produces a little black vile and cracks it over the blade. "It's not personal. It's just what I do." Survival pushes Sabia's body, forcing her into a last ditch slide across the kitchen floor. Isolde runs the sword through her heart before she can even reach the wall.

Finally, the Dream takes her. It opens up from behind Isolde in bright, endless wings, wrapping over them both.

Sabia is warm. She's that six-year-old again, and her mother is holding her little body tightly. She tastes salt tears, but she doesn't want to cry anymore.

Do you want to go back to sleep, baby?

"I'm scared."

Do you want to stay up with me?

"I don't know."

Her mother kisses her forehead and sings a lullaby she doesn't remember. It has no notes. It's the color of ice and sweet like corpses. It's the most wonderful thing Sabia has ever felt. It makes her think of pain. Of the nothing in the dark. That fear is her friend.

Do you want to go back to sleep?

"No."

The Dream falls away, and time takes her mind back. She's cold, standing, leaning on the sword, unlocking the contents of Isolde's stomach. They're both surprised.

Survival is pushing Isolde's body now, but her voice betrays her. "I...saw her..."

"I know," Sabia says, as they both begin to bleed out.

INTRODUCTION

You don't suffer nightmares.

You cause them.

You were normal, once. At least more than you are now. You got up and went about your daily routine like anyone else — work, school, family, friends — with the same petty complaints and ambitions as anyone else you knew, except that you never quite fit in. People might have called you a troublemaker, a tattletale, a great judge of character, or an empath. You might know the truth, though: you dream deep.

Your dreams pull you down into horrific, dark places with unholy monsters. Maybe they swoop down upon you from above, leaving you feeling exposed and vulnerable when you wake. Perhaps you dream of drowning, of tentacles yanking you into blackened deeps, or maybe your nightmares see you wandering in a dark wood with only an occasional growl to warn you of the creature seeking your heart's blood.

Whatever the nature of your nightmares, though, when you wake, *things make sense*. You sweat and your heart pounds, but you find wisdom in fear. Many people draw strength and perspective from their dreams, but yours give you purpose. In some ways, then, it was no surprise when you came face to face with a real monster. It might have been something you recognized from your dreams, or maybe not; either way, suddenly it all made sense.

I remember a time or two way out on the prairie ... I'd get the feelin' somethin' was behind me. Somethin' waitin' for me to become it.

—Garth Ennis, *Preacher: Alamo*

The dreams are real. The monsters are out there, in the real world, walking among us. Some people — like you — visit the Primordial Dream without their help, but most do not. Most need help to learn the lessons of fear. That is why monsters are there to teach them. Answers do not come easily. Wisdom has a price. The Children of the Dark Mother exact that price from those in need of the truth and use it to feed the Horror within.

The monsters, whoever they were, offered you a chance to become one of them and guide humanity to hard-fought wisdom. You accepted; that night, you were Devoured. When you awoke the next morning, you were no longer human...but oh, the lessons you now have to teach.

You still walk among the flock, but you certainly aren't one of them anymore. You satisfy your Hunger as you will and leave nightmares in your wake, keeping the world properly afraid of the terrors that lurk just out of sight. You slide in and out of supernatural societies as easily as you blend in with the human world; the other inhabitants of night — the vampires, werewolves, changelings and stranger things still — are your kin, and they have their own lessons to teach. You have your hunting grounds and your Lair, a special pocket of the Primordial Dream that belongs just to you. As you build it, you grow in power, and the nightmares you grant become more intense. This carries its own risks, of course, but it allows you to teach, and feast, far more effectively.

Of course, the human world doesn't understand what you're doing. It's not easy being the monster everyone was raised to hate and destroy. The Beast who Devoured you, your Big Brother or Sister, told you to do

your best to minimize the harm, to teach without causing lasting damage, and to choose targets who will spread the wisdom you grant them. You might take that advice. Alternatively, you might simply embrace your monstrous nature and become the villain of a thousand legends before you. If your Legend grows, your lessons could reach entire cultures; it might be the whole human race that awakens breathless, terrified, but wiser.

Overview

In **Beast: The Primordial**, you play one of the Children, a human being whose soul has been replaced by one of the great monsters of legend: dragons, gryphons, giants, kraken, and worse. You became one of the Children when another Beast entered your dreams and Devoured your soul. In that moment of oblivion, your soul became the monster. Beasts are not born, but reborn, Begotten in a moment of terror by one of the Children of the Dark Mother. This is the life of the Children: preying on humanity enough to feed the Horror within, teaching people to listen to their nightmares and take wisdom from loss and fear, tending their Lairs as they guard their territory, and moving freely between mortal society and supernatural cultures as legends in both.

Even before the Devouring, you had a connection to the Primordial Dream. All your life you've had nightmares, the classic dreams so common to human nature. Maybe the dreams were varied, maybe it was one recurring nightmare with different details. Hunted by a relentless predator. Dragged into the murky depths. Dropped from great heights. Held under the thumb of something huge and powerful. Or simply the inescapable dread that comes from knowing that some nameless, shapeless *thing* out there in the dark was stalking you. It was nothing human beings haven't suffered since the dawn of civilization, but you listened to the dreams. You woke up following these visions knowing how they related to you and your life. The lesson wasn't always pleasant; often it was painful and carried loss with it. You almost always knew, though, how to incorporate the dream into your life.

At first you didn't know how they found you or why they chose you, but you soon learned the truth. The world has grown too crowded; human settlements have grown too large. People's minds are overloaded, and they can't hear the lessons the Primordial Dream teaches. Other creatures of darkness can teach these lessons, but it isn't in their nature to do so; most of them don't know how. The Dark Mother, therefore, reaches into the minds of those who listen; these people are the ones marked for Devouring.

As one of these people, you were offered a choice: lose your soul, but gain a higher purpose and feast deeply on the fears of humanity...or remain a dreamer. You chose to be a Beast. After it was done, you were welcome into a brood.

Discovering one's true Family can be traumatic, but for many of the Children, it's a profound relief. They finally understand the reason for the dreams that have been driving them for their whole lives. They have the chance to grant others a lesson from pain and fear, to give people a moment of catharsis. And, of course, that moment of catharsis feeds the Horror inside the Beast. Everyone wins. Not every Beast is a good teacher, however. Some succumb to bitterness, or revel in the power the Horror provides, and descend into sadism and brutality. Some of them listen too closely to their Horrors; a bad idea when all a Horror wants is to feed.

Every Beast feeds on fear: the greater and more widespread the fear, the greater the meal. The Begotten regard themselves as teachers, but the truth is that they must choose the lessons they impart wisely. A Beast who teaches nothing and instills fear just for the sake of the feast reflects badly on all Children, bringing the wrong kind of attention to them. Some Beasts associate with other supernatural beings, learning how they interact with humanity and helping them to teach their own lessons, if they are willing. Such Children must be careful, though; these creatures have their own societies, mores, and agendas. It is all too easy for a Beast to become enamored of their cousins' ways of life and forget their own role in the World of Darkness.

The Beast with A Thousand Faces

Every culture tells stories of monsters, many of them incompatible with one another, thus determining the truth of any given assertion is nearly impossible. If you factor in the other supernatural creatures of the World of Darkness and their legends, the truth can get complicated indeed. In order to understand a bit more about the characters in **Beast: The Primordial**, here are some common beliefs and how they align with the Begotten:

- **Beasts aren't human:** True. Beasts are born human, though most of them experience deep, primal nightmares throughout their lives — an intrinsic connection to the Primordial Dream. At some point, another of the Children finds the incipient Beast and offers to change her through Devouring. From that point on, the person is no longer fully human, having lost her soul and replaced it with a Horror.

  Some Beasts claim that they have *never* been human, however, and that the Devouring merely cleared away detritus. Instead of replacing a human soul with a Horror, they say, the Devouring clarifies the connection, allowing the Horror that was always present to come forth. Indeed, some Beasts claim that the Devouring was spontaneous and that no other Beast was involved.

  In either case, whether another Beast instigated the Devouring or it happened on its own — whether a Beast was human or just believed she was — the Children are not human.

- **Beasts are a literal bloodline:** False. While Beasts often refer to themselves as being descended from the Dark Mother and divide themselves into Families, the connection is supernatural, not genetic. Any human being can be a Beast — there is no particular ancestry or marker for it.
- **Beasts have legendary weaknesses:** Partially true. Beasts have no natural vulnerability to the traditional banes found in legends and songs. Heroes possess the disturbing power to nevertheless make these weaknesses real, at least for a time.
- **Beasts physically transform into monsters:** Mostly false. Beasts do not shapeshift in the traditional sense, though they can use powers called Atavisms to temporarily gain certain advantages related to their Horrors' true shapes.
- **Beasts are inherently evil:** False. While Heroes like to think of the Children as absolutely evil, the truth is that a Beast is only as evil as her actions. Beasts *do* instill fear and even grief into human beings, but they do it to impart the wisdom of the Primordial Dream. (Of course, not all Beasts are so benign.)
- **Beasts are feral monsters:** False. Every Beast has a Hunger that drives his Horror, a primal need that he must fulfill to appease it. However, a Beast can use all of his human ingenuity to satisfy this need — it is no mindless animal drive.
- **Beasts are solitary creatures:** False. Many Beasts join a brood after the Devouring, while some run with a group of other supernatural creatures. Family is important to Beasts; most of them only feel comfortable with some kind of cohort. Even a group of humans is better than nothing. Older Beasts sometimes retreat to a private Lair, but true loners are rare among the Children.
- **Beasts must fight Heroes to survive:** True. All Beasts eventually attract Heroes, and these meetings are rarely peaceful. The more powerful a Beast becomes, or the more it hunts, the more numerous and determined the Heroes become, thus creating a vicious cycle of violence. Wise Beasts understand, however, that Heroes are often the people most in need of the lessons they can impart, and that instruction is more useful than violence. That being said, Heroes don't always give them a choice.
- **Beasts are immortal:** False. While a Beast with a well-established Lair can live for a very long time, they eventually perish of old age, assuming no Hero or other hazard gets them first.

The Dark Mother

At the heart of the Beasts' existence is the figure known as the Dark Mother, the progenitor of their kind. While trading rumors of her sightings is a popular pastime whenever a number

of Beasts gather, she has not been reliably sighted in centuries, possibly millennia. Despite this, the Begotten know on an instinctive level that she is still alive out there, somewhere. They know because the fear of her never quite goes away; if she does return, she is far more likely to devour her children than embrace them.

Who Is the Dark Mother? In the beginning, She was there. The first monster, the mother of nightmares. Lilith, Echidna, Tiamat, Circe, the Queen Mother of the West — she's been called a hundred different names in tongues living and long dead alike, and described in a thousand ways across ten thousand years. These days, her Children usually call her the Dark Mother. Some say she was the first being to travel the Primordial Dream and absorb its secrets, which she then brought back to this world and formed into her children. Others claim that she *is* the Primordial Dream given form; since humanity isn't listening to her nightmares anymore, she chooses to act through her Children.

Regardless of the truth, most Beasts see her as not only the first of their kind, but also the first of *all* monsters. As far as the Begotten are concerned, vampires, werewolves, changelings, and other stranger things are their siblings, branches of the family tree that have diverged but still share common roots. While other beings may scoff, Beasts have powers and abilities that seem to back their claim.

What do her children do? If Beasts can be said to have something close to a single purpose, it is to *feast*. Linked as they are to the Primordial Dream, the place where all nightmares are spawned, Beasts remind humanity and even other supernatural creatures that everyone has something to fear. A Beast does this by feeding her Hunger, which sates the primal part of her Horror, the great monster that dwells in the nightmare realm. If she does not indulge her Hunger, the Horror begins to wreak havoc in the minds of mortals around her, starting with her closest friends and relatives and quickly attracting the attention of Heroes bent on the Beast's destruction.

Sowing nightmares is not an end unto itself, however. The Primordial Dream is, or was, the method by which humanity shares wisdom. The most basic kind of wisdom comes from fear and pain. Do not touch the hot metal, or you will burn your flesh. Do not run along the narrow ledge, or you may fall. Do not enter the cave at the end of the canyon, for monsters dwell within.

Over time, human society became more complex. Populations exploded, and the wisdom of the Primordial Dream became lost amidst eight billion voices. Some people can still hear it, for whatever reason, and these are the people who become Beasts. A Beast must feed the Horror within, yes, but they do it to bring wisdom.

Beasts don't apologize for their harsh methods — wisdom doesn't come without loss. At the same time, Beasts generally embrace a creed of moderation. If they feed too deeply or too brutally, they teach nothing but trauma and loss. If they feed too lightly and make their lessons too superficial, the Horror within grows hungry and roams the Primordial Dream, looking for nightmares to amplify. Beasts must be mindful of both their Horror's appetites and what they hope to accomplish. Eat to live, don't live to eat.

The Horror

While humanity confidently declares that no monsters hide in the shadows, deep down it knows better. The dragons, the giants, the kraken, the gorgons, all the great monsters of legend and nightmare — they may not walk the world openly, but people know what they see in their dreams. Humanity searched for them in deep caves and dark forests when they should have looked within, where the true monsters dwell.

The great creatures of myth and legend are still very much with us. Beasts are expressions of these dread creatures in the flesh. From their lairs deep within the Primordial Dream, the old nightmares merge with chosen humans by Devouring their souls, as they have since before history was written. The synthesis of the two allows them to walk the mortal world, sowing dread and harvesting ruin to feed their boundless appetites.

It is important to understand that the Horror is not a flesh-and-blood monster. The Horror is much more iconic than that, existing primarily as a dread spirit entity in the darkest depths of the Primordial Dream. Some Horrors are storied monsters of legend, while others saw their cultures die around them as their tales were forgotten. Still others are new creatures, born of more modern fears and fantasies. Whatever its form, whatever its origins, in the moment of oblivion when a Horror Devours a human's soul, a new Horror is born. The newborn Beast joins with this Horror and becomes one of the Begotten.

Devouring

Anyone can become a Beast. The potential to slide back into the first darkness and join the ranks of humanity's nightmares-made-flesh dwells within every human heart. Still, the process of heeding the wisdom of the Primordial Dream begins early, sometimes even in early childhood. The nascent Beast has nightmares, glimpses of the Primordial Dream. Her nightmares are made all the worse because she is more often than the predator than the prey. She awakens with a start: sweating, sometimes crying, but *wiser*. A problem that was eating at her has a solution. It's not always (or ever) an easy solution, but she knows what changes she must make.

Sometimes she dreams other people's wisdom. She sees a friend working himself to death and dreams of giants beating her, breaking her bones, as she tries in vain to assemble a broken jug. She awakens knowing that if her friend doesn't quit his job, it will break him down. She tells him what she has seen; hopefully, he listens.

Sometimes the lesson is more horrific. She dreams of a monster in the dark, leaping out and snapping up her friends and leaving behind nothing but a smear of blood. When she awakens, she knows the truth: One of her friends is a predator, working his way through their mutual social circle. Does she

confront him? Tell the rest of her friends? Maybe they'll listen... but they are just as likely to say it was all a dream.

One day, though, a real Beast finds her. How the Beast knew about her dream, she has no idea. The Beast demonstrates its power and its nature, however, and she sees the Horror beneath...and recognizes it. Maybe she's never seen that particular monster, but she's seen its brothers and sisters in her dreams. Some people recoil in horror at coming face to face with the thing in the dark, but some feel a rush of gratitude. The nightmares were terrifying, yes, but they brought catharsis and good lessons.

The Beast explains that the dreamer feels the knowledge of the Primordial Dream more deeply than most, and that she is therefore equipped to become one of the Children. In order to join the family, though, she must give up her soul. She will become inhuman, seemingly a person but possessed of a Horror. She will never dream again. Instead, she will *become* the nightmare that teaches the harsh lessons. She will become the Primordial incarnate.

If the dreamer accepts, she goes to sleep and dreams again of monsters, but in this final nightmare, the monster catches and Devours her. She experiences a moment of black, beautiful stillness, a moment of oblivion. Many Beasts report that in that moment, they see the great and terrible face of the Dark Mother. Then comes the Horror.

The Horror is a monster from the Primordial Dream, which rushes up to merge with the dreamer. It splits the dreamer's nightmare off from that of her Big Brother or Sister, and the dreamer — now a Beast — finds herself in her new Lair. The Horror is now part of her. She sees the Primordial Dream stretching before her, replete with the hard-fought wisdom that humanity has earned since the dawn of time. They are part of a great brood, a family of monsters the world over.

Of course, with relief comes dreadful knowledge, as the Beast realizes her terrible Hunger must be fed to keep the Horror appeased. Everything a Beast has learned since she was a child tells her the monster is evil. The monster is, at best, a vicious animal to be slain by a victorious Hero. In most cases, the monster is an analog: Satan, lust, greed, or whatever other quality or being society wishes to demonize. The monster is vile, she is *wrong*; every story the Beast knows ends with the monster's destruction. The Beast has to come to terms with knowing that she *is* the monster, and in most stories, she's the villain.

The conclusion that Beasts quickly reach, of course, is that they need to define their own stories. The Beast isn't a villain. She's a lesson.

The Lair

As part of her connection with her Horror, every Beast has access to a small pocket of the Primordial Dream, referred to as her *Lair*. A Lair reflects the nature of the Horror as well as the personality of the Beast herself, becoming a mixture of the two. The basic composition of the Lair is related to the nature of the Horror — an aquatic Horror often favors an underwater Lair, for instance — but from there the Beast's personality and experiences shape it into something entirely personal and unique. All manner of fascinating and horrifying locations can be found in the *Chambers* of a Lair; understanding exactly why a Lair takes the shape it does offers a great deal of insight into the Beast's nature.

Aside from serving as a private sanctum, the Lair is also an expression of the Beast's power and how closely tied she has become to her Horror. As the Begotten indulges her Hunger and explores the supernatural world around her, the Lair expands, becoming larger and more complex as well as offering new advantages of its own to the Beast. At first a simple space of recovery and reflection, the Lair of a seasoned Beast is more like stepping into a small world, presenting dire dangers for those foolish enough to chase the Begotten into her den.

Should a Beast join a brood, their Lairs form connections as well. The fluid laws and nightmare logic of the Primordial Dream allows impossible combinations of features and environments as their spaces link together. The result is a structure made of connected Lairs that is stronger and more dangerous than a Lair that any of the brood might possess individually: a valuable level of protection with Heroes constantly on the hunt and other dangers abroad. Likewise, the Lairs of all of the Beasts in a given area generally share a trait that resonates with the most powerful local Begotten, or whatever other supernatural creature has inspired enough fear to color the Primordial Dream.

Of course, a shared Lair has risks as well. A Lair linked to other Beasts means that others have access to a character's most personal and private space, and even the potential to invite outsiders into that space. A Hero who manages to breach the Lair of one Beast in the brood can use it access any others connected to it, not to mention that a private sanctuary is an excellent place to stab someone in the back. Then again, a Beast is always more powerful in her Lair.

Hunger

All Beasts have a primal drive called *Hunger*, which they must indulge to sate the appetite of the Horror. A Hunger can be a very simple, direct thing, such as a drive to stalk and kill prey, or it can be more abstract, such as a need to punish others for their transgressions. Though the primal drive is the same for everyone, how Beasts interpret that drive can vary — instead of literally hunting prey to consume them, for example, a Beast might more metaphorically stalk a target and "consume" their trust.

However it is interpreted, Hunger must always feed the Horror's appetite. Put another way, as older Beasts sometimes tell younger ones, "if someone eats, something else gets eaten." A Beast may console herself by thinking that she only hurts "bad people" to sate her Hunger (either to scare the subject straight or make an example of him), for example, but deep down she knows that as far as her Horror is concerned, really anyone would do — and one day, if she isn't careful, they just

might. It is rare for a Beast's Hunger to change, though it can happen in certain extreme circumstances and always signals a profound struggle to reconcile with the Horror.

Beasts sate their Hungers to feed the Horror, naturally, but that isn't all they do. Beasts sate their Hungers to teach a lesson from the Primordial Dream. Every Beast has a particular lesson it imparts in various ways; the lesson comes from the intersection of the Beast's Family and Hunger. In order to teach the lesson, though, the subject of the lesson has to survive it and internalize it. A nightmare is only useful if the dreamer awakens, and wisdom is only useful if someone survives to use it. The Horror doesn't understand this (or doesn't care); it is just as happy if the Beast kills to feed it. Beasts who simply indulge their Horror's whims, though, tend to come to a bad end: some face the judgment of their kin, while others attract Heroes.

Heroes

Where monsters hunt, Heroes follow. As a Beast grows in power, she inevitably attracts hunters who follow the nightmares she leaves in her wake like tracks left in the dust. Literature idealizes these figures as square-jawed, divinely chosen champions putting themselves between depraved monsters and their innocent victims, but the Children know the truth is more complicated.

Beasts feed their Horrors with the terror of a nightmare, but Heroes "feed" on fear in a different way. If people are afraid — not just individuals, but a population — they look for something to hate and a leader to tell them what to do. In the far-flung mists of the past, Heroes were the ones who helped people understand and crystalize the wisdom that the Primordial Dream brought to them. Perhaps they were shamans, leaders, judges, or lorekeepers, or perhaps they were simply the women and men brave enough to enter the darkened cave and report on what they found there.

Over time, the stories became more about the Hero than the lesson. Heroes became legends, gods, and saints. As the human population grew, the Hero's understanding and relationship with the Primordial Dream changed. People who were once able to understand the wisdom of nightmares now responded with instinctive, retaliatory disgust and rage. People who once might have been willing to tell and retell cautionary tales now did not trust others to learn or grow. Heroes came to forge weapons and charge into the dark: not to learn the wisdom a monster might teach, but to kill it and take its head.

Modern-day Heroes resemble, in some ways, the dreamers who eventually become Beasts. They experience the Primordial Dream, but unlike the pre-Beasts, they don't learn from it. They wake from nightmares early and carry forward no understanding of the lessons the Dream is trying to teach them. They slide from their own dreams into others' and, eventually, they see a Horror — and in that moment, they find their purpose. Protect the fearful masses. Kill the Horror. Slay the Beast. Become the Hero.

At best, Heroes bear a strong resemblance to the protagonists of ancient epics: deeply flawed people doomed to a terrible but glorious fate. At worst, Heroes are gore-spattered maniacs whose obsessive quest to destroy the Horrors of the Primordial Dream makes them dangerous to everyone around them.

Beasts often sympathize with Heroes, at least to a point. After all, even the noblest Beast is still indisputably a monster of the darkest sort of nightmares, one who preys on human beings to satiate her Hunger. Yes, she has her reasons, but not all Beasts exercise restraint, so perhaps Heroes are a necessary evil, weeding out the Beasts who go too far.

The problem is that Heroes aren't actually trying to solve a problem. They aren't trying to kill off *a* Beast, they're trying to become revered *for* killing Beasts. While the Children benefit from the burst of fear and realization that comes from a hard-won lesson, Heroes benefit from a veneer of simmering dread that never goes away. Beasts use fear to teach (and to feed their Horrors, yes). Heroes leverage fear into dependency and adulation. A Hero kills a Beast, but then realizes that the nightmare hasn't ended, and his work isn't done. More monsters must die on his sword. He cannot receive the fame he so richly deserves, because the world doesn't believe in monsters, so he smears the Beast's name, drags her publicly into the light, makes her hated for mundane reasons and crimes (real or not), and amasses followers who know the truth about him and his enemy.

Ultimately, Beasts recognize that the Hero cycle is as much a part of their nature as their Lair and their Horror. Humanity fears Beasts — it's part and parcel with what they do — and what humanity fears, it invariably attempts to destroy. Beasts quickly learn that they can't become angry that people have that reaction; it's human nature. At the same time, though, the Children know that they have a purpose: they are capable of teaching people some hard but valuable lessons. The world is a terrifying place; the monsters in the dark are there for a reason. The dominant narrative may be "Hero arises, kills the monster," but the Begotten see that this narrative sells them short, demonstrates a breathtaking lack of faith in humanity, and, of course, winds up with dead Beasts. Heroes, on the other hand, seldom question their own heroism. This is what makes them so dangerous.

Nightmares

While it may seem that Beasts would be feared most in a physical sense, a great deal of their power stems from their ability to create Nightmares, which are moments where the Children call upon primal fears to injure and terrorize their targets. Nightmares play upon fears and sensations buried deep in the mind; no matter how much a target may try to convince themselves that "this can't be happening," their bodies register it as all too real. The most powerful Nightmares can actually become real, warping reality for a time to show a horrifying glimpse of the Primordial Dream.

FAMILY GATHERINGS: BEAST CROSSOVERS

Beast: The Primordial is expressly designed to be crossover friendly, meaning that while it is a full standalone game, it is also intended to run easily in conjunction with other **World of Darkness** games. As a result, you might see references to other **World of Darkness** books along with relevant page numbers. If you have those books, the referenced sections and rules will be useful for crossover games; if not, don't worry, as they are never essential to playing **Beast**.

Crossover within **Beast** is discussed thoroughly in Chapter Five.

Atavisms

If Nightmares are an expression of the Beast's connection to the Primordial Dream and the nature of fear, then Atavisms are the expression of her Horror. They allow the Beast to change herself or her immediate surroundings momentarily in order to grant her a measure of the Horror's iconic capabilities, such as a giant's strength, a hydra's regeneration, a dragon's fire, or a roc's precision.

At their most powerful, some Atavisms physically transform the Beast, but they mostly just assert the Horror's true nature for a moment by using the Begotten as a conduit of sorts for their primordial power. The end result is possibly even more disconcerting, as a Beast's perfectly ordinary-looking hands might leave devastating claw marks, or her flesh may knit back together without so much of a single scale of the hydra showing through. Atavisms may not be subtle, but what they lack in subtlety they make up in raw power. Supernatural beings and people who are sensitive to supernatural phenomena catch a glimpse of the Horror when a Beast activates an Atavism, granting them some small understanding of what they're seeing.

Kinship

Though other monsters might deny it (or simply not understand it), as far as Beasts are concerned, their family ties to other supernatural creatures are obvious. Beasts can recognize monsters and even supernaturally gifted humans on sight. They can extend the blessing of the Dark Mother to energize another creature's powers. They can even make use of otherworldly gateways created by their younger siblings, either to access their intended destination or to force a doorway to the Primordial Dream.

Broods

Though some of their younger siblings participate in vast shadow societies, the Children have no such global organization. Beasts do have some cultural understandings and mores, mostly arranged around their familial understanding of one another. Family doesn't always get along, but they do understand each other. That counts for a lot.

Regional organizations are common, typically arranged around the most powerful Beast in the area. An Apex Beast naturally assumes a position of, if not leadership and respect, then fear and deference. Whether part of a Beast's Lair or not, the Chambers of the Primordial Dream take on a subtle reflection of the most powerful and feared supernatural being in the area. If that's a Beast, the Beast's Lair influences all others. If it's a vampiric prince, for example, Chambers in the area might on a bloody, sensual flavor.

Whatever the supernatural scene in a region, the Children usually build close ties with other local Beasts, forming a group known as a brood. Members of a brood weave their Lairs together to forge a stronger shared realm, which in turn allows them a greater degree of security against outside threats such as Heroes. Sating one's Hunger is also easier with a brood, as the group can collectively derive sustenance when one member feeds.

Inheritance

Every Beast reacts to their nature differently, and so it is no surprise that they should pursue different ultimate goals as well. The more experienced Begotten speak of something called the Inheritance, a condition where the Beast reaches a reckoning between her human nature and her Horror and, in the process, becomes something different. Some undergo the Merger, where the Horror merges physically with the Beast, transforming into a violent creature that lurks in the dark places of the world. Such beings leave the Primordial Dream behind, succumbing to the Hero's narrative and becoming nothing more than menaces that hunt for flesh and wait for a Hero to kill them. Others Retreat instead, fleeing the physical world in favor of becoming nightmare spirits that haunt the Primordial Dream forever. The Retreat can also occur involuntarily, if the Beast's human body dies while the Horror remains intact.

A rare few fully embrace both their Horrors and their human natures, becoming one of the Incarnate: incredibly powerful and dangerous beings whose synthesis of their dual nature is unparalleled. The Incarnate are the legends among legends, the true monsters of the World of Darkness.

Themes

Beast works with a number of thematic motifs and components. When reading the book, try to keep the following ideas in mind. They are woven into the text of the game, including the mechanics, and help inform the assumptions that the game makes about the stories you will tell.

No Neat Little Boxes

The World of Darkness is not a tidy place. Werewolves hunt spirits, but mages deal with them, too. Vampires make people disappear, but changelings find that abhorrent. Sin-Eaters help put the dead to rest, but many other characters deal with the unquiet dead in their own ways. **Beast** examines some of those swirling undercurrents in the World of Darkness.

Characters — and players — might assume that they have a solid understanding of how the World of Darkness works and what the "rules" are. **Beast** is a reminder that no one — not the most connected vampire, not the wisest mage, not the oldest mummy — *really* has all the answers. Beasts delve into the secrets of the World of Darkness not because they necessarily wish to solve mysteries or gain power, but because this world is their home and they feel they have the right and, sometimes, the responsibility to know.

This theme comes up in another way, though: Beasts are not "good guys." They terrify people in order to feed their Horrors. Although their culture teaches that they do so in order to impart important lessons, their peculiar form of pedagogy is entirely optional. A Beast is capable of being a force for wisdom, even for "good" in the World of Darkness, but doing so is entirely up to the Beast. Likewise, a Beast's primary enemy, the Hero, believes that killing the Beast is the right, objectively moral thing to do. The Beast disagrees. *Neither of them is necessarily wrong.*

A kind of dichotomy — the Beast and the Human — is an integral part of **Beast**. That isn't to suggest any kind of reconciliation; a Beast can never be fully human. Perhaps, though, Humanity is just one more type of monster; the fact that *any* human can become a Beast is an important part of that. That applies to many of the other types of supernatural being (anyone can theoretically become a vampire, mage, changeling, or Sin-Eater, too, since those conditions are all foisted upon people from the outside), but for a Beast, the potential to become the monster is right there, in the deepest, darkest part of humanity's nightmares, locked into their very genetic code. The characters in **Beast** are not the most evil parts of humanity. They're the *scariest* parts of humanity, because they are the stuff of nightmares.

You Don't Choose Your Family

Monsters don't choose to be monsters, *but*, looking at Greek myths, one often finds an element of fatalism or determinism. Medusa and her sisters are sometimes listed as children of Echidna, but there are also legends that Athena cursed Medusa for sleeping with Poseidon. That notion that monsters are responsible for their own nature plays into the rather childish, but pervasive, notion that everyone and everything faces the same choices. On a sociopolitical level, we see it when people blame the poor for being poor, as though it was a choice (and a moral failing). In **Beast**, Heroes see the Begotten as irredeemable because of what they are — but the Beasts cannot be otherwise. Even Beasts that "choose" to be Beasts because another of their kind offered the Devouring aren't really making a choice; they know what they are. The Devouring just confirms it.

The struggle against this theme is also an interesting one. A Beast might feel that his family — the one he grew up with — is his family, whether he likes them or not. That feeling provides conflict because he's a monster and they (like all Good People) think monsters should die. The notion of intentional family, though, is a way to subvert and struggle against this theme. A Beast might feel that these people she grew up with *aren't* her family, they're just the people who raised her. Now she's ready to take her place among her true people (other Beasts, or the supernatural in general).

To Thine Own Self Be True

Beasts are primal, elemental, and ultimately simple, right? The Horror is, at least. An individual Beast might have a job, friends, family, lovers, children, and all the while they are also a powerful and hungry being from the nightmares of early humanity. They cannot ignore the Horror, or it runs wild through local dreams and attracts the notice of heroes. They cannot ignore the human part of their lives, or they slowly lose touch with the world and become cruel and savage. Beasts have to be true to themselves, but being true to themselves doesn't excuse them from the consequences.

Inspirational Material

Modern entertainment is full of stories about sympathetic monsters of various kinds, but not too many of them capture the full scale of what it means to be a Beast. Nevertheless, players can still find excellent material to help inspire them.

Fiction

Although they tend to be heavily slanted in favor of the Heroes, it is still worthwhile to check out some of the classic myths and legends such as *Beowulf, Gilgamesh, The Odyssey*, the Norse Eddas, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, etc., if only to see the great monsters in action ... and just how unfair the whole business seems from the Beast's perspective.

John Gardner's novel *Grendel* is perhaps the quintessential **Beast** story, a retelling of *Beowulf* from the titular monster's point of view. While an unapologetic antihero, Grendel nonetheless grapples with the meaning of what it is to be a

monster, the slippery definitions of good and evil, and even the nature of myth itself. A superlative if dark take on what it is to be a Beast.

Alan Moore's run on the *Swamp Thing* comic series is a classic example of a heroic character who appears monstrous and as a result is often targeted by self-righteous "do-gooders," leading to events ranging from darkly comic to downright tragic. As man who had no choice in becoming a monstrous being but has since chosen to become a hero, Swamp Thing serves as a good model for a nobler sort of Beast.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* might not seem to be much of a Beast story at first, but it is a classic tale of what happens when a monstrous being is brought into the world, as well as who is truly to blame for the creature's actions once so created. Unlike his film portrayals, the monster is quite intelligent and articulate; he is frustrated by a world that vilifies and alienates him for a life he had no say in living. One could even see the book as the Beast's version, and the classic film portrayal as the distorted perspective of a Hero.

Bill Willingham's *Fables* comic series is fairytale oriented, but many of the concepts behind **Beast** are still there: magical Lairs, journeys between fantastic worlds, monsters in human forms, the mythic cycle as a very real factor in day-to-day life, and a whole lot of inverted stories going in unexpected directions. In particular, Bigby Wolf would make an excellent Beast, a great wolf that walks like a man and whose Horror is the North Wind itself, as well as a reformed "villain" who must suppress his Hunger to hunt in order to fit in with the world around him.

Non-Fiction

Stephen Asma's *On Monsters: An Unnatural History of Our Worst Fears* is an insightful, often slyly amusing investigation into the origins of monster stories, their evolution around the globe, and what they have to say about all of us. At once approachable enough for casual reading yet scholarly enough for real revelation, this book heavily informed and inspired the one in your hands now, and is a stellar resource for groups preparing to run **Beast: The Primordial** games.

Film & Television

While a more lighthearted take on the whole, Disney's classic animated version of *Beauty & The Beast* (1997, dir. Gary Trousdale & Kirk Wise) still deals with some of the game's key themes, particularly misunderstood creatures, bloodthirsty Heroes, and the inversion of the traditional monster story. For a more adult take, the live-action French version released in 2014 (dir. Christiophe Gans) offers much of the same material, along with an interesting view of the Beast's magical Lair as well as other fantastic Family members.

For a decidedly *not* kid-friendly look at horrific monsters, have a look at *Feast* (2005, dir. John Gulager). While the monsters of the film aren't really the protagonists, *Feast* recognizes the typical conventions of a monster movie and

gleefully defiles them. Be warned: violent, gory, and not remotely respectful of emotional boundaries.

The X-Files episode "Hungry" as well as the *Supernatural* episodes "Heart" and "Metamorphosis" all deal with ordinary people becoming monsters against their will, not to mention coping with serious unnatural Hungers. As a bonus, "Metamorphosis" also features a remorseless hunter who makes an excellent model for a well-intentioned but ruthless Hero.

While it technically concerns younger siblings of the Children — a vampire, a werewolf, and a ghost — the television series *Being Human* is an entertaining depiction of how a brood might look during play. Their shared Lair may be nothing more than a rundown flat, but they still help each other with their Hungers, navigate several dangerous supernatural cultures, wrestle with their humanity, and occasionally indulge in spreading a healthy dose of fear to mortals. Both the original BBC version and the American remake are worth a look, as the American take starts similarly but quickly veers off into a lot of its own original territory.

Nightbreed (dir. 1990, Clive Barker) is a horror movie based on the novella *Cabal*, also by Barker. It tells the story of Boone, who is tricked into believing he is a murderer and transformed into a monster. A dark goddess eventually raises him up to lead his fellow Nightbreed to a new home. The titular creatures are varied, strange, and in many ways reminiscent of the Children.

Tucker and Dale Vs. Evil (2010, dir. Eli Craig) is a horror/comedy that plays with the "killer hillbilly" tropes of other slasher movies; the title characters, Tucker and Dale, are perfectly nice people who are immediately misunderstood and vilified by the teenagers who intrude on their land, one of whom displays an immediate — and Hero-like — hatred.

Lexicon

Anathema: Weaknesses of *Beasts*. Some are vulnerable to particular metals, herbs, rituals, or methods of attack. *Heroes* can place Anathema on *Beasts* by striking them when they are "soft" (when *Satiety* is low enough that the *Beast* is still hungry, but high enough that the *Horror* isn't roused).

Apex: The most powerful and feared supernatural being in a region. The Apex unconsciously colors the local *hive* with its influence.

Atavisms: Supernatural powers available to a *Beast* based on the character's *Horror* and *Lair*. As *Lair* becomes bigger and more powerful, Atavisms become more useful. Atavisms are also more dramatic when the *Beast*'s location resonates in some way with her *Lair*.

Beast: A human granted a mystical connection to the *Dark Mother*, as expressed by the *Horror*.

brood: A group of Beasts who have banded together and formed a shared *Lair*. They can fulfill each other's *Hungers* to some degree.

Burrow: A passageway connecting *Chambers* within a *Lair*. A Burrow may also connect *Chambers* belonging to two or more separate *Lairs* of *brood* members.

Chamber: A distinct location within the *Primordial Dream*, often part of a *Lair*, reflecting an important place to the *Beast*, her *Horror*, or both. Chambers can also form in response to the actions of other supernatural beings, though they seldom recognize this.

Dark Mother: The ancestor of all *Beasts*, she is also called Echidna, Gaea, Tiamat, and many other names. *Beasts* are firmly convinced on a deep, instinctive level that she is still alive and watches over them.

Family: One of the five lines descended from the *Dark Mother*. They are *Anakim*, *Eshmaki*, *Makara*, *Namtaru*, and *Ugallu*.

Hero: A human being who senses the *Primordial Dream* in a broad, superficial way. Some Heroes becoming violently obsessed with killings *Beasts*.

hive: The interconnected mass of *Chambers* that form near a given population center, all subtly influenced by the most powerful and influential supernatural being(s) therein.

Horror: The monstrous, iconic form of the *Beast*. It is separate from her physical body and lives in the *Primordial Dream*.

Hunger: One of the five driving urges that spur a *Beast* to go out into the world and hunt. They are *Prey*, *Hoard*, *Power*, *Punishment*, and *Ruin*. Fulfilling a Hunger increases *Satiety*.

Incarnate Inheritance: One of the three "end" conditions for a *Beast*, this involves the character and the *Horror* becoming fully realized. The character is permanently connected to her *Lair* and becomes one of the most dangerous forces in the World of Darkness.

Inheritance: A state that any *Beast* can reach under certain conditions, in which she becomes something other than what she was. The three Inheritance states are *Incarnate*, *Unfettered*, and *Rampant*.

Kinship: The familial relationship that *Beasts* share with each other and other supernatural beings, including vampires, werewolves, mages, changelings, Prometheans, mummies, Sin-Eaters, ghosts, spirits, and most of the rest of the weirdness in the World of Darkness. *Beasts* can use Kinship to accentuate and augment the powers of other creatures, and can use interactions with these creatures to bolster their *Nightmares*.

Lair: The pocket of the *Primordial Dream* that a Beast's *Horror* inhabits. When a group of Beasts form a *brood*, they may connect their Lairs via *Burrows* to allow free passage between them.

Merger: The process by which the *Beast* joins with her *Horror*, creating a near-mindless monster unable to access the *Primordial Dream*, thus achieving the *Unleashed Inheritance*.

Nightmares: Supernatural powers of *Beasts* based on activating Primordial fear in other beings. Nightmares are tied to *Kinship*; as *Beasts* expand their *Kinship*, they can learn (or create) new Nightmares.

Primordial Dream: A layer of the collective soul of the world, perhaps "below" the Temenos, in which the nightmares of humanity are given life. The *Lairs* of the Primordial Selves of all *Beasts* are here. *Beasts* can grant access to this Dream to other supernatural beings through *Kinship*.

Primordial Pathways: The paths used to access the *Primordial Dream*. *Beasts* can do it fairly easily, and can open them for other beings with *Kinship*.

Retreat: The process by which the *Beast*'s human body becomes severed from her *Horror*, creating a vicious spirit monster unable to leave the *Primordial Dream*, achieving the *Unfettered Inheritance*.

Satiety: Pronounced "SAY-shi-tee." A measure of how fulfilled a *Beast*'s *Hunger* is at any given time.

Unfettered Inheritance: The Inheritance gained when the *Beast* undergoes *Retreat*. The *Beast* embarks on an astral journey and dies while in the *Primordial Dream*. The *Beast*'s *Horror* becomes a free-floating nightmare, a quasi-spirit haunting the dreamscape forever.

Unleashed Inheritance: The Inheritance gained when a Beast undergoes *Merger*. This can occur when a *Beast*'s *Lair* is destroyed, or if the *Beast* wills it to happen. The *Beast*'s *Horror* merges bodily with the *Beast*'s human form and becomes an animalistic monster, lurking in some dark corner of the world until a *Hero* arrives to kill it.

DEVOURING

The nightmare began the same way it always did: with a slight tug.

Ben had suffered the same nightmare as far back as he could remember, and yet when it began, it always managed to surprise him. This night was no different from any other in that respect. He was swimming with his sisters down at the shore, maybe a little farther away from the beach than they should. They were laughing and splashing when there was a tug on his foot. As if something large grabbed ahold for a moment.

It wasn't much, just enough to get his attention. One of his therapists had said the tug symbolized his fear of being dragged down by life pressures, which was in his opinion a bit over the top for a six year-old; when he was ten, a different therapist said it was his feeling of being left behind by his more academically successful siblings. Those therapists were right, in a way, but they always missed the larger point.

The thing in the dream was a monster, and it was pulling him down to die. No matter what realization Ben awakened with, that feeling never left him.

Right on schedule, another tug followed, pulling him under. Ben fought to surface, spitting out cold salt water, only to find himself alone, the sun hidden behind clouds, the beach deserted. That was the way it worked, each pull drawing him under longer, returning to a surface ever more bleak and inhospitable until it was almost indistinguishable from the blackness of the deep itself.

Ben would go under a final time, something cold and rubbery gripping his leg dragging him down until he opened his mouth to scream and nothing but cold water flowed in, salt burning his lungs as he went numb. He'd wake up soaked in sweat, the salt scent of it nearly making him gag reflexively as he remembered the sea. He'd wake up understanding something, recognizing some obvious part of his life that was dragging him down, and he'd understand how to fix it.

Except this time, he couldn't struggle to the surface. This time, the monster was going to finish him. Ben struggled a moment more, and then embraced it.

When the cold tendril wrapped around him, Ben ducked under the water and grabbed hold of it. It was cold and rubbery and tough to hold on to, but he held fast when it released his leg, even as it dragged him down into the dark. Water pressure pounded in his ears and his chest burned as his air ran out, but still he held on, panic shifting to a giddy sense of defiance.

Ben's eyes strained against the dark, seeing nothing in the blackness … until he realized it wasn't blackness at all. He wasn't blind, he was simply looking at something so vast and dark it might as well have been the abyss. In that moment, still clutching one of its countless tentacles, he forgot about drowning, and would never again remember it.

A single baleful eye opened, as large as a house, and it was the same strange blue-gray shade as his own. Ben stared at the eye as the tentacles enveloped him, pulling, tearing, rending him to pieces. And then…stillness.

Blackness.

Something in the dark. Something in his head. No. A face. A mother. The woman he'd seen in the lake all those years ago. *His* mother, now.

Ben felt himself changing, becoming one with the Horror in the black sea, tears of joy mixed with the salt of the deep. He finally understood. All those nightmares, it was never trying to drown him.

It was calling him home.

TALES OF THE DARK MOTHER

SHANTE

Don't ever make the mistake of thinking we can't hit bottom. We're strong, sure. We wander through dreams and we rub elbows with werewolves, we do things that nine-tenths of the planet doesn't even know are possible. We can hit bottom, though.

I hit bottom at a music festival in Tennessee, in June. It was 110 degrees during the day. Six people died of heat stroke that weekend (well, four died of heat stroke, one died because she partied with a vampire and then got dehydrated, and the other one...I'll get to him). I ran out of drugs on the second night because some asshole stole my stash while I was lying on the grass listening to some little band play. I could feel the music like tongues on my skin, I could feel the water leaving my body behind and my lips tasted like salt. I couldn't smell a thing, though. That always happens to me when I fix, don't ask me why.

The fucker who stole my stash, I found him the next morning. Sun was rising. I could hear people fucking in tents, I could see the early risers making breakfast. This guy, his name was Fred or Frank or Fredo or something, he's got on a one-person tent and a shitty little car next to it, and I can smell that he's fixed just a minute ago. I unzipped the tent, and he's nodded off.

I tried to punish him. I did. I sat there with him for an hour, trying to think of the worst thing I could do to get him back for taking my shit. I tried to reach out to the monster inside, that great and terrible whale-thing that swallowed Jonah and belched up the remains of ships, but it had beached itself, and I was left there, sitting in a tent, watching this guy smile away the morning on my drugs.

I just laid down next to him, trying to think. I wanted more than anything to fix, but I also knew if I did that I'd just be there with him all morning, probably into the afternoon. I turned over on my stomach, and I started to cry. And then I felt Her.

She pressed down on my back, Her weight forcing the air from my lungs. She didn't speak. She didn't need to. She let me know what I needed to know: I was on the bottom. I was dry, beached, stranded, marooned...but She loved me. She would accept me if I could find my way back.

I left my shit there in the tent. I'm not saying the next few months didn't suck; they did. But at least I got to see them, and that's more than I can say for Fredo.

Chapter One
After the Devouring

When a Beast emerges from her final nightmare, and becomes the monster in the dark, she realizes what she really is. All her life, she has witnessed and applied the wisdom of the Primordial Dream, and now she can be that sacrament to others. That moment of perfect stillness following the Devouring shows her Horror, the monster she has become, that maybe, in some way, she always was. She knows that she belongs to a long and glorious heritage, stretching back to the Dark Mother. Her new, adopted Family welcomes her. She knows the nature of the Hunger that drives her and how she can sate it — and, if she chooses, use it to teach.

From there, she sets out to meet her long-lost cousins. Let the rest of the world beware.

Families

The five Families of Beasts all stem from an iconic, primordial fear. Humanity's nightmares are varied in their details, but boil them down and they usually reflect one of a few simple anxieties. In the prehistoric mire of humanity's birth, early people looked at the sky and saw a vast, endless, expanse of *nothing*, from which death could descend at any moment. The ocean — indeed, any body of water — was an abyss, concealing hungry, lurking creatures in its depths. The firelight only extended so far; past its warming boundaries, fanged death awaited. These fears and images are reinterpreted and reimagined with every passing generation, but on some level, they haven't changed in thousands of years. The ocean might be a literal ocean or the "sea" of humanity, but the kraken remains. A person might feel "small" before an actual giant or a group of people who sit in judgment, but the fear of powerlessness is the same.

> One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin.
>
> —Franz Kafka, *"The Metamorphosis"*

Hungers

Every Beast has a Hunger. More properly, the Horror experiences the Hunger as a primal, iconic need. The specifics of the need vary — one Beast consumes flesh and blood, another consumes trust or innocence, but both share the Hunger for Prey. As a Beast's Satiety falls, the Horror grows ravenous and less choosy about what it eats. As it feasts, it becomes sated and its tastes become rarefied. Some Beasts prefer to stay well fed so that they can act like gourmands, choosing their meals and eating when they will. Some Beasts stay lean and hungry, eating only when necessary, relishing the feeling of power from their hungry Horror. Some Beasts *try* to stay fed, but never seem to manage.

A Beast can sate its Hunger in a number of ways, and a brood can often find a way to hunt that allows all of its members to increase Satiety. Of course, that's a little like a whole group coming to consensus on pizza toppings — it usually means no one gets what they *really* want. Sometimes, they need to go out and feast on their own.

Culturally, Beasts encourage each other to feed the Horror while teaching the prey. The moment of catharsis — the moment when the victim awakens from the nightmare, thankful to be alive and intact but still terrified, now with a deeper understanding of some unpleasant, visceral truth — is what the Begotten urge each other to engender. The Horror, though, doesn't care, and some Beasts choose "feast" over "teach."

ANAKIM

NIGHTMARES OF HOPELESSNESS

His instinct is to get out of the way as the fist comes down. With the adrenalin rush, he sees it practically in slow motion. But it's too big to dodge. It fills his vision as it collides with his face, a widescreen impact that sends him reeling across the room and wondering if his neck is broken. No, not broken, he can still feel. Feel his heart pounding against his rib cage. And feel those ribs crunch inwards with the next blow. And then feeling is gone, and sight is gone, and it's all sound. One sound: the monster's rumbling laughter.

The little people won't hold you back anymore. They have their petty concerns: their debts, their hates, their loves. You tower above those petty concerns, a pillar of strength and unstoppable force. You might say that your enemies are like toys in your hands, but that would mean you could even count anyone as an enemy. They're not, not really. They're mice standing up to cats. When they even bother to stand.

As one of the Anakim, you are power incarnate. Size is secondary; the Giants are raw strength and bottomless Hunger. To hunt as one of the Anakim is to overwhelm your prey by the force of your own magnificent body. No one stands up to you. Who could, when you stand so tall?

On the hunt, you're faster, deadlier, and more brutal than your prey. You are the fear that chases, the fear that crushes, the fear that tears limb from limb. Maybe someone called you unsubtle. Maybe that someone still has all their ribs. Maybe.

Once, so some of your peers say, the Anakim were the firstborn of the Dark Mother, whom you know as the First Woman. When she freed the terrors of the world from their secret hiding place and held back hope from the world, she made sport with the strongest of them, giving birth to giants in the Earth. Others say that she made love to the very sons of God, and that her children married the sons of humanity and left the terror of hopelessness in the blood of the mortal race.

Lives

His victims cower and beg for his mercy. He towers over them, the unquestioned voice of power. He is the judge who weighs the hearts of the guilty and the innocent, like Maat with her feather. Those who come before his court don't fear their bones breaking at his hands, but they know that he is strong, he is brutal, and he knows every avenue of law through which they might try to escape. Through him, they learn that they cannot hide from what they have done, and they will pay their debts.

He cracks safes. It's who he is. His apartment is littered with the refuse of a hundred jobs, a thousand pieces of inanimate victims who fell before his deft fingers and years of experience. But the truth is, he's not perfect. Sometimes, he just can't do it, just can't get through some particularly fiendish piece of machinery. And in the small hours, when he's had just about enough and can't stand the thought that he might *lose*, the Giant comes out and simply tears the safe open. Few of his clients have ever seen him do it, and fewer would care. All they want is what's inside, and all he wants are the locks and scrap metal.

He thinks of himself as the hammer of God. He does not sit in judgment; he waits for the call from the divinity that sired his kind. When he hears that call, he takes to the streets, or the clubs, or the back rooms. Then he acts as the hammer, smashing the wicked to pulp and fragments. Let the witnesses tell the tale. Let them speak of Divine judgment, reverently, with quaking voices.

In another age, they might have called her the great white hunter. She doesn't care for the label; she doesn't look at the world as her colonial playground. But she does love her trophies, the antlers and ivory and even skulls she's torn from their flesh by her own two hands. She doesn't like weapons. She lives for the hunt and the kill, the contest of predator against the closest thing to a monster that isn't her kin. Maybe one day she'll snap and take another Beast's head for her wall. It's what her Horror wants, but it doesn't seem sporting to her.

Stories

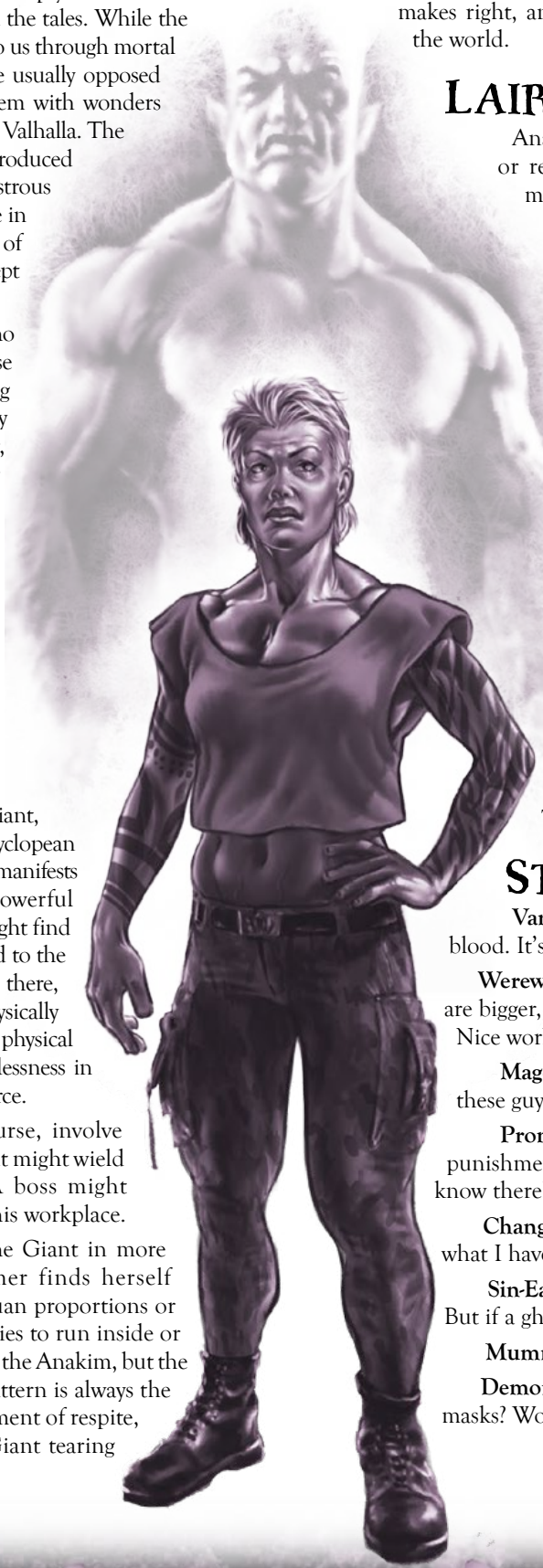
Many Anakim believe the Basajaun to be a tribe of Giants that dwelt in Basque country in the time before recorded history. As the tales come down, these stocky, hairy Anakim had a prodigious Hunger, but sated it entirely on their massive flocks of livestock. They taught useful skills to the mortal newcomers and the non-Beasts of their own tribe, and built hundreds of monuments to their own strange gods that still stand today. Modern Giants often like to speculate that the Basajaun still haunt the remote regions of Basque country, but it's been centuries since any native Beast has claimed to see one.

Paiute oral history records the story of a tribe of beautiful Giants that lived in what is now the Sierra Nevada. These Giants were prosperous until an ugly child was born to them. When they shunned the child, they were punished by having their land blasted into desert. Anakim more familiar with the mythologies of other monsters wonder if the beautiful ones might have been

right to shun the child, even with the consequences it carried, for changelings tell tales of fairy beings being left in the place of mortal children and bringing ill-luck.

The Norse believed in a panoply of Giants and the Anakim of today often retell the tales. While the accounts that have come down to us through mortal sources say that the Giants were usually opposed to the gods, they also credit them with wonders such as building the wall around Valhalla. The union of a god and a giant also produced Fenris... and though that monstrous wolf is said to wait to play its role in the end of the world, would any of the Anakim do less after being kept prisoner for eternity?

The Ispolini were Giants who inhabited the Earth before the rise of humanity and the breeding of Beast with mortal. They disappointed the Dark Mother, for they warred with her other spawn, the dragons, whom many modern Anakim associate with the Namtaru. Anakim today say that the Mother destroyed the Ispolini for killing their kin, leaving only their burials behind in parts of Bulgaria.



The Horror

When a dreamer sees a Giant, it's not always in the form of a cyclopean monstrosity. Rather, the Anakim manifests as someone bigger or more powerful than the dreamer. A dreamer might find himself back in school and called to the principal's office. When he gets there, the principal towers over him, physically terrifying. Sometimes there's no physical violence, just the sense of hopelessness in the face of a superior physical force.

The dream could, of course, involve other authority figures. A parent might wield terrifying disappointment. A boss might bodily hurl the dreamer from his workplace.

Another dream depicts the Giant in more traditional form. The dreamer finds herself pursued by a figure of gargantuan proportions or simply obvious strength. She tries to run inside or put barriers between herself and the Anakim, but the Giant tears them apart. The pattern is always the same. The dreamer finds a moment of respite, but just as she imagines the Giant tearing through, it does.

The scariest thing about an Anakim's physical assault in a dream is that it never kills. It throws the dreamer into objects, covering him in bruises. It breaks his leg, and then makes him try to run. The dreamer is left with no doubt that might makes right, and that the Giant has all the right in the world.

Lair

Anakim create Lairs that imprison, trap, or reduce their victims, restricting their movements and leaving them prey for the Primordial Self.

Suggested Lair Traits: Cramped, Crosswinds, Currents, Jagged, Maze, Sealed Exits, Undergrowth, Unstable, Earthquake, Exposed

Birthright

For all that they can express dominance by other means, the Anakim are creatures of force. Its use and abuse come naturally to them. Once per scene, they can break through any physical obstacle in a single turn. A physical obstacle enhanced by magic or supernatural power requires the player to expend a point of Satiety.

Nickname: Giants

Atavisms: Cyclopean Strength, Looming Presence, Mimir's Wisdom, Titanic Blow

Stereotypes

Vampire: Their greatest power is in the blood. It's not the way *I* do things, but it works.

Werewolf: The spirit wilds have things that are bigger, and yet you're still the thing they fear. Nice work.

Mage: When I say "not all giants tower," it's these guys I'm talking about.

Promethean: I'm impressed at how much punishment your body can withstand, but you know there's more to it than that, right?

Changeling: I think you've already learned what I have to teach.

Sin-Eater: I knock you down. You get up. OK. But if a ghost helps you up, does that still count?

Mummy: No one judges me.

Demon: What would happen if I tore off your masks? Would anything remain?

ESHMAKI
NIGHTMARES OF DARKNESS

She knows it by its eyes. She hasn't seen its face, hasn't heard its footsteps... come to think of it, she hasn't even really seen the eyes, either. She's just seen them reflected, shining in the darkened shop window or the rear view of a car she passes. It's after her. Should she run? Scream? If she did, would the fantasy of the lurker burst like a soap bubble and leave her free? But she does none of those things, and this time, she feels its breath on her neck.

Everyone fears the dark. In the dead of night, we might be only a room away from others, but the dark separates us and leaves us isolated, fearing solitude. Being the only one in a room, listening to the house settle or the pipes creak. Thinking they see the shadows move, even when nothing in the room did. Worst of all is the fear that *something* is out there in the dark, waiting, but to venture out into the night would confirm it. Fearing the monster in the dark is bad enough. Seeing it could stop someone's heart.

You understand being alone, being the watcher from the outside. You've been shunned in your time. You've seen mortals take your rightful place in their laughing crowds and fancy parties. But you're also their fear of being alone. You are the thing in the dark.

When the Dark Mother gave birth to your kind as She Who Lives in Her Shadow, she did so in the dark. Some other Children think it was out of shame, but you know better. You know she was giving you life in your natural element, birthing and leaving your ancestors in their natural element, so that they might understand loneliness but never fear being alone.

Lives

They say children can see monsters. They're wrong, at least about him. He's only seen in his day job, as the administrator of a juvenile justice facility. His facility's got one of the cleanest records in the state. After lights out, he stalks the corridors of the building, seeing what no one else can see, guarding against the dangers the children bring inside with them or foment when given too much time to themselves. He'd never hurt any of "his kids"... but they're here to learn a lesson, and he isn't shy about teaching them.

She only wants what belongs to her. She was disinherited, with everything taken and distributed to relatives who couldn't give a damn about her childhood memories, much less her material needs. So she's taking things back, one by one, night after night. She snatches her heirlooms and leaves things in their place. Deadly things. Poison syringes, pipe bombs. Victim by victim, those wicked relatives are dying off. One day, maybe even soon, she'll be the only kin left standing.

He knows what it's like to be on the outside, but he likes it there very much. He gets to watch people. Happy people. Sad people. Loving people. He sets up camp every night across the street from the only bar in town, and watches the little people go about their lives, blissfully unaware that they share their town with a monster. He's very strict with his Horror. He only lets it feed with abandon every few years, but oh, what a glorious feast. To take one of those happy people and break their neck before they can even stop smiling, and then to feast on the flesh. The rest of the happy people cling their loved ones tighter, and shiver, and think "there but for the grace of God." And he watches, sated.

Every day, the elite get away with things. Those people are her prey, but it's not so much the injustice she worries about. Life isn't fair or balanced, after all. It's that they think they're better. That they think it's more than an accident of birth or fortune that let them use and discard people like tissue. She knows about accidents of fortune. That's how she became what she is: not just the Beast, but also a very rich woman. So she mixes with them, learns their secrets and their sins, and then, when the acquaintance is over and there's nothing to connect her to her prey, she strikes. Brakes that fail. A fall from a penthouse balcony. A lover goaded into a jealous rage. She doesn't kill them, not usually. She wants them to learn that luck doesn't make them better or safer. Luck cuts both ways.

Stories

The Lurkers are known around the world, but none showed their Hunger as keenly as the Baku. This Japanese spirit longed for a hoard, but rather than gold, it hoarded nightmares. In the night, the Baku seemed fearsome, but in truth it was a coward who hid from the light, for it fed upon only the nightmares of destruction, and had no appetite for the real thing.

The Hero's admirers would have you believe that Grendel came from the wilderness to butcher the men of Heorot. But, so the Lurkers say, the Hero entered the story late. The Danish lord, Hrothgar, drove Grendel's tribe from the land, marking them for extermination, and building his great mead-hall atop the grave of Grendel's father. Grendel even accepted that his tribe had been bested in a fair fight. Rather than revenge, he killed the men of Heorot that his father might have fit servants in the life beyond.

The Edomites left few records, but a few Eshmaki have preserved oral traditions from even ancient times. Around the 10th century BCE, the Edomites were prolific miners in their own region. Or rather, their slaves were. Forced to work in cramped, dark conditions, the miners encountered the creature they called only "It." As long as a light was lit, It could not approach. But should the light sputter out, should it fail for even a moment, one of the miners would vanish. Little did they know that they had trespassed in the caverns where the Beast had retreated from the increasingly populated and hostile human world, and little could they have known how hungry it would become.

No one knows the name of the Hag. Eshmaki debate whether she was really one of them at all. Certainly, she lurked in the dark, and certainly, she brought destruction in her wake. But wherefore her habit of sitting on the chests of her victims at night? Was it her way of targeting an individual to unleash her primordial self? Was she some kind of half-breed vampire sucking the life from her victims? Or, perhaps the most controversial theory: is she the modern and degenerate form of the Dark Mother herself, evaluating potential paramours by examining the quality of their nightmares?

The Horror

Everyone's dreamt of being chased by something they couldn't see. That unknown horror could well be one of the Eshmaki. When a Lurker's Soul is unleashed, it finds the dark places in people's dreams and hides in them, waiting to strike.

Sometimes, it infects dreams of solitude. A person will be walking in the woods, only to sense that he's no longer alone… and realize that daylight is no longer with him. He might be walking alone on a beach, only to turn and see two sets of footprints behind him. At other times, the Eshmaki lures someone away from a group of dreamed friends with strange noises and baleful sounds, only to draw him into a maze from which he cannot escape. In every case, the dream starts innocent, even peaceful, before turning into a terror of running and imminent death.

Often only a single feature of the Lurker is visible in the dream; shining eyes, an animal stench, the scratch of claws on a bare leg. The Eshmaki is a nightmare's nightmare, a thing that avoids form except when it leaps out for the kill… which is of course when the prey wakes up.

Lair

Eshmaki create Lairs that allow them to stalk their prey. Eshmaki Lair Traits rarely deal damage themselves; rather, they allow the Eshmaki's soul all the advantages.

Suggested Lair Traits: Blazing Light, Cramped, Downpour, Echoing, Fog, Poor Light, Maze, Steam, Swarms, Undergrowth, Darkness, Mirages

Birthright

Eshmaki lurk in the shadows until they unleash their terrifying destructive power. When making a successful Brawl or Weaponry attack on an unsuspecting victim, they can choose to inflict a Tilt as if they had made a roll against a specified target (p. 166), such as an arm or a leg. Alternatively, they can choose to successfully initiate a grapple while still dealing the damage from the Brawl or Weaponry attack.

Nickname: Lurkers

Atavisms: Dragonfire, From the Shadows, Limb from Limb, Relentless Hunter

Stereotypes

Vampire: When the world was young, it was your kind and mine, together in the shadows. Do any of you remember?

Werewolf: You watch boundaries. I live in them. Let's be friends.

Mage: When you look so long, so deep, in the dark, what looks back? It isn't me, if that's what you were thinking.

Promethean: I get being on the outside. Thing is, I like it here.

Changeling: You're worried about being taken? I could watch you. Just to make sure.

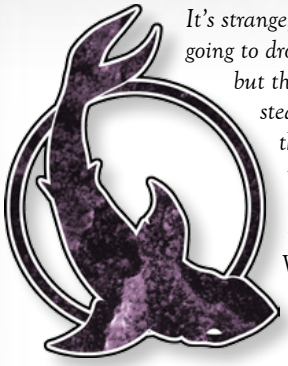
Sin-Eater: You're never quite alone now, are you? Do you know what your Other thinks, or is it always just…watching?

Mummy: The longer you walk, the less in the dark you are. I know how *I'd* feel about that.

Demon: I like my prey to be multiple choice!

MAKARA

NIGHTMARES OF THE DEPTHS



It's strange, because he's almost forgotten he's going to drown. He's still holding his breath, but the rush of the water by his ears is so steady, it's almost hypnotic, the drag of the hand on his foot so unyielding, it's almost gentle. There's a sense of leaving the world behind, the surface, the cares, all that breathable air. What did he need it for, anyway? Still he holds his breath, and still he sinks deeper, and as he hears the siren call like whalesong, he's faintly aware that his lungs are about to burst. And then... black. Nothing but the deeps and the end of time.

People say still waters run deep. You wouldn't know. For you, the waters have never been still, even in their darkest depths. You were always set apart. Maybe you lived near the water, maybe not. It didn't matter. The rush of the tides was always in your veins. And now that you've come into your own, you're both the force of the waves and the thing they hide, the shadow from the deep that claims wary and unwary alike.

Some other Beasts see you and shiver at the thought of drowning on dry land. But you're more than that. You're not just the choking power of the depths, not just the pounding waves and the crushing pressure, you're the knowledge, too. You're a link to the drowned history of humanity, to the knowledge that the oceans have reclaimed. To the sunken temples and lost continents, to the ugly wreckage and watery graves.

People like to forget that the oceans dominate the planet, that the blood in their veins is just nature's way of letting them carry a little of it around so that they can survive in an unnatural environment. You know better.

For you and your family, the Dark Mother was the Queen of the Deeps. She spawned you somewhere in the dark fathoms. It was only after millennia that you joined humanity on the surface, and that you learned to keep the ocean within and the dry husk around it. Your Family is the oldest. Sea monsters predate everything — humanity, mammals, dinosaurs, even trees.

Lives

It's her freshman year in high school, and some of her friends feel like they're drowning. There's more homework, more people, more of everything that makes life hard. She only *wishes* she was drowning. The water's where she feels alive. Swim team would help, maybe. But who's got time? She can't help lashing out from time to time, letting her real self rise to the surface. She's afraid someone will notice, but sometimes she wants them to. Sometimes she wants people to know that she's different and that they should be afraid.

The swimming hole is his. Sure, in the summer, the kids can play there. He allows that. He allows the adults to come by and throw coins in, making a wish on a whim. But it belongs to him. Only he knows how deep it really goes. Only he has touched the mind of the thing that slumbers there. The thing that grants those wishes when it wants to, the thing that makes everyone regret wanting. It's the thing that tells him the secrets. Who wants what. Who wants *whom*. And those secrets are very lucrative indeed.

She likes to think of herself as a classic. She finds remote beaches, swims out far enough, and lures someone into the water. Sometimes she pretends to drown, while other times she just looks alluring. Either way, she lures her prey and shows them the wonders of the deep... for as long as their lungs will hold. And then she takes whatever they leave on shore. Waste not, want not.

She realized very young what she was. Her parents never paid her much attention, so constant visits to the sea and long swims in the deeps never attracted any worry. She always came back for her friend, though, the girl with the wine-dark hair. When they were children, she hoped her friend would become like her, would be able to share the wonders of the ocean. But as they aged, and as friendship turned to love, she realized that her friend didn't dream like she had. She feels the call to her Lair, a place of safety and blissful quiet. Still, she comes back, hoping one day her love will dream of her, and then she'll offer her the secrets of the depths.

Stories

Some South American Makara trace their lineage not to an ancient mother of monsters, but to a being still apparently with us today — the yacu-mama. According to these Children, the yacu-mama is a snake-like Beast over a hundred feet long. She is the mother of all of the creatures of the water. These Makara include other Beasts among these creatures, for surely, life arose first in the water. Some Beasts of other Families dismiss this as fantasy, while many Makara wonder if the Dark Mother might still be alive in the Amazon.

The sea is the ultimate source of life, and Makara are quick to look for primordial figures there, whether the Dark Mother or some of her other children. The goddess Ceto rouses particular

debate because she's often cited as the mother of the Gorgons... and if that's true, that might be a link between the Makara and the Namtaru that goes beyond their shared human heritage. Ceto was also a mother of monsters in her own right. Was, she, perhaps, a mother of intermediate generations of Beasts, responsible for some of the diversity seen today?

To the Makara who care to discuss them, the Maori Taniwha are particularly contentious. Like many Beasts lost to the mists of mythology, they've been portrayed as both benevolent and evil, as both guardians and kidnappers. Alleged to have the forms of whales or sharks, they've been accused of kidnapping women to keep as brides under the sea. Earlier generations of Makara were inclined to gloss over this supernatural human trafficking, while more recent ones question whether such marriages might be consensual, or whether the Beasts of the past were substantially grislier than one might have wished.

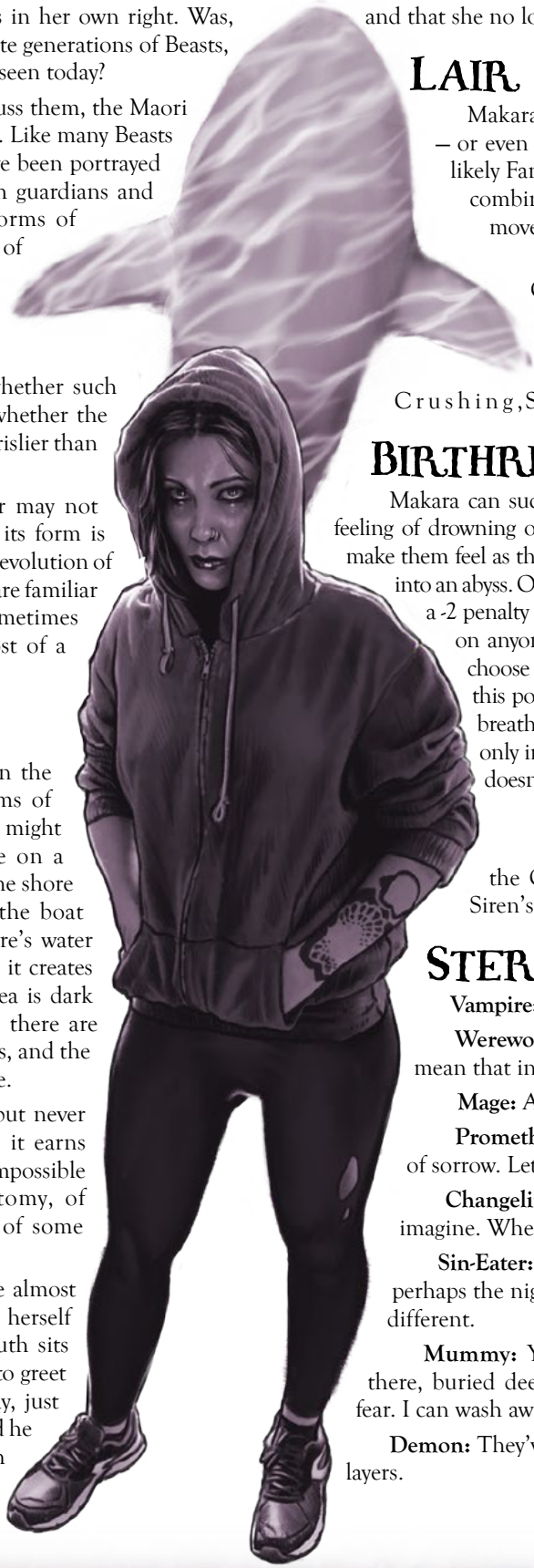
The Japanese Umibozu may or may not have been a Beast at all. Certainly, its form is exceedingly monstrous, suggesting an evolution of the Beast beyond what Makara today are familiar with. If the Umibozu was, as is sometimes suggested, a ghost, what is the ghost of a Beast?

The Horror

When a Makara is unleashed in the dreamscape, it usually brings dreams of drowning and suffocation. A dream might start innocently enough... a cruise on a little boat, for example. But swiftly, the shore disappears, and the depths below the boat become frighteningly apparent. There's water all around, but instead of openness, it creates the feeling of claustrophobia. The sea is dark and opaque, yet the dreamer *knows* there are things below. The abyss seems endless, and the creatures within of unfathomable size.

The Beast might appear itself, but never in its almost-human guise. Instead, it earns the name Leviathan, a creature of impossible dimensions and improbable anatomy, of tentacles miles long with the jaws of some imagined prehistoric horror.

Some dreams of the Makara are almost pleasant, though. The dreamer finds herself near a river, where a handsome youth sits combing his hair. The dreamer tries to greet the youth, only for him to pull away, just slightly into the water. She follows and he pulls away again, leading her with each step into the river. With every step, the water grows deeper, but the youth's smile more beguiling. Soon, the dreamer finds she can't keep her head above water, that she is gulping it down instead of lungfuls of air... and that she no longer cares.



Lair

Makara create Lairs that trap and hurt — or even kill — victims. They are the most likely Family to have damaging Lair Traits, combining Traits that confuse or impede movement with harmful Traits.

Suggested Lair Traits: Crosswinds, Currents, Extreme Cold, Extreme Heat, Flooded, Jagged, Steam, Unstable, Earthquake, Engulfing, Crushing, Suffocating

Birthright

Makara can suck the air from a room, impose a feeling of drowning or claustrophobia on a victim, and make them feel as though they are being dragged down into an abyss. Once per scene, a Makara can impose a -2 penalty on all Physical actions for one turn on anyone within (Lair x 10) feet. She can choose not to affect certain characters with this power. Characters that don't need to breathe are still affected; the Birthright only imposes the *feeling* of drowning, and doesn't actually affect airflow.

Nickname: Leviathans

Atavisms: Alien Allure, Heart of the Ocean, Monster from the Deep, Siren's Treacherous Song

Stereotypes

Vampire: You don't drown. My place, then?

Werewolf: The sharks of the land, and I mean that in the best possible way.

Mage: Abyss? You're looking at her.

Promethean: You're drowning in an ocean of sorrow. Let me drown you someplace nicer.

Changeling: You've seen depths I can only imagine. When you're ready, I'll listen.

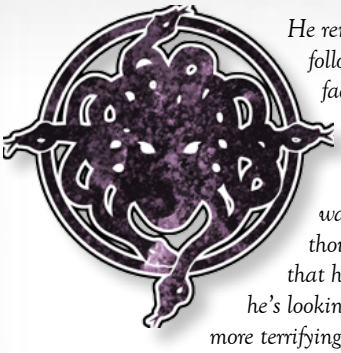
Sin-Eater: We're both drawn to deep places; perhaps the nightmares we find there are not so different.

Mummy: You've forgotten something out there, buried deep in the desert. Something you fear. I can wash away the sands.

Demon: They've mistaken depth for dressing in layers.

NAMTARU

NIGHTMARES OF REVULSION



He reminds himself that he didn't follow her out here for her pretty face. It wasn't that kind of lure. No, she promised him what he needed, the only thing that makes his heart still beat like it was in love. As he turns the corner though, behind the dumpster, he sees that her face has melted away, that he's looking at something from an older and more terrifying world. He screams, but her hand is on his face, scratching lightly, and the poison burns to work in his veins. Not the poison he was after, but it will have to do.

No one ever tells you that you're pretty: at least, not if they know what's good for them. Beauty's in the eye of the beholder and you don't respect the beholders one bit. You know what you are—a monster. And you're glad that everyone can see it, at least a little.

Those who call you ugly miss the point. "Ugly" is just another one of those things in the eye of the beholder. No, you're *hideous*, terrifying to normal people on a level as atavistic as the heritage that made you a Beast. That hideousness links you back to the earliest monsters, the ones who didn't wear human shapes because they didn't care.

On the hunt, you're different from the rest of your brood. To them, the chase is a necessity: the simple fact that if you must hunt, you must pursue. Not for you. You enjoy the fear. You enjoy knowing that the prey is running because of *you*, because you've captured its imagination with terror and instinctive hatred.

People tell uncharitable stories about you and the Dark Mother. They call you her shunned progeny. They say she cursed you for some ancient slight. But once again, they're ever so wrong. The Mother of Monsters gifted you with a face to match your function, a unique "beauty" that goes far more than skin deep.

Lives

She sculpts statues of famous people. Even other Beasts think it's an affectation, a callback to the Medusa myth so well-known and well-beloved by the Namtaru. Even so, it's hard not to notice that the ones she keeps in her studio instead of selling to the public are twisted in expressions of fear and agony. Truth is, she's working up her courage with every hammer of the chisel. It's not a collection. It's a hit list.

He takes on the cases no one else will. Stalking. Domestic violence. Every kind of abuse. When people tell you the system can't help you, he comes in. He's not a vigilante, at least not in the sense of lurking in alleys and breaking the kneecaps of evil men. He's a lawyer and he knows how to channel every last bit of the fear he conjures into protecting his clients. He is the monster that monsters fear, even as they hide behind the flimsy protection of the law.

She's the last thing you'll ever see. Not a murderess, not an angel of death, but the night shift nurse. They keep her on nights because she has a habit of upsetting visitors. She's plain-speaking, rough-voiced. She offers no comfort where it would be illusory, no word of kindness where it would be forced. But put her on at night... and, well, some of the problems seem to go away. Whatever it is that lives in the basement and sucks the life out of patients when they're nearing the end... it's afraid of her. And so, when your time comes naturally, the last thing you'll see is her smiling, ugly, rough-hewn, face.

He works in a clinic, the kind where they give free needles to junkies to try and curb the spread of disease just a little bit, even if they can't do anything about the spread of addiction. He doesn't let anybody push his patients around, either, the skeletal, odious, half-day nocturnal folks who come here to get their works. He isn't one of them, but he looks like he is, and he gets the same stares. When he started at the clinic, he fed his Horror with the fears of the addicts, thinking to teach them about the perils of using. He's learned, though, that they don't need his lessons. The people who spit on them do.

Stories

The Namtaru hold a special place of reverence for the original Gorgons. You see, Medusa was raped by Poseidon in the temple of Athena. It was an ugly crime. When Medusa's sister, Stheno, cried out for justice, Athena gave the family an ugly blessing: Medusa and her sisters became the chosen of the Goddess of War, given the power to bring vengeance against the wicked. The gaze of one of these original Gorgons could freeze a man's blood in his veins, even turn him to stone. For centuries, Medusa and her sisters traveled the ancient world, destroying evils no one else could touch. Medusa had always been too kind-hearted for her own good, however; when the Hero Perseus made her face the blood on her hands, she died of grief.

The Namtaru are known for their fearsome appearances. More insidious by some standards was the legendary Kishi, who shared the hideousness of the Family but kept it concealed. The Kishi had the handsome face of a man and the silver tongue of a devil. He would approach young women in the sunset, charming them with his pretty face and charming words, only to reveal his

second face — that of a hyena, with jaws that clamped and devoured. Many Namtaru can identify with hiding behind a false face, but the purely predatory nature of the Kishi troubles them. Perhaps his actions were more from desperation than cruelty, however, as times can be very lean for hyenas in the desert.

While some Namtaru wear faces of fear, the Arabic ghul wears any face it pleases. A shapeshifter most comfortable as a monstrous hyena, it is revolting not for its face or voice but for its eating habits — it prefers human flesh, a diet few Namtaru tolerate in the present day. Some Namtaru say the ghul hunts primarily in the dreamscape, using its Primordial Self as a deception to lure sleepwalkers away from their camps and homes.

The Futakuchi-onna is another monster you might not want to invite to dinner. She's a woman with a second fanged maw in the back of her head, a mouth that mumbles obscenities and horrific advice. Folklore says that this is a curse that falls on people not given enough to eat. Beasts, however, recognize this as the awakening of an atavistic heritage, one that might not be so different from their own.

The Horror

When the Namtaru is unleashed in the dreams of mortals, it naturally takes the form of revulsion. A hand put in a desk drawer comes out covered in biting maggots. A thing with a melted face stalks the dreamer through the streets of her neighborhood, which have somehow twisted so that they never lead home.

A dreamer might "wake" to find herself paralyzed while the Gorgon hovers over her and performs obscene operations on her body, the creature itself a presence her eyes won't quite focus on. Nightmares like this can seem to last for hours and leave the dreamer with a lingering sense that her body is no longer quite right when she wakes. Sometimes, the paralysis and terror even extends into true waking, leaving the once-dreamer temporarily a captive in her own body.

These are not the only nightmares of revulsion. More insidiously, the Namtaru might cast the dreamer in its own role, the hideous and hated. The power the Gorgon finds in hideousness isn't present here — instead, the dreamer finds herself shunned and hated by her family, lovers, and most intimate friends. Sometimes this is because of a physical mark, but more often the dreamer has committed some unknown sin, some crime so horrible that it cannot be forgiven but which can never truly be known.

Lair

Namtaru create Lairs that prevent recovery. Low-level extreme environments that cause bashing injuries as fast as a human recovers them and settings that unnerve or stress their victims are common.

Suggested Lair Traits: Blizzard, Extreme Cold, Extreme Heat, Stench, Stinging, Undergrowth, Decayed, Diseased, Rotting, Toxic

Birthright

Namtaru are nothing if not revolting. To have the attention of a Gorgon is to feel discomfited, at best. Once a Namtaru establishes contact with a character during a scene, via touch, eye contact, or a moment of conversation, that character's Composure is considered one lower for all purposes (acting as a resistance trait, calculating Initiative, as part of a Perception roll, etc.). This effect lasts for a scene, but can be reestablished in the same way. The Namtaru can choose not to affect a given character if she wishes.

Nickname: Gorgons

Atavisms: Basilisk's Touch, Infestation, Shadowed Soul, Unbreakable

Stereotypes

Vampire: Those night terrors you leave them with, sweat soaked and crying for their mothers...is that how you dream of me? Let's find out.

Werewolf: Do you want them to fear you? Or does it just...happen that way?

Mage: Mysteries, you say. The uglier and more horrifying the better? Well, my place or yours?

Promethean: These people who reject you. Why do you let them?

Changeling: You hide your face, too.

Sin-Eater: Your dead companion is ugly enough for the both of you.

Mummy: We both keep Lairs, but yours was built for you and I dreamed mine. What would *you* choose?

Demon: You're a virus. You infect everyone you touch with your fears and paranoia. I can't decide if I should thank you or end you.

UGALLU

NIGHTMARES OF EXPOSURE

Stay with the car. That's what they always tell you, stay with the car. Don't set out across the desert by your lonesome. Don't risk the scorching days and the freezing nights and the endless thirst tromping somewhere you might never be found. She didn't listen, though. She didn't even remember. She just had to get as far away from that wreck as she could, because she couldn't bear to see who she'd just lost to it. She's been aware of the shape overhead for hours now. It's been watching her. It's not a natural thing, not part of the experience of a college student driving south for spring break. But it's there, and she knows it's waiting. Finally, as the sun dips below the horizon, she lies down and lets it take her.

You ever notice how people keep their eyes on the ground in the city? More fool them. The sky only looks empty. It belongs to you and your kind, a hunting ground that you share with no other sapient predator. At a moment's notice, you could plummet from above and snatch any one of those poor bastards off the street. They really *should* look up.

When people dream of being naked, being exposed, being unprepared or without the tools and skills that usually make them competent, they are simply dreaming a more refined version of your Nightmare. In its purest form, the dreamer is on a flat expanse with no cover to hide beneath, waiting for the Raptor's claws.

On the hunt, you once again see the world differently from everyone else. Other Beasts try to corner their prey, chasing them down blind alleys or following them relentlessly until they can run no more. But you, you're death from the skies. It doesn't matter to you what the terrain looks like from the ground, all that matters is that there's a path between up and down.

Whoever else her children may have been, you know the Dark Mother as Mama Crow. She was a creature of the skies, like you, in the hot, sticky nights of the first cities. Her paramours were other Beasts of the air. Some of your friends say they were angels, but any angel whose blood runs in your veins had good reason to say "be not afraid."

Lives

He has an apartment on the third floor, but you'll never find him there. Instead, he's always up on the roof, with his birds. He has friends — human friends — who raise pigeons. It's an eccentric hobby that reaches across lines of race and class, but even among this select few, he's a little strange. He raises crows, not pigeons...yet they're docile and come home to him at night. In his community, they call him Papa Crow. He accepts that in tribute to the Dark Mother.

To him, what glitters is gold. Or diamonds. Rubies even. He doesn't care. What matters is that the objects are precious, not so much to him as to the people he takes them from. He's a second-story man, or perhaps 22nd-story man, using his natural gifts to steal from those who would keep treasure for themselves. He watches his prey carefully, since he only steals what cannot be replaced.

He rolls his eyes when they talk about chemtrails. He's a crop-sprayer by trade and he doesn't like the anti-science bullshit spouted by fringe elements. He particularly doesn't like the black marks it puts on small aviators, the ones who make modern agriculture possible. He's never been able to master flying under his own power, so he needs that little plane to get up where he belongs. And he needs money to keep flying. So when those tick-tock men come with their mysterious "fertilizer" and cryptic instructions, he takes the payload and he takes the cash. But still, he rolls his eyes.

She thinks of herself as dead. She almost was, fading out in a hospital, before she found her heritage. She calls it her "second wind." To her, her flights above the city are as a ghost, a non-person, an entity always apart from the crowds and the forced intimacy of humanity. She gets lonely. So sometimes she'll take someone. A child, an old woman, a pretty man, and keep them in her aerie for a while, just long enough for them to start to come around to keeping her company. And then she returns them to their lives, right where they left off, because it's not for ghosts to hang on forever.

Stories

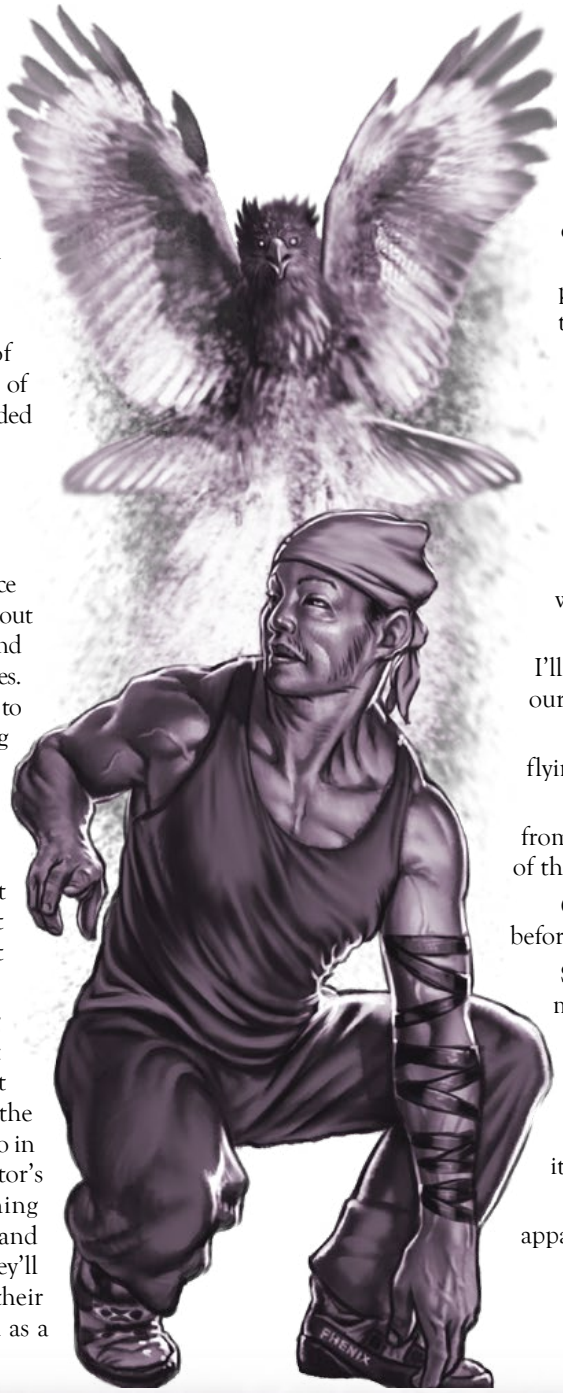
When the goddess Inanna killed her lover Tammuz and her handmaiden Lilith in a jealous rage, they vanished away into the underworld. There, Lilith drank the blood of predators and became one of the screech-owls, the guardians of the boundaries between life and death. Inanna, in her guilt, bargained with the Owls to release Lilith into the land of the living, but in so doing, bound her to the night, never to see the day again. According to some Ugallu, by the blood of the Owls, Lilith and her children are kin to the Beasts.

The Cherokee once told tales of the Raven Mockers. These shapeshifters took the form of elderly men and women and hunted their victims to exhaustion on wings of fire. They let out cries like ravens, but always with an uncanny timbre that struck terror into the heart of their prey. When the victim finally dropped to the ground in exhaustion, the Mocker would descend and open the

victim's chest to consume his heart. With the heart eaten, the Mocker would gain a year of life for every year the prey would have lived. Ugallu say that unknown to humanity, there were only ever two Raven Mockers, a man and a woman. Exiled for their atavistic traits and unable to have children together, choosing the slain was the only way for them to preserve their heritage.

The Simurgh has a special place in Ugallu thought as one of the few Beasts of legend known for its mercy. The young prince Zal was revealed as a Beast as a child and left to die in the wilderness. The Simurgh took him in and taught him the ways of magic. Returning to the world of humanity, Zal was greeted as a savior, performing great works of medicine and even saving his wife's life during childbirth. The son, however, became a Hero; while he spared his father, his own child was not so lucky.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, many of the Ugallu like to claim the Phoenix as one of their own. It's an almost universally positive icon, being long-lived and beautiful, and even possessing a dubious sort of immortality. (It's arguable how immortal you are when you have destroy your previous identity first — but then again, that's something some Beasts can relate to.) But the more cynical Ugallu like to raise a point of order. For all the positivity of the myth of the Phoenix, no one's ever quite recorded what it *ate*.



The Horror

The nightmares of the Ugallu are nightmares of exposure. The Raptors place the dreamer in a nightmare world without clothes or food. The dreamer can't even find shelter — especially not shelter from the skies. To be in the nightmare of an Ugallu is to be completely vulnerable while something terrible and unnatural circles overhead, never glimpsed directly, seen only by its horrible shadow on the ground. At any moment, the creature could swoop down and carry the dreamer away into some yet more terrifying place. It is not a mercy that this place is never seen, for the fear of it stalks the prey's every dreaming moment.

Everyone's dreamed about finding themselves at school or work without clothing, or unprepared for a test. But in those dreams, the dreamer is often the only one aware of their exposure. Not so in the nightmares of the Ugallu. In a Raptor's dream, everyone is watching. Nothing hides from the gaze of the predator and no matter where the dreamer flees, they'll always find someone to catch them at their most vulnerable — or some*thing*, such as a murder of crows or a wall of eyes.

Lair

Ugallu create lairs that remove victims' capabilities, leaving them exposed and vulnerable for the Primordial Self. Most Ugallu Lairs feature stark landscapes that deny the Beast's prey any shelter or hiding place.

Suggested Lair Traits: Crosswinds, Icy, Stinging, Thin Air, Thunderous, Exposed, Mirages, Hurricane

Birthright

The Ugallu can pierce façades with a glance, leaving their prey exposed or at the mercy of the world. With a moment of concentration, a Raptor can uncover something hidden; a lurking assassin, a cowering victim, a valuable object. This does not require a roll or an expenditure, but the Raptor must actively search for the hidden target. If the target is hidden with a supernatural effect, the player must expend a point of Satiety, and the effort may provoke a Clash of Wills (p. 222) at the Storyteller's discretion.

Nickname: Raptors

Atavisms: Eye of Heaven, Needs Must, Storm-Lashed, Wings of the Raptor

Stereotypes

Vampire: I'll blot out the sun with my wings for you.

Werewolf: You take the ground, I'll take the sky. By morning, it's all ours.

Mage: Icarus' mistake wasn't flying. It was flying *badly*.

Promethean: If it's any comfort, from up there you look the same as any of them.

Changeling: I'll see them coming before you do. Make a deal with *me*.

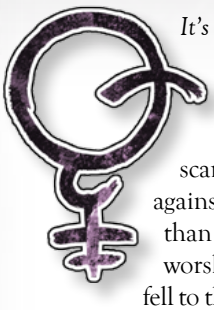
Sin-Eater: I admit, your Underworld makes me uncomfortable. It's so *close* in there.

Mummy: Everything about you is a tapestry. I can't wait to unravel it. Then you can see how it was made!

Demon: Didn't fall far enough, apparently.

TYRANTS

HUNGER FOR POWER



It's too late. I've won. I own you now, and you are going to do exactly what I say.

Some monsters live to make mighty warriors feel like mere infants, alone and scared in the dark, trying desperately to stand against something stronger and more cunning than they. In ancient times, such Beasts were worshiped as gods. Child and champion alike fell to their knees in awe at the mere sight of such a magnificent, terrible creature. Not every Beast would thrive under such attention, but for the Tyrants, the best part about being on top is looking down at all the people they crushed to get there.

Tyrants are Beasts who crave power, feeding off the act of besting someone and proving their own superiority. They bask in the fear, respect, and trembling worship of those beneath them, whether standing at the top of the pyramid or controlling things from the shadows while their subjects tremble at the thought of their unseen king. A Beast is always more than merely human; a Tyrant thrills in reminding those below him just how powerless tiny mortals really are against the stuff of nightmares. Should a Tyrant fail to find proper subjects during his waking hours, his Horror stalks through the dreamscape and brings them subjugation while they slumber.

On the Hunt

A Tyrant hunts in as many ways as there are people to master. A literal hunt provides the quickest route towards satisfying the Hunger for Power on short notice. Finding some drunken thug in a bar and pinning him against a brick wall in the back alley while forcing him to beg for his life is usually enough to satisfy a Tyrant's immediate cravings, but many consider this a inelegant approach to feeding.

Not all of those who hunger for Power are so straightforward. If a Tyrant considers himself above such brutish displays, he'll find other sources for what he needs. A corporate Tyrant might feed by orchestrating his own promotion over that of a hated colleague, delighting as he forces his former equal to polish the nameplate on the door of the Beast's new corner office. A Tyrant lawyer could find herself working in criminal law, feeding from those moments where the opposing attorney realizes he's lost the case against her superior skill, regardless of whether the accused is guilty or innocent. An elderly Tyrant might rule her local homeowners association with an iron fist, making all her neighbors live in fear of her visits.

The Lessons

A Tyrant teaches people their limits. The modern narrative in many places is that people can be whatever they set out to be, but that's simplistic and naïve. Some people's bodies are weak; that's not a moral failing, but it does prevent them from feats of physical strength. A beneficent Tyrant can show people alternate ways to achieve their goals or goad them into pushing past their weakness. A more vicious Tyrant might teach through despair, terror, and even shame — *you are not strong enough to best the dangers of the world alone*.

The Families

Anakim are well suited to the Hunger for Power, since they make people feel inferior by nature. They often like to get up close and personal with their victims, holding someone down and watching from mere inches away as the fight leaves his eyes when he realizes he's been beaten. A Giant Tyrant's Horror often takes the form of a literal monstrous tyrant: a hulking cyclops wearing a crown crafted from human bones and sinew, or an ogre queen who turns the swords of her victims into twisted knots left strewn about her Lair.

Jo doesn't tower over her prey — she's short, but she's all muscle. She enjoys letting other people challenge her, especially men. The challenge isn't always or even usually physical. Sometimes they try to test her knowledge on topics they think she shouldn't understand, or try to explain things to her that it's obvious she knows. She destroys them; she knows what they know and she pokes holes in their beliefs and their facts, showing them sides of the topic they never considered. Secretly, though, she relishes the rare times when a man gets so mad he tries to touch her, because then she can beat him in a way that leaves no room for argument.

Eshmaki Tyrants enjoy the process of the hunt nearly as much as they enjoy its spoils. They can be playful with their victims, affecting belief in concepts like "fair play" and "sporting chance." This makes them no less brutal while feeding; they take power from their victims just as surely as any other Tyrant, but the Nightmares of Darkness do seem to an enjoy a labyrinthine hunt. An Eshmaki Tyrant's Soul hunts from the shadows, its form never fully seen; the glimpses that his victims catch reveal

something very nearly human...but not quite.

Reynold is a health inspector for the city. Most of the time, he does his job without complaint, but sometimes he finds the places where horrible things have happened and left...stains. Then he finds those responsible, and he makes them clean up their mess. Human offenders are simple. Supernatural ones...they take a different kind of approach. Reynold doesn't mind the work; he doesn't judge others for *making* the mess, just for leaving the stains behind.

Makara Tyrants enforce their rule with the very Lairs in which they dwell: as masters of the depths, they have an entire sea of nightmares at their back when they hunt. The victim of such a Tyrant may not even recognize an intelligent force behind his misery when the world starts to work against him, only to find out at the last minute that a keen and malevolent mind has plotted to take him out of his element and into hers. The Makara Tyrant's Horror rules her nightmarish oceans with the same subtle menace, forcefully reminding her victims of how powerless they are in the Beast's waters.

Ari drives a cab. He goes to the parts of the city that the other cabbies won't. He knows every bit of the city — the poor neighborhoods where everyone looks out for each other and the rich neighborhoods where everyone's a stranger. When he feels his Hunger, he picks someone up and drops him in a place the person's never seen before, a place where just walking down the street will get him arrested or jumped. He never lets anyone die. He just wants each little fish to know how far from its home pond it has strayed.

Many Namtaru Tyrant Horrors resemble insects: a queen bee with mandibles that drip venom or a cloud of vermin surrounding the unseen master of their swarm. They may be vile, but they are also impossible to ignore. A Gorgon who Hungers for Power must take extra care when choosing her victims, finding people who experience the awe and humility they should, even when bested by some hideous crawling thing.

No one wants to get sent to the principal's office, but *especially* not with Ms. Blaise there. Ms. Blaise is the assistant principal, but the real principal is just as scared of her as the kids. She has a pet scorpion in a tank on her desk. She always feeds it when she's talking to a kid in trouble. Sometimes kids cry, sometimes they mumble apologies, but no one gets sent to Ms. Blaise twice.

The Ugallu already embody the nightmare of being watched; their nature combines with the Hunger for Power to create a particularly effective sort of Tyrant. Ugallu Tyrants becomes adept at mastering the panopticon, convincing victims that their master always has a hundred sleepless eyes watching their every move. Such Beasts are content to feed on their victim's powerlessness from afar, knowing they could swoop down at any moment and make their superiority completely clear. An Ugallu Tyrant's Soul often appears impressive in his own right, a fearsome golden dragon or a giant eagle crowned in flames, but it's the creature's perch atop their tall and impenetrable Lair that truly makes them worthy of reverence and fear.

Dave worked his way up. He started out delivering packages, but then he got promoted to supervisor, went to school, got his MBA, and now he's got a corner office. But he's got his sights set higher — he wants top floor. He wants to look down at the whole city. He's patient, though. He figures there are about six more positions between his and the big boss, and he wants to have them all. It's not *having* the top floor that will make him happy. It's *taking* it.

COLLECTORS

HUNGER FOR THE HOARD

I wanted it more than he did. That makes it mine.

The image of the dragon perched upon her hoard of precious gems and gold has been written into stories for thousands of years. Kingdoms have fallen trying to appease such Beasts with an endless train of gifts, only to have her sights turn to their grand castles and priceless crown jewels once everything else is gone. Even hundreds of years after all survivors have fled her domain, the stories of legendary riches and their fearsome guardian spread far and wide on desperate, greedy whispers, keeping a Collector well fed for centuries to come.

Whether a Collector gathers diamonds, or gold, or priceless antiques, all of these are mere vessels for something far more important: the worth that humans place upon things. Her greed is a reflection of the greed of humankind, craving only those things that are already jealously guarded by others. Nothing is quite so satisfying to a Collector as having something that someone else wants, then watching as he scrapes and crawls and fails to take it back.

On the Hunt

Though every Collector hungers for physical things, hoards vary drastically from Beast to Beast. What they all share is that a Collector's hoard always holds great worth to someone other than the Beast herself, enough that someone would be willing to risk life and limb to claim it. Gold and precious gems are common, of course, but plenty of Collectors have found other objects of worth. An academic Collector might prize rare books above all else, neatly putting them away in his personal library where no one else can reach the precious knowledge found within. Another Collector works as the principal of a high school, confiscating little things that may mean nothing to anyone but a student that's broken one of her rules.

Whatever the Hoard's nature, Collectors satisfy their Hunger by acquiring new objects. Even for a very rich Collector, this is never as simple as going out to a store and buying a new diamond necklace. That's not acquiring something new, it's merely trading one thing of value for another. Many Collectors become thieves, planning elaborate heists to satisfy their Hunger. Others work themselves into positions of power where they can steal from their subordinates without giving them a chance to fight back. Still others prefer to seek out wealth lost for centuries, delving into ancient and forgotten places to claim old treasures as their own.

The Lessons

The Collector teaches her victims that nothing is forever. Objects, relationships, memories — all of it fades and disappears into time. A Collector forces a target to choose between something he is fond of and something he truly loves — what is the target willing to die to protect? What is he willing to *kill* to protect? If you truly own nothing but what you can carry at a dead run, the Collector forces her target to choose what to pick up before the running even starts. Some Collectors let it go at that. Cruel Beasts chase down the target and take his prize anyway.

The Families

An Anakim Collector hoards objects that stand as a testament to his own strength: perhaps the weapons and armor worn by those who have failed to defeat him, or personal mementos of great sentimental value pried away from fallen foes. While his Lair is likely covered with odd scraps of such riches, his most valuable pieces are worn directly on the monstrous body of the Collector's Soul, forcing any who would dare take them to face the Giant head on.

Zmei is a burglar...of a sort. He doesn't creep in quietly or slip through windows. He walks in, takes what he wants (he's partial to silver), and leaves. If the homeowner wants to try and stop them, they're free to do so. If they *can* stop him, Zmei feels, they deserve to keep their belongings.

Eshmaki who Hunger for the Hoard often focus on the owner, not the goods. They follow a target, letting their presence be known just enough to cause the target to grip something a little tighter in fear. What do they grip? A ring? A book? A wallet? That's what the Lurker wants to take. Some Eshmaki have more specific tastes, of course, but they usually try and find objects that are, if not financially valuable, at least well-guarded.

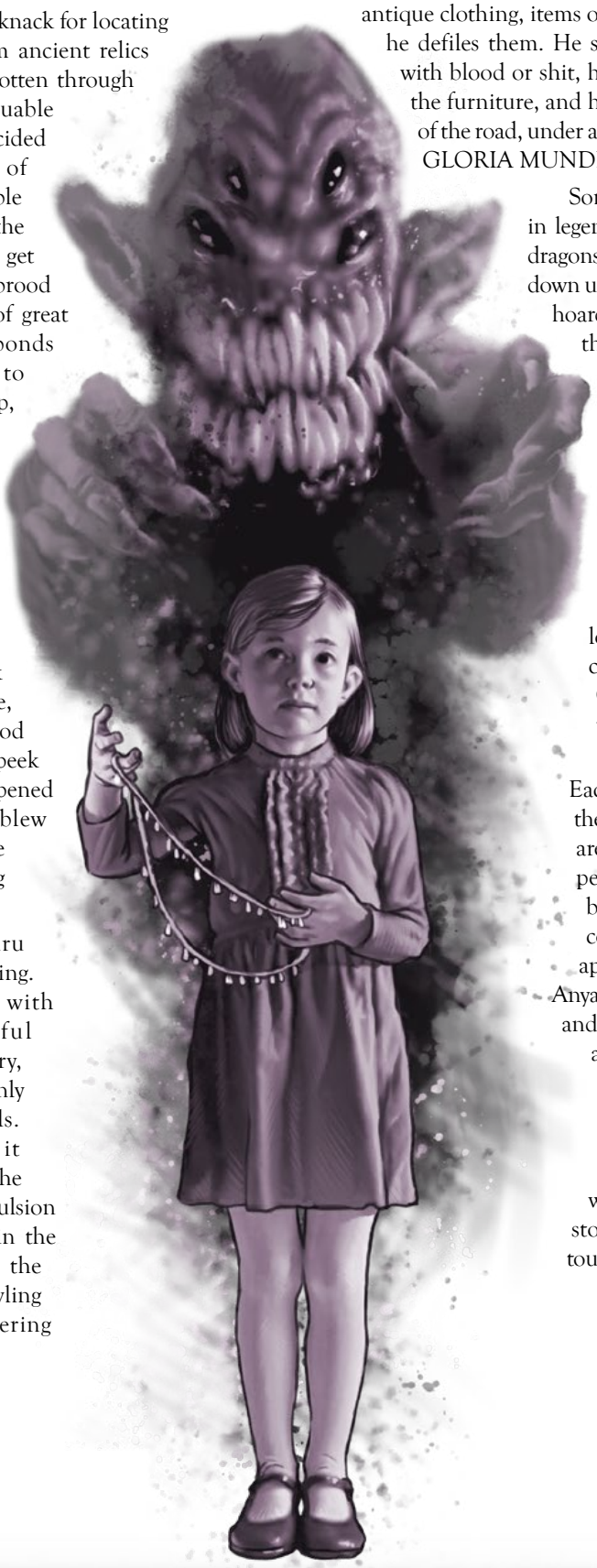
Rose collects teeth. She'll take them from a victim's mouth, if she needs to, but that's messy and difficult. She'd rather take them from people — a lot of parents keep their children's baby teeth, at least for a while. She's taken them from the dead, too, and sometimes she breaks into dentists' offices. The shape of human teeth fascinates her. Hers, after all, feel so sharp. She wonders if a vampire's teeth might feel more like hers, but she

likes most of the vampires she's met too much to rip their fangs out. Most of them.

Makara Collectors have a knack for locating long-lost things of value, from ancient relics to knowledge that's been forgotten through the centuries. They are invaluable assets to a brood that has decided to try and learn the secrets of their world, being both capable and highly motivated to find the things they're seeking. Things get more complicated when the brood successfully finds something of great worth; caught between his bonds of Kinship and his desire to hoard away every valuable scrap, a Makara Collector faces a dilemma with every victory.

Yin found a little hollow just off the coast. She swims out there once a day with a plastic bag. She always has something in the bag, something metal and heavy, and she always comes back to the beach without it. Once, someone from her neighborhood decided to grab the bag and peek in, but no one's sure what happened after that because a storm blew up out of nowhere. Next time anyone saw Yin, she was walking into the water with two bags.

The hoard of a Namtaru Collector is exquisitely terrifying. On the surface it is filled with beautiful things: masterful paintings, finely wrought jewelry, and elegant robes made from only the most luxurious materials. Look closer, though, and it becomes impossible to miss the signs of the Nightmare of Revulsion who owns them: the stench in the air, the mud on the ground, the creeping trails of insects crawling over and around every glittering masterpiece.



Many Collectors hide their riches away from the world. Not Nigel. He takes ("acquires," if anyone asks) heirlooms, antique clothing, items of historical significance, and then he defiles them. He smears the handstitched clothing with blood or shit, he carves deep, uneven furrows in the furniture, and he puts it all on display by the side of the road, under a banner that reads "SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI."

Some of the most iconic Collectors in legend have been Ugallu, vast winged dragons who perch in high places and look down upon the world from their glittering hoards. They have also been amongst the most successful, littering the ground beneath their lairs with the corpses of would-be thieves who have fallen to their deaths. Ugallu Collectors gravitate toward objects that are inaccessible or shameful. The murder weapon thrown into the river, the breakup letter crumpled and thrown from a car, the diary of crimes and secrets locked up in a safe — all Raptors can find what is hidden, but the Collectors feed their Horrors with these things.

Anya owns an apple orchard. Each tree has a ribbon tied around the top. Some of them are red, some are yellow, some are green, and most people who visit the orchard and buy her apples assume the ribbons correspond to the specific type of apple the tree bears. But that isn't it. Anya goes out into the orchard at night and checks the ribbons, reminiscing about the day each tree was planted. The ribbons don't match the apples. They remind Anya what she buried when she planted the tree. Red for something stained with blood, yellow for something stolen, green for something never touched or tasted.

PREDATORS

HUNGER FOR PREY

Oh, you precious little thing. Why, I could just eat you up.

Humans think that they're on top of the food chain, preying on animals that are bigger and stronger than they are. Some part of them, though, remembers a time before they were the ultimate hunters and knows yet more fearsome creatures see them nothing more than the next meal. Predators remind the world's self-declared alphas that when you catch one of them alone at night, they're nothing more than helpless, hairless monkeys.

Some Predators are subtle, lurking and waiting in the shadows until their victims get close, while others prefer to chase their prey openly at a dead run until their victims collapse. Still others use their beauty and charm to lure victims away from the herd, all sweet songs and handsome smiles until it's too late for their prey to escape.

Predators have the most primal and basic of Hungers: the desire to hunt. The Hunger for Prey differs from the Hungers for Power or the Hoard in that the victim must lose something intrinsic and personal. The Beast sates its Hunger in the taking, not the keeping.

On the Hunt

Of all the Hungers, the Hunger for Prey is perhaps the simplest. Predators do not need complex emotional states from their victims; they don't feed through nuanced tricks or metaphors. A Predator hunts her prey by whatever means necessary and feeds on the results of her predation.

Some Predators are lucky, in that their Horrors can be satisfied with a sort of catch-and-release. The prey doesn't need to die so long as the Beast can take some sign or trophy to show that she has completed her purpose as a hunter of humankind. A Predator might spend a night chasing a victim down the dark alleys of his city, let him "escape," and then take a lock of her victim's hair after sneaking into his apartment while he sleeps. She might simply feed off the utter terror in her victim's eyes when the Beast has him pinned to the ground with a knife to his throat. The Beast doesn't need to kill the victim, but he needs to have been able to do so. The victim needs to be at the Beast's mercy. Unlike the Hunger for Power, though, the victim doesn't need to know it.

The Lessons

Predators teach a simple lesson: mortality. Unlike the Tyrant, who might show a victim that the climb is unsafe but manageable with the right preparation, the Predator shows the monsters waiting at the summit. Some Predators enforce humanity's ignorance of the supernatural: *stay out of the shadow, for only misery waits within.* They might do this by offering the victim a glimpse of the truth and then letting him run, or by offering him up as an example and warning to others. Predators also might teach lessons about trust; humans want to trust each other, and they tend to believe what they are told if they are told earnestly. A Beast who Hungers for Prey might expose this folly.

The Families

Anakim Predators are towering monsters that make even the bravest humans feel puny. They are the most inclined to hunt in the open, rampaging through the world with little thought to who sees them or what damage they do as they run down their prey. An Anakim Predator's Horror might be a hulking reptilian monster like something from another age, or a towering giant who grinds the bones of men to make his bread. Such impossibly huge carnivores should find humans too small to be worthy of their attention, but instead they eat them anyway.

Darius took his name and his hunting style from a werewolf he met once. He chases down his prey and breaks a bone — finger, arm, leg, neck, doesn't matter, as long as he can hear the crack. He inflicts pain and fear in his prey and leaves behind a crippled, anguished person...or sometimes just a corpse, depending on how loudly his Horror howls.

Eshmaki are nightmares of stalking, killing creatures; their Horrors demand the nourishment appropriate to such a visceral nature. They don't always kill, but some kind of mark — a small cut, a bruise — is necessary to bring home the lesson. Eshmaki Predators are often fairly subtle about the hunt itself, keeping hidden until the last possible moment and then taking care to hide all possible traces of the struggle at its end.

Father Landon was a priest before the Devouring. He still believes, but when he prays, he prays to the Dark Mother. He talks with other men of the cloth, tempting them to break their vows and sin, and then watching as they run to other priests to give confession. At times he exposes their crimes and watches as the church either protects its own or makes examples. Father

Landon doesn't really care about the punishment (though his broodmate sometimes takes an interest) — he hunts transgression.

Makara Predators plan out elaborate tricks and traps to make their prey come to them. This may mean physical obstacles, but just as many use more pleasant bait to get their victims out into the water. Beautiful Makara have been luring sailors to watery graves for thousands of years with little more than a perch on a tiny island and an alluring song. Modern Beasts know that the classic tricks are classic for a reason. If a Makara Predator's human body cannot match the true aquatic terror of her bestial form, she'll find supernatural or technological means of enhancing her abilities for the hunt. The Horrors of Makara Predators often resemble aquatic creatures made monstrous: deep-sea hunters from another age brought back with extra fangs and tendrils to tear apart their drowning prey.

Brianna came to her Family early. Now in middle school, she spends summers with her brood, traveling the coastlines. She visits beaches, swims out too far, and waits for some poor soul to come and try to save her. Some Predators feed on flesh and blood. Brianna feeds on altruism. She doesn't drown her would-be saviors — what kind of lesson would *that* teach? — she just dives deep and swims away, letting them either keep looking or swim back to land thinking that she drowned.

Hunting with a Namtaru Predator can be rather disconcerting. She works with a strange alien efficiency when set into a group and given a task, growing even more unnerving when the task is a violent one. A Namtaru Predator's Hunger might require her to taste the blood from a dozen separate tiny cuts from her victims, or feel all a victim's ribs break, one by one, under her hands. Of course, not all Gorgons are so vicious. Some bite, but do not draw blood. Some kiss the sweat from their victims' brows. Some leave a single sting, something that itches and aches but causes no last harm.

Vanessa likes blood. Her forearms cause deep gouges, as though they had serrated blades, and anyone caught in her embrace will bleed. Vanessa doesn't necessarily drink the blood — she's been known to, but just feeling it running down her body is enough. Her favorite "bleeders" are the disinterested, the people who are aloof and disdainful of their fellow humans. In her embrace, she knows they *feel*; if they survive, they are grateful for every moment they have. Everyone wins.

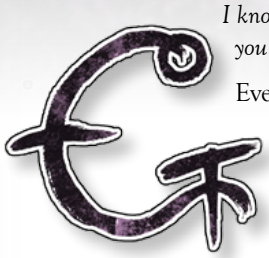
Ugallu Predators are patient, or as patient as a hungry Beast can ever be. They are long-term planners when they hunt, picking out their next meal long before they actually feel the urge to feed again. Once an Ugallu Predator has found a target, he can plan out a safe and efficient hunt that will be easy to implement whenever it becomes required. Their Horrors are often slower, slinking creatures that perch in wait for days on end, waiting until their Hunger strikes them. When they do descend on silent wings, the results of their predation are swift, brutal, and efficient.

John Dawson owns the big, big house in the south end of town. The house has many rooms and a high, slanted roof. John steals people, takes them away to his house, and keeps them there long enough for their families to grow desperate. He waits until someone accuses someone else, until the dirty laundry comes out and the grief and fear breaks someone...and then he releases his prisoner, hungry but unharmed. Most of the families repair themselves. John prides himself on being the one to help them clear the air.

Nemeses

Hunger for Punishment

I know what you've done. Now it's time for you to pay.



Every culture has its boogeymen. Make one mistake, and the monsters will come to get you. Children understand this law instinctively, hiding under the blankets to keep themselves safe. Adults forget their instincts as they grow older, assuming they can get away with infractions so long as no one is watching. One glimpse of the monsters in the dark, however, soon makes them wish they had remembered to hide.

Nemeses feed by punishing the guilty, or at least those they perceive to be guilty. They might tear someone to pieces right after the act, or they might wait for years before finally revealing what they know and making their victim pay. The Nemeses keep the guilty conscience of humankind on edge, keeping the transgressors looking over their shoulders even when they should know, rationally, that they'll never get caught.

On the Hunt

To satisfy her Hunger, a Nemesis must first pick a suitable target: someone who has broken the particular rule or rules set out by her Horror's demanding nature. The required infractions vary wildly from Beast to Beast: one Nemesis might hunt down only those who have willfully murdered a member of their own family, while another might be content to feed from anyone who has ever spoken a lie. Whatever her rules are, the Nemesis must be reasonably convinced that her target has broken them, though exactly how much evidence this requires is entirely up to the Beast herself.

Once a victim has been chosen, the Beast's Hunger is satisfied once she punishes him for the infraction. Like the rules themselves, exactly how this happens can vary from Beast to Beast, and even from feeding to feeding. It is, however, always painful to the victim. Whatever the exact method used, the victim must be made aware of exactly what rule he broke, and know that his infraction is why such awful things are happening to him. Punishment simply isn't satisfying to a Nemesis if the victim isn't aware that they have earned their pain.

The Lessons

The lessons that a Nemesis teaches might seem self-evident; they are, after all, literally punishing infractions. Sometimes that's enough. Beasts that Hunger for Punishment can sate their Horrors forever punishing easily understood crimes; murder, assault, theft, betrayal. Community requires trust, and trust requires adherence to a set of rules — this lesson, at its core, forms much of the Hunger for Punishment's ethos. However, Nemeses are capable of teaching other lessons, including, ironically, that the rules *don't* matter, that the deck is stacked against the victim, and that everything, including justice, is arbitrary.

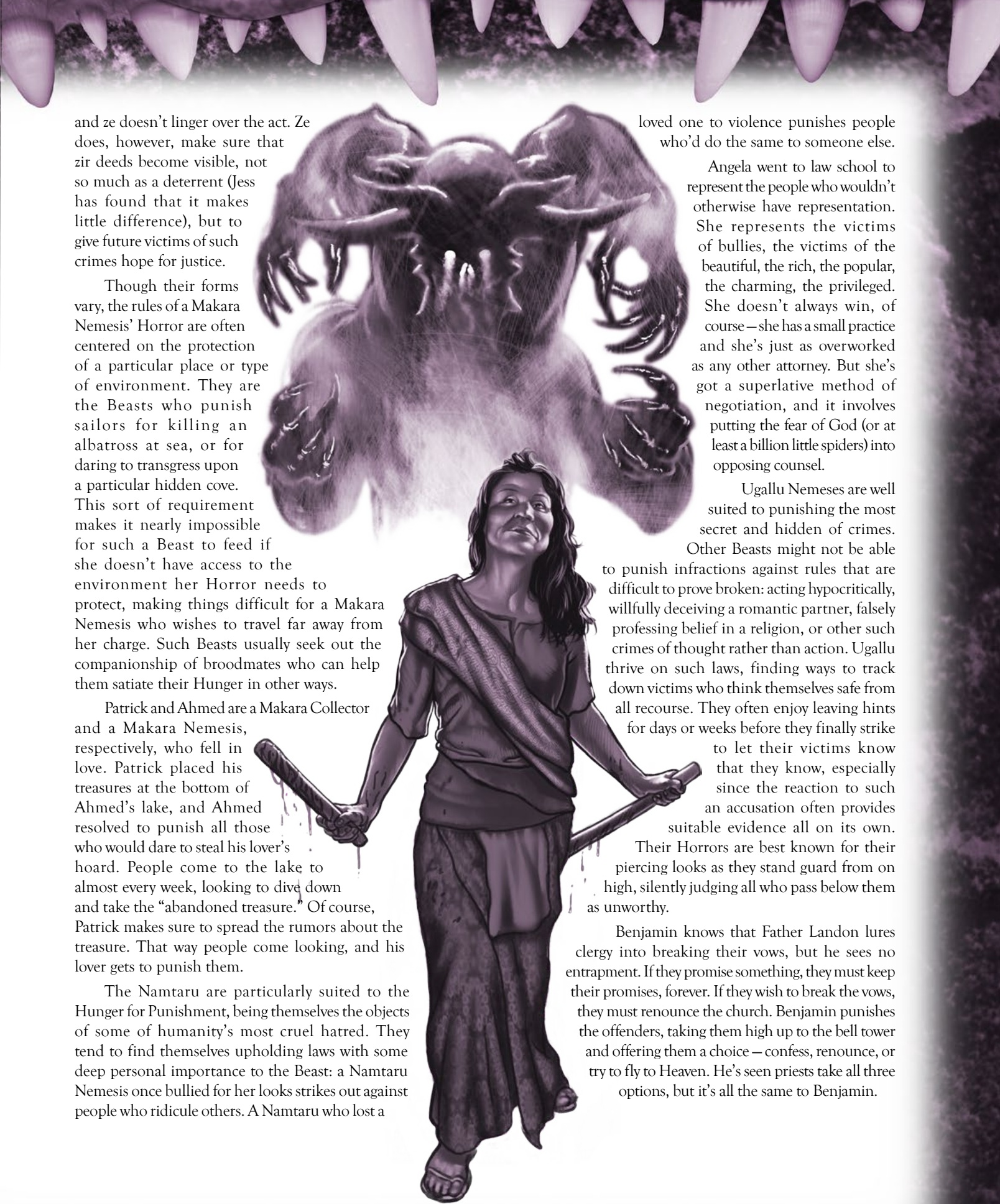
The Families

Anakim Nemeses are particularly blunt when satisfying their Hunger. They punish acts of violence with more violence, targeting murderers or physical abusers with their fists and claws. The laws they punish are simple and straightforward — easy to identify, easy to break. Their Horrors are often highly exaggerated human-like creatures, literal giants that can best even the strongest and fiercest transgressors.

Ogre got his nickname wrestling in high school. The funny thing is that he's met real ogres since then, creatures who were forced to be brutes and workhorses in the far-off Faerie realms. He's made friends with several such changelings — and he's the one they call in when someone breaks an oath. Ogre can't stand betrayal. If you want to fight, kill, maim, that's fine, he thinks, but don't *say* you have someone's back and then stab it. That's when Ogre cracks his knuckles and everyone steps back, because they know he's about to hit something.

Eshmaki Nemeses are known for drawing out their acts of punishment, reveling in their target's terror as he realizes with dawning horror just exactly what's happening. They love to find long-forgotten transgressions, springing dark secrets from a victim's past upon him just when he thinks his crimes have been completely forgotten by the world. The victim may never actually see the monster that's come to get him. The state of perpetual terror at not knowing what's out there is just one part of the Eshmaki's punishment. Their Horrors are also rarely seen, noticed only as a whisper from the shadows that knows exactly what you did.

Jess' brood doesn't know much about zir. They don't know zir's real name or zir assigned gender, and Jess isn't interested in sharing. Jess also doesn't participate in group hunts — it's not personal, Jess just takes hunting seriously and prefers to do it alone. Ze finds the people who have committed crimes that went unreported — date rape, domestic violence, child abuse, the really unpleasant stuff. Those are the people Jess punishes,



and ze doesn't linger over the act. Ze does, however, make sure that zir deeds become visible, not so much as a deterrent (Jess has found that it makes little difference), but to give future victims of such crimes hope for justice.

Though their forms vary, the rules of a Makara Nemesis' Horror are often centered on the protection of a particular place or type of environment. They are the Beasts who punish sailors for killing an albatross at sea, or for daring to transgress upon a particular hidden cove. This sort of requirement makes it nearly impossible for such a Beast to feed if she doesn't have access to the environment her Horror needs to protect, making things difficult for a Makara Nemesis who wishes to travel far away from her charge. Such Beasts usually seek out the companionship of broodmates who can help them satiate their Hunger in other ways.

Patrick and Ahmed are a Makara Collector and a Makara Nemesis, respectively, who fell in love. Patrick placed his treasures at the bottom of Ahmed's lake, and Ahmed resolved to punish all those who would dare to steal his lover's hoard. People come to the lake to almost every week, looking to dive down and take the "abandoned treasure." Of course, Patrick makes sure to spread the rumors about the treasure. That way people come looking, and his lover gets to punish them.

The Namtaru are particularly suited to the Hunger for Punishment, being themselves the objects of some of humanity's most cruel hatred. They tend to find themselves upholding laws with some deep personal importance to the Beast: a Namtaru Nemesis once bullied for her looks strikes out against people who ridicule others. A Namtaru who lost a loved one to violence punishes people who'd do the same to someone else.

Angela went to law school to represent the people who wouldn't otherwise have representation. She represents the victims of bullies, the victims of the beautiful, the rich, the popular, the charming, the privileged. She doesn't always win, of course—she has a small practice and she's just as overworked as any other attorney. But she's got a superlative method of negotiation, and it involves putting the fear of God (or at least a billion little spiders) into opposing counsel.

Ugallu Nemeses are well suited to punishing the most secret and hidden of crimes. Other Beasts might not be able to punish infractions against rules that are difficult to prove broken: acting hypocritically, willfully deceiving a romantic partner, falsely professing belief in a religion, or other such crimes of thought rather than action. Ugallu thrive on such laws, finding ways to track down victims who think themselves safe from all recourse. They often enjoy leaving hints for days or weeks before they finally strike to let their victims know that they know, especially since the reaction to such an accusation often provides suitable evidence all on its own. Their Horrors are best known for their piercing looks as they stand guard from on high, silently judging all who pass below them as unworthy.

Benjamin knows that Father Landon lures clergy into breaking their vows, but he sees no entrapment. If they promise something, they must keep their promises, forever. If they wish to break the vows, they must renounce the church. Benjamin punishes the offenders, taking them high up to the bell tower and offering them a choice—confess, renounce, or try to fly to Heaven. He's seen priests take all three options, but it's all the same to Benjamin.

RAVAGERS

HUNGER FOR RUIN

You ever seen a hurricane, all up close and personal? Well, you're about to.

Some monsters are remembered not as creatures, but as natural disasters. A Beast emerges out of nothing to topple whole mountains and destroy grand palaces with one sweep of its billowing wings, only to disappear as quickly as it emerged and leave nothing but rubble where a great kingdom stood mere hours before. Those few who survive find themselves new homes in the cities nearby, but they lie awake for years to come when thinking of that horrible night. The monster was never killed, after all, and they have no way of knowing when it might choose to strike again.

A Ravager must destroy to feed. It's not exactly the act of violence that he feeds from, it's the change it causes in the humans who notice. When someone witnesses the destruction caused by a Ravager, or its results, they are suddenly aware of how fragile they are and start to wonder just exactly what will be destroyed next. The state of uncertainty and fear is what satiates a Ravager, leaving those in the wake of his rampage wondering what could have caused so much damage and when it might be back.

On the Hunt

Ravagers can unleash their fury in any number of directions. Most Horrors who Hunger for Ruin aren't particularly picky about their meals. A Ravager might burn down a state-of-the-art nightclub one day and take a sledgehammer to the priceless antiques at an auction house the next without his Horror becoming upset by the disruption. Many actually prefer the chaos caused by such wildly varied hunts, planning their meals such that no one will ever know where they'll strike next. The easiest way for a Ravager to ensure his desired reaction is to target some symbol of security. Destroying a home almost invariably leave its inhabitants shaken and lost, but leaving gashes in the brick walls outside of a police station might have the same effect over a whole community of people. The Ravager needn't target a structure, either. Smashing a woman's laptop might leave her feeling just as lost as destroying her house, while setting fires in public areas quickly creates the necessary state of panic and confusion.

Ravagers rarely target people; Beasts who kill to feed normally Hunger for Prey, not Ruin. A Ravager who kills a person doesn't gain any sustenance from the murder itself, but from the effect it has on the surrounding community. As such, the death of a mayor or politician might cause sufficient Ruin, as might the death of a community organizer or the patriarch of a large family.

The Lessons

Life is chaos. Death strikes at any moment. The Ravager teaches people not to be prepared for disaster (because who can be prepared for utter Ruin?), but remain focused and steadfast when it arrives. A Ravager's lesson is often that disaster is survivable. The victim can weather the storm, extinguish the fire, ride out the hurricane. Of course, the Beast needs to be careful; this lesson to the wrong person leads to a Hero, someone who thinks he can *beat* the storm, and that attitude is dangerous for all involved.

The Families

Even among other Ravagers, who don't tend towards being discreet, Anakim Ravagers are the sort who smash first and ask questions later. Their rampages don't lend themselves well to blending in with a mortal community, so most become wanderers who travel from town to town, leaving a wake of destruction in their path. Such Horrors scream danger with every horn and claw and fang. Whether they bring the world to ruin with gouts of flame, scything mandibles, or an array of oversized blunt weaponry, an Anakim Ravager's victims know exactly how he intends to tear them apart.

Grace watches with amusement as people take care of their cars with a tenderness they never show to people. Few things provide so much sustenance with so little work as damaging an expensive car. When Grace really feels the need to treat herself, she turns a car upside down and watches as the owner goes crazy trying to figure out how it happened.

Eshmaki Ravagers pass unseen into the most guarded of places, then leave the signs of their intrusion to be found long after they have vanished again. They are among the most precise of all Ravagers, being very particular about the nature and extent of the ruin they cause. Eshmaki Ravagers are particularly adept at hunting down humans, wounding one member of the herd to panic the rest.

Lester loves the sound of glass breaking. Human beings forget how flimsy windows are — they are enough to keep out the rain, yes, but not enough to keep out bricks, branches, or a determined intruder. Lester smashes the windows in the homes of the rich in the dead of night, and watches the security come running. Sometimes he writes his message on a wall or a mirror: YOU ARE NOT SAFE.

The aftermath of a Makara Ravager's feeding is often mistaken for damage done by the destructive power of nature, as they are most inclined to use it to their advantage in the hunt for sustenance. This might involve the use of her own supernatural powers, or a Makara might simply take advantage of how delicate humankind's defenses against natural disasters can be, using just a little effort to ensure the worst happens at just the right time. A Makara Ravager's Horror might be mistaken for a natural disaster at first glance, a living whirlpool that can cling to ships or a typhoon that twists and forms into some slithering creature.

Naia tries to keep herself under control. She really does. She breaks things when she's hungry, calling up enough of a storm to do some damage, and watching people feel helpless in the face of nature. But when her Horror truly hungers, she relinquishes all control and lets her Lair pour into the world, blowing down walls and flooding buildings. That's when she floats on her back and happily watches the debris drift by.

Namtaru Ravagers do not so much destroy as pollute. Their Horrors are pestilent monsters that poison the air and cover everything they pass in vile sludge, or swarms of insects and other vermin. Their human selves create the same sort of ruin, infecting the world around them and feeding as people discover that something once clean and safe has become dangerous to even approach. Their ruin is insidious, because it can resurface long after people think they've repaired what was lost. Namtaru Ravagers don't merely destroy whole forests or fields, they turn them to salt that poisons the earth for decades to come.

Amon finds fungus fascinating. He knows that certain types of fungus turn insects into zombie slaves, and other types can drive people from their houses in fear of their health. The fungus that grows in his Lair and that festers in the eyes and mouth of his Horror could overtake and reclaim a city in days if he ever let it out. He wouldn't — he has friends who run as wolves, and they have to live here, too. He has a deal with them, though. If their enemies ever attempt to take territory, they'll establish a spiritual quarantine zone and Amon will let his fungus spread.

Ugallu Ravagers drop from the skies like smart bombs, flattening structures and destroying their targets. Their Ruin is precise, their aim true. They destroy only what they need to in order to feed. Of course, when a more widespread approach is necessary, they are capable of flying through a city like the Angel of Death, laying waste to whatever is unfortunate enough to be in their path.

Diana is an assassin. She chooses her targets based on two factors. One is how much someone will pay to see the target die — Diana is a woman of expensive tastes, and her lifestyle requires money. The other is how many people will mourn (or celebrate!) her target's death. A sufficiently high-profile target or an appropriately large deposit to her Cayman Islands account earns a single shot from her rifle. Unless, of course, she feels like a more hands-on approach that night.

NIGHTMARES

"The fuck are you looking at, dipshit?" Kyle snarled, standing up and walking up with his hands out in a macho pose he'd probably seen in a dozen tough-guy movies.

Ben stopped up short, hands hooked around his backpack straps, trying to hide the smile on his face, maybe even put on a little fear. That's what they'd want to see, after all, and that just made what was coming even sweeter. There were three of them, Kyle and two of his admirers. You could usually catch them smoking at the edge of the parking lot before school. He'd heard they liked to come out here and sneak some booze, maybe blaze a little bit, but the thin boy with frightened eyes behind them told a different story.

Good. He'd been hoping for something worse than a little weed.

"Hey guys, I just wanted to let you know - you know what? Fuck it." Ben normally drew out a feeding, savoring the indulgence, but the monster was growling loudly and he couldn't be bothered. Instead he drew on the cold depths within and looked at the two boys behind Kyle with eyes that had seen what lived in the lightless dark. "Get the fuck out of here."

All the color drained from the boys' faces as they scrambled away from Ben, tripping over backpacks and nearly pitching headfirst off the loading dock in their haste to get away. Kyle looked around, disbelieving, as his "muscle" slammed the door shut behind them with such force the plexiglass panel rattled in the frame. "What the fuck -"

Ben grabbed hold of Kyle's arm. The older boy threw a wild haymaker with his free hand. It bounced off Ben's temple without so much as moving his head. Ben had a moment to savor Kyle's confusion as it turned to panic before he squeezed the older boy's wrist. Bone groaned under the pressure and Kyle shrieked, falling to his knees.

"This is what being an asshole gets you," Ben said casually, still squeezing. His Horror savored the punishment, drinking it in, and for the first time in days Ben's head cleared. He enjoyed it so much he forgot Kyle was still there until the boy began to blubber. Ben let go of his wrist like he was tossing a piece of garbage. "Now fuck off."

Kyle yelped and scurried backward, clutching his wrist, where a bright crop of unusual bruises was already blooming. He looked at his bag and back at Ben, thought better of it and left it behind, hurrying after his friends.

"Holy shit," the younger boy said when they were alone. He looked Ben over, eyes still frightened. "How did you do that?"

Ben shrugged. "People don't fuck with you if you don't let them."

"Well, thanks." The boy smiled weakly. "They were gonna fuck me up. Fourth time this month." He pulled down the collar of his shirt to reveal yellowing traces of old bruises. "And all I did was scratch the big guy's car by accident."

"Oh really?" Ben felt his Horror stir. Maybe he could make another meal of Kyle sooner than he'd thought. He put his arm across the other boy's shoulders, barely registering the flinch. "Tell me about it. Maybe there's something I can do."

Tales of the Dark Mother
Tanya

It was meant to be the other way around.

She should have been the one chasing them, her shrieking laugh echoing off the sandstone walls of her Lair as they fumbled through the maze of twisting passages. She should have been tearing them apart, first from each-other, then bone from flesh and muscle from sinew in a long-awaited feast.

But one mistake, and now Tanya was the one running for her life.

There were only six of them, one Hero and five of his lackeys, but they were armed and she had nothing but a perfect trap that they had just completely avoided. She had better eyes, but they had longer legs and far more practice running. They were gaining on her. A part of her yearned to just turn and sink her teeth into one of their throats, take him down with her in a blaze of glory and death. But her family was waiting back in the warehouse, and who knew what kind of trouble they'd get themselves into if she didn't survive? Besides, it wasn't just their flesh her Horror wanted. They needed to know what they'd done first. They needed to know that she knew who the real monsters were.

She made her feet beat faster down the wet pavement, forced aside her gnawing Hunger to focus on the escape. Left turn at the intersection, right turn to duck into the alleyways, then left again. The dark corners of the city could be a little like a maze, maybe like enough to call to her Lair? If she could just have a moment to breath, to figure out a plan. Another turn up ahead, maybe with a few more twists and turns she could slow them down.

Or maybe she'd find a dead end. It was too late to turn back by the time she saw the tall chain fence that blocked the way, slick with rain and sharp with barbed wire. The thud of her pursuers was close, and closer still with every moment. This was it, then. Dying cold, wet, and alone.

No, not alone.

Beyond the fence, though darkness not even Tanya's keen eyes could pierce, there was something waiting. Something fierce and ravenous, even by a Beast's discerning standards. Something horrible. Tanya's breath caught in her throat, but the fear that washed over her was familiar. The darkness was familiar too, cold and eternal just like had been the night of her Devouring. Dangerous, yes, but not to her. Not tonight. Tanya let her mouth curl open in a sharp, predatory grin.

"That's a dead end" the Hero said, still just out of sight. "We have her. One monster, six of us, this shouldn't take long." And then he and his followers turned the corner. What did they see behind that fence, she wondered? How did the Dark Mother show herself to those who weren't her Children, if she showed herself at all? Whatever they saw, it was enough for the Hero's lackeys found the better part of valor and turned to run. She'd catch them later, one by one, alone.

But first, food. Tanya licked her lips, and met the Hero's wavering gaze. "Two of us and one of you, now. I'm going to make this last."

Chapter Two
Waking Nightmares

In the light of reason, humans think they killed the monsters. The real ones, that is. The wolf needs their help just to survive. The only lions and tigers are in zoos. Dinosaur bones are strung up like trophies in natural history museums.

Secure in his fortress, Man tells himself he has nothing to fear.

At night, though, people sweat through the old familiar nightmares. The modern man is plunged back into the primordial dark and hounded by a predator from which he cannot escape. *It* is back, *it* is hungry, and civilization avails him nothing. He scurries through abandoned streets and primeval forests like a rat fleeing a cat. When they meet, the fiend has a human face: a friend, a coworker, a family member, but with no humanity in his eyes and tension in his muscles like a predator coiled to strike.

Once in a while, it looks like *him*.

The Primordial Dream

They lounge together, hands occasionally brushing. Once in a while, Patrick reaches up and strokes the back of Ahmed's head, playing his fingers across recently buzzed hair. It's easy for Jo to forget they're monsters.

"I always dream of blood," she says. Patrick smiles. Ahmed remains poker-faced, but he sits forward. "I mean, not always, but whenever the dream is...."

"Deep," says Ahmed.

She nods. "Deep. Yeah. I dream of the smell. Not fresh blood, but old, rotted. Like meat. That's the first thing that hits me. And then the dream is different every time. Once I dreamed that I was in this museum, with all these beautiful people – like model-beautiful, dressed up to the nines – all behind glass. And I was tiny, and weak, and they didn't notice me, they just stood there."

Patrick licks his lips. Somewhere, in a place-that-isn't-a-place, a sea monster breaches the surface looking for food.

"And I walked up to one of them, and I realized she was dead. Dead, but still moving. She stared at me and smiled and she had fangs, and then I realized they all did." Jo clears her throat. The dream shouldn't affect her. It was years ago. "I woke up, and I called my friends and changed plans for the weekend. Stayed away from the new club. We never went."

Ahmed cracks a smile. "You mean Verdant? Club with the big tree on the logo?" Jo nods. "Good call staying away."

Jo pales a little. "Why?"

"Because the vampires really do run that place." He reaches over to the cooler and pulls out a beer. "And you are just their type."

"There is not a monster dreamt that hasn't walked once within the soul of a man."

—C. Robert Cargill, *Dreams and Shadows*

THE VIEW FROM WITHOUT: ARBORGHAST, MASTIGOS OF THE MYSTERIUM

Over time, I've come across people — Sleepers, by the way — who claim that their dreams are meaningful. That part isn't uncommon, of course; check the self-help section of any bookstore and you'll see countless piles of crap dedicated to telling you that if you dream of crabs you'll come into money, or whatever. Every so often, though, I find a person whose dreams really *do* connect to something.

Whether or not their dreams grant them any helpful insight isn't my place to gauge, what with confirmation bias, recall bias, and narrative bias being what they are. Skimming their subconscious minds, though, these "dreamers" are doing something that few other people can. They're reaching an Astral space that *we* can't reach without effort. Are their minds just more open? Are they on the cusp of the Awakening? From what I can tell, no. It looks like the connection was there from birth. Spiritual genetics aren't really my area of expertise, though.

Humanity is a young species. Looking at anatomy, the species dates back roughly 200,000 years, but the behaviors that identify us as *human* are much more recent. We moved from family groups to communities to villages to cities, and now, in the modern era, our numbers exceed seven *billion*. Scientists and sociologists discuss the implications this ever-increasing number has for the health of the planet and the continued survival of the species, but few of them understand the effect the population has on the Primordial Dream.

The Primordial Dream is, at its most basic level, the collective fears of humanity. As human beings emerged as a species and developed the ability to see patterns, to recognize one thing as reminiscent of another, it in turn developed the ability to fear ideas. A shadow might look like a predator, and elicit a response of terror — what caused the terror, then? Not the shadow; shadows are harmless. Not the predator; that never existed. What caused the terror was the *idea* of the predator, as expressed through the shadow and interpreted by the person's mind. That predator, then, a hundred times more terrifying and deadly than any naturally occurring monster, takes its place in the Primordial Dream.

Fear is basic. Fear is survival. Fear teaches simple, understandable lessons. Even now, parents use fear to keep their children in line: fear of punishment, fear of pain, fear of disapproval. Fear appeals to the simplest, animal instincts that humanity possesses: Do this and thrive. Don't do this and perish. The Primordial Dream hearkens back to a time before humanity could convey complex ideas through language. In simple, bloody terms, people taught one another what they needed to fear, and those lessons were encoded in the Primordial Dream as monsters.

Noise

Over time, the population increased and people came together in ever-larger communities. The human mind is equipped to recognize a finite number of other people — approximately 150-200. Anything past that number isn't a "person." This works well in a small group, but as the number of humans grew, people's minds became overwhelmed by the number of unrecognizable beings around them. This led to a number of effects; xenophobia, paranoia, and increased tribalism among them. It also meant that the simple, uncomplicated language of the Primordial Dream was drowned out by the noise of billions of voices, all experiencing the fear of being surrounded by strangers.

Some people, though, still dream deep. Some people, for whatever reason, touch the Primordial Dream. When they do, they have nightmares, often (but not always) including terrible monsters. Sometimes the nightmares have recurring themes or characters, while some dreamers experience an endless cavalcade of frightening variety. Every nightmare, though, carries with it some wisdom.

The lesson of the nightmare isn't always something a dreamer wants to hear, but the dreamer can always interpret it. She wakes knowing that her partner isn't just going through a difficult time — she's abusive. The relationship is toxic. The dreamer must leave. Perhaps the dreamer awakens knowing that his drug habit has gone out of control, and he must get help or die. The dreamer might even come to a realization that something in her life is *dangerous*, whether predatory or supernatural. Her connection with the Primordial Dream is protecting her the way it has always protected humanity: through fear.

Horrors

The Primordial Dream is vast and dark, but it isn't empty. It contains endless vistas, each corresponding to a place on Earth in which a human being was shaken to her very core. When the population was small, these "Chambers" were few and far between. As humans spread, however, their terrors spread with them. Now the Primordial Dream holds myriad Chambers, most of them floating unconnected with those around it. Each of these Chambers reflects some hapless person losing a bit of herself.

In the metaphysical geography of the Primordial Dream, Chambers are closest to the waking world. As more Chambers are created, the older Chambers are pushed further out into the formless deeps. Such Chambers become disconnected from their origins, their features taking on a combination of accurate memory and imagined narrative. Eventually, something from the outer darkness crawls in — a Horror.

A Horror is a nightmare monster, a creature from the dreams of a terrified human being. Modern Beasts theorize that every time a person dreams of monsters, that monster either already exists somewhere in the Primordial Dream (and the dream calls on ancestral memory) or is created at that moment as a Horror (if the dreamer is one of the special few whose dreams go so deep). In any case, the Horror drifts through the Dream, eventually reaching one of the outer Chambers. If it finds one it considers habitable, it enters it, settles down, and bonds with it. The Chamber becomes a Lair.

Horrors, on their own, rarely touch the minds of human beings deeply enough to have a greater effect than a particularly intense nightmare; it might be a cause for discussion, even analysis, but doesn't do any lasting harm to a person. Only when Lairs are close to the waking world do the nightmares have the power to cause real harm. The primary way this happens, of course, is when a human being becomes a Beast.

Flesh & Blood

Charlotte sits in the back of class, hunched over a desk two sizes too small. The teacher explained to the class that she has a genetic disorder. She is taller than everyone, boys included, wearing ill-fitting clothes over limbs that seem grotesquely elongated.

The teacher's words are hollow. People snicker behind her back.

Things are worse at home. Every afternoon, she returns to a ramshackle house with a father who belittles her. She cringes while he rants and raves and throws bottles at her. It doesn't sting as much as it used to, but the words – the words still hurt.

"It's your mother's goddamn fault!" he screams, and she is not sure if he means her being a freak or being alive. To her, there's no difference.

Every night she goes to bed bruised and brimming with hate. She has nothing to look forward to but doing it all again.

A Beast is an atavistic throwback. It is a human being with the soul of a mythic monster, itself a manifestation of fundamental fears: of the unclean and unknown, of the predator lurking in the shadows, and of forces beyond human reckoning. Beasts disagree on whether they are born, made, or both. In either case, though, they feel a connection to the Primordial Dream even before the Devouring that sets them apart from humanity.

Even as children, Beasts often feel like outsiders. One dreams of the deep ocean where she sleeps in solitude, far from the demands of her needling peers. Another's eyes stray to a sky forever out of reach. At night, a third runs on all fours through a darkened forest, only to wake up once again in a stifling human world. Sometimes, a Beast's dreams show her wisdom that seems obvious in retrospect, and sometimes it shows her things she couldn't possibly know. Such dreamers grow up understanding Cassandra's plight — they might try and share what they've learned, but few of their peers are willing to listen.

Not all of the dreams lead to wisdom, though. Sometimes the dreams show new, horrifying possibility. The dreamer sees herself as the monster, and then wakes in her human skin. She knows this lump of flesh is *not* her. She is a prisoner of her own skin and blood.

No one wants to be a freak. No one wants to be alone. Humans are wired to be social animals. Being shut out of people's lives — let alone hated — cuts like a physical wound and leaves scars that last a lifetime.

Growing up estranged or even bullied, the dreamer has every reason to hate her tormentors, but does that make the human race her enemy? What about her family? That one teacher who spoke up for her? The boy next door who had a crush on her even though she was "weird?" These people whom she recognizes as people and who recognize her in turn, these are family even if they aren't kin. Is she, then, really a part of this community? If so, then why can't the rest of them recognize it?

A Beast is raised human. Even after the Devouring, she holds onto that against all odds. She lives on the knife's edge between Hunger and humanity, trying to protect her loved ones and herself — from herself. The alternative is to be consumed by Hunger, to become the mindless monster the Hero believes her to be, and that way lays devolution and death.

Devouring

Rick is climbing. He does not know where he is or how he got here, but such is the way of dreams. The sun shines on his back, and he reaches up for the next handhold, smiling, happy, free. A good dream.

No. A shadow over the sun, just for a moment. This isn't a good dream. This is the other dream, the dream where–

He has no time to think before the talons hit home. He is plucked from the mountainside, hundreds of feet in the air, with burning, searing pain in his shoulder and leg where the great bird's claws have pierced him. He twists to see the thing, to finally see it, but he cannot move. He hears the wings beating, but everything else is pain.

The claws move, pushing him forward. The beak – he can finally see the beak. It closes over his head, and he hears the SNAP as his neck breaks.

Darkness. Nothing. And then...the sun returns. He emerged from a cave. He's standing on his own mountain, but it overlooks a vast forest, lush and green. But that isn't right, he thinks. That forest should be burning and charred.

He does not think. He takes flight. He swoops low and spits fire into the trees, and then soars high, gazing down over the forest, the mountain, his Lair, his new home. He will never dream of being plucked from the mountain again. Others will dream of him.

No blood or DNA test can tell the difference between a Beast and her human kin. She *looks* like them, but a living nightmare fills the gap where her soul should be. At night, she wanders through the periphery of that nightmare, catching glimpses of her primordial Horror. Her *true* self.

A Beast is the first victim of her own nightmare. She is marked — even defined — by the dreams that haunted her entire life. Therein is the key to her true nature.

- Charlotte flees mechanized colossi who bellow and pursue her through the city center, moving faster than she can believe. Where is safe when they can reach inside of buildings — or tear them down?
- Alina wakes to screams and the smell of smoke. Cut off from her family, she tumbles out of the window and sees the forest engulfed in fire. The image that sticks with her is deer fleeing to the city streets ahead of the blaze.
- A beautiful woman beguiles Alain into the water. Leathery coils tighten around him and barbed hooks tear his flesh as she pulls him beneath the surface, and the dream implodes in a foam of blood and choked screams.
- Jude is in a ruined, life-sized dollhouse with a forbidden room at the top. Just looking inside means death, but he goes anyway. A little girl with a distended abdomen and a spider's body nests over an old cradle. Her jaws unhinge as she descends to greet him.
- Rick is climbing, which is his favorite hobby, when the wingspan of something huge blots out the sun. Torn from the mountain by enormous talons, he flails helplessly through the air with the wind roaring in his ears. It chose this for him. It wonders if this little man can fly.

A dreamer might come to any conclusion about her nocturnal visions. Some assume that their subconscious just tells them what they need to know, albeit in terrifying and allegorical ways. Some assume that they have some kind of psychic ability. Very curious dreamers might seek out supernatural phenomena, thinking that their dreams make them worthy to join the ranks of the unseen (they aren't wrong, as it happens). No matter what the dreamer thinks, at some point, the Dark Mother finds her.

The first exposure that the dreamer has to the Dark Mother does much to shape her life going forward. Sometimes, the Devouring just happens. The Horror ascends from the Primordial Dream, finds the dreamer, and consumes the thin veneer of humanity that was her soul. Sometimes, a Beast finds the dreamer, her Horror drifting toward the dreams of a seemingly normal person whose nightmares extend deep into the Primordial Dream. The Beast might then choose to offer the Devouring to the dreamer. Some Beasts couch the Devouring the form of an offer; become a Beast, or remain a dreamer. Some are less friendly about the choice, making it clear that if the dreamer refuses to join the Begotten, she can't be allowed to live. Some don't even bother making the offer, but progress directly to the Devouring. Very occasionally, the dreamer spots a Beast first and follows her, trying to make sense of the odd connection she feels, eventually realizing she is, in a sense, chasing herself.

In any case, though, the Beast isn't losing her humanity, but gaining her true self. She experiences one final nightmare: The Devouring.

The Final Nightmare

However it happens, a Horror (whether another Beast's or his own) consumes the dreamer within the dreamscape. The dreamer then experiences a moment of perfect stillness. During that moment, the dreamer, for the first time, sees her own Horror.

The particulars of this process are the subject of much debate among Beasts. If the Beast's Devouring is brought on by another of the Children, is the new Beast's Horror chosen, in some way, by the Beast that does the Devouring? If that's the case, it would make sense for a Makara to "spawn" other Makara, but that isn't always what happens; a Makara might Devour a dreamer only for the dreamer to become an Anakim or an Eshmaki or a member of any other Family. Is the new Beast's Horror — and therefore her Family and Hunger — random? That doesn't seem to make sense, either, as new Beasts invariably feel that by becoming a Beast, they have not lost their humanity but gained something they were missing all along.

That feeling — the realization that the dreamer has, in some way, *always* been a Beast — isn't universal, but is extremely common. The dreamer might never have had the language to describe it, but all her life, she felt different. With her soul cleared away and the Horror finally replacing it, she claims a birthright she never knew she had. For Beasts Devoured by other Beasts, they have a big sibling to welcome them to their new family. For Beasts who experience the Devouring spontaneously, the Devouring is more of a homecoming.

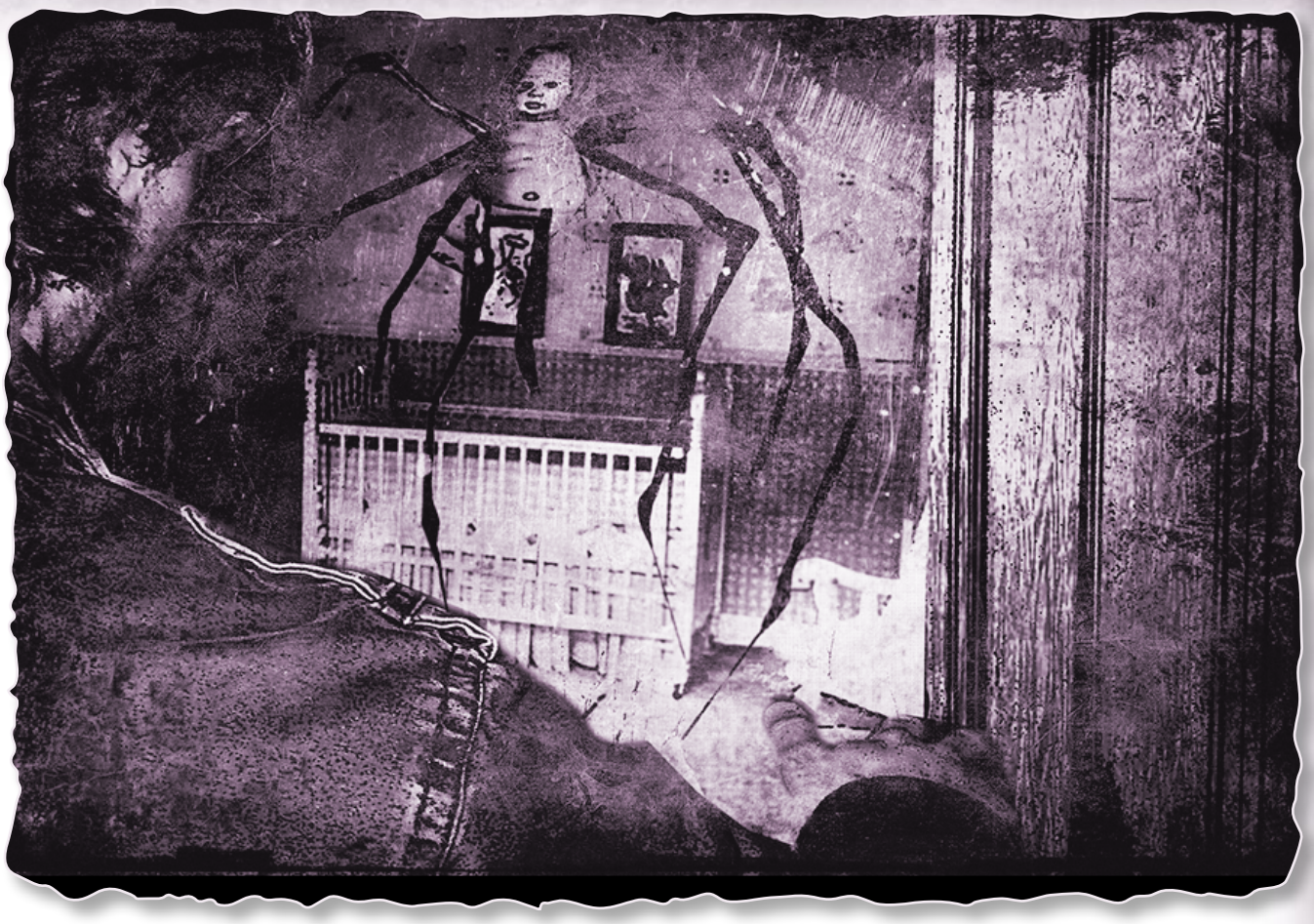
For any Beast, the moment she and her animalistic Horror come face to face is a baptism of sorts. To the Horror, her human self is, initially, just another victim. In the moment of the Devouring, though, the Horror understands the connection to the dreamer just as the dreamer realizes her connection to the Horror. In order for it to fully join with the dreamer, the human soul must be cleared away, symbolically consumed, and reimagined. Another Beast can facilitate this by Devouring it, or the Horror can do it spontaneously. In any case, the new Beast must accept her fate.

This is different from agreeing to a proposal from another Beast, however. A Beast can offer the dreamer whatever he likes: threaten her, seduce her, or simply lay out the truth. The dreamer might agree or disagree as she sees fit, but that conversation isn't even necessary. In the dream, in that final nightmare, when the last shred of the dreamer's soul is Devoured and the character experiences a pure moment of *nothing*, then that dreamer must make the choice.

Only when she is no longer afraid can she be whole. Thrown into the monster's jaws, the Beast triumphs over fear by *becoming* it. She steps into the monster's role and takes control.

In this moment of epiphany, she sees the face of the Dark Mother. She joins her new Family, a word rich with bittersweet connotations. For the first time, the Beast knows what she is and where the dreams came from. She is not a defective human being. She is not insane. She is a creature of legend.

The Beast's eyes snap open. She and the nightmare are one.



The Mythic Self

A Beast's Horror is a nightmare cloaked in legend, a horror in the form of a mythological monster. Mankind has projected its fears onto these forms for generations.

Most Horrors are ancient. Their roots lie in the earliest epoch of human history, when these hairless, defenseless apes lived in terror of predators, uncaring elements, and plagues for which they had no names. Over time their fears become encrusted in myth and legend: the natural human response to a recurring nightmare in their midst.

Rarely, a Beast inherits a strong Horror with a name and sense of history. She awakens with a mythic identity overlaid upon her human self. She is not just Ugallu, she is Ashalla, the Idiptu wind-fiend who unleashed hell on ancient Babylon. She feels compelled to walk among its ruins, even though she is also Ashya Dochev from Kazan, Russia.

Not every Beast has a mythic antecedent. Old fears evolve and new ones are born, from SARS outbreaks, to plague cannibals, to a devastated greenhouse world. Ironically, people feel just as helpless against these modern horrors. They fester in the collective unconscious, becoming fodder for new iterations of the Families. Beasts are born of humanity, and humanity has no end of reasons to fear.

The Beast looks at the world through her Horror's eyes. To others, an Eshmaki is just a sleek young woman with sun-darkened skin and the kind of lean muscle that does not come from a gym. Her true self may be a serpentine dragon, but she is confined by the physical reality of her human self, at least in the waking world.

Aspects of her Lair bleed into the environment as the Beast concentrates. Heat shimmer fills the air. The sky grows sullen with the glow of distant fires and ash blows on the wind like snow. Shifting her perceptions only takes a modicum of effort, but seeing truly is harder when Hunger gnaws at her.

The Beast can draw upon her Horror and aspects of her Lair — its heat, its darkness — to perform supernatural feats in the waking world known as Atavisms. These powers become more potent in locations that echo her Lair in some way, consciously infecting those around her with her fear. When a Beast uses an Atavism, any nearby being with supernatural awareness — be it one of the Beast's inhuman cousins like a vampire, or simply a mortal with some psychic affinity — catches a clear glimpse of the Horror in all its monstrous glory.

The Beast and her Horror are two aspects of the same being, but their joint existence is fraught with tension. If her conscious self is the Ego, then her Horror is undoubtedly the Id. Its urges are blunt and instinctual: hunt; kill; feed; survive.

Like the Id, the Horror cannot be reasoned or bargained with, only sated, and the Beast *must* do so if she hopes to keep peace between them. Unfortunately, what the Horror demands may be abhorrent. Morality is irrelevant to its single-minded pursuit of its defining Hunger. The Predator must hunt. The Collector must take. The Tyrant must rule. These are not cravings; they are categorical imperatives. Embracing her Hunger outright, however, means surrendering her humanity and hence the only thing keeping her Horror in check. Shutting herself away or turning her back on people ends the same way. The Horror seizes her and drags her screaming back into the nightmare.

A Beast must be true to both sides of herself: human and monster, Life and Legend. This, in large part, is why Beasts choose to use their Horrors to teach humanity.

Family

The date isn't going well. It's going fine, which is the opposite of how Rick wanted it to go. Alessandro is completely Rick's type – strong arms, blue eyes, thick hair – but he seems tentative. Rick can't quite stop seeing him as...well, prey. They haven't really found anything to talk about.

"What do you dream about?" Alessandro's question is weird, but what the hell.

"Flying," says Rick. "Mostly."

"Like a bird?" Alessandro's blue eyes are fixed on Rick, and Rick notices he isn't blinking.

"Like a hawk." Rick licks his lips.

"And you dive."

"Yeah."

"And then you catch–"

"Whatever I'm diving at. Yeah."

They stare at each other for a minute longer. "I have that dream, too," whispers Alessandro.

Each Family embodies an iconic fear from the collective unconscious, with individual Beasts as variations on the theme. The firstborn squabbled as they struggled to feed insatiable Hungers. Spreading their nightmares far and wide, they gave rise to legends about great monsters: dragons, megalodons, giants, and many more without names.

The relationship between myth and monster is symbiotic. Humans believe naming something gives them power over it — control — but ancient Beasts seized upon the names that were given to them in order to tighten their grip on the mortal psyche. In exchange, they adopted the forms bestowed on them.

During the Devouring, a Beast is reborn into his new Family. It is essential to his identity from the moment he embraces his Horror and feels the gnawing of his Hunger. He feels the pull of his kin. He hears the echo of their nightmares and is compelled to seek them out. They are not just familiar; they are of the same flesh, the same indelible essence.

Family is more than just lineage; it is a shared experience. Even before the Devouring, a Beast's dreams color his perceptions and bleed over into the world at large, influencing people's attitudes toward him. Nightmares are another common denominator. Swapping stories, Beasts' eyes light up when they realize they had the same dreams growing up. The particulars differ but the essence is always the same.

Of course, Family relations are not always cozy. Familiarity breeds contempt as much as intimacy, and interactions between Beasts are fraught with rivalry, ideological difference, and even outright conflict. Still, when the enemy is at the gates, who else can you trust?

Anakim

Giants once ruled the world, from the Greek Titans to the gargantuan Ymir of Norse mythology. Time and time again, they were overthrown, slaughtered, and cast into the pit. They always survived. Smiling grimly to themselves, they gnaw on old bones and wait in the darkness for the age when they will rise again.

People still dread the coming of Giants, as well they should. They are bigger and stronger, and relentless as well. They are the nightmare of hopeless struggle against unstoppable forces and unbeatable foes. They remind people how feeble they really are: small and fragile, bones snapping like twigs as they are trampled underfoot.

The View From Without: Julia Phoenix, Galateid

I saw her surrounded by men. The men carried bats and boards and knives, and I though, for a moment, *she's like me. They hate her so*. But I did not feel her inner fire, and I thought that something was happening that I did not understand. So I watched, but I promised myself if the men started to hurt her, I would intervene.

She fought them. She threw one against a wall so hard he bled. She punched one in the chest and he dropped, coughing, spitting red. But then one moved in behind her with a knife and I yelled a warning.

The woman turned and exhaled fire. And I saw — I promise, I *saw* — the dragon, superimposed on her, mighty and terrible and resplendent and beautiful. The man ran, burning, only to collapse. The other men stood and staggered away.

I climbed down from the fire escape into the alley. I did not know what to say to her, this beauty, this woman with a dragon in her. I could not feel her inner fire the way I would with another like me, but I had, beyond doubt, seen it.

Anakim are born of rage and deprivation. Petty people — *little* people — held them back their entire lives. They endured poverty while the rich cavorted on TV. Bullies beat them down, emotionally if not physically. Gluttons for punishment, Giants always defied their abusers by rising again.

The Anakim vows he will never be powerless again. He flexes his muscles and forces the world to make sense on *his* terms. Unfortunately, there is no such thing as a "gentle giant." People get hurt around him constantly. Always accidentally, he tells himself, so why does his family cringe every time he raises his voice?

Eshmaki

Humans are prey and the weakest members of the animal kingdom. People pride themselves on their technology, thinking it gives them the edge, but a million years of evolution have produced creatures that shatter vertebrae with their jaws as effortlessly as opening a soda can. What are humans against that?

For thousands of years, people lived in scattered tribes of nomadic hunter-gatherers. They were in constant fear of being eaten by predators. Safety was fleeting. Death and destruction were the natural order of things.

Is the modern world so different? Death still comes suddenly and violently, now at the hands of strangers now instead of animals. People shut themselves away from the predators in their midst. To a Hunter, the city is just another stalking ground. He thrives there, as either a lone predator or as part of a pack.

The Eshmaki is a wolf in sheep's clothing. He sees the people around him as victims in waiting; a cud-chewing herd waiting for someone to save them — or for their comeuppance. Tearing down the world is the only way to make it better. Either way, his is an often-solitary existence. People instinctively shun those who walk arm-in-arm with death and destruction.

Makara

Earth is an ocean world. Humans scrape by on but a fraction of its surface while lost continents and alien wonders lurk below; every ancient culture recognized the primacy of water as the bringer and sustained of life. Technology has recently permitted access of a limited sort to the lightless, inhospitable ocean depths, but we still prefer to send machines in our place. Everybody knows: "there be monsters."

Every seafaring culture has recorded encounters with monsters, from mammoth sharks to ichthyosaurs to even stranger creatures. The ocean's hostile and mysterious nature gives these legends staying power. Until the Space Age, the sea was the most dangerous place humans could go. The Leviathans are the lords of the deep and nightmares of the unknown, and people *will* die if they trespass in their domain.

Black eyes and a shark's smile are the Makara's hallmarks. No one knows her well; her heart is packed with secrets. Occasionally she lures someone into her embrace, crushing and wresting from them what she craves, whether secrets, sex, or simple flesh and blood. She glides silently through the world of men the rest of the time, ever restless, ever searching, and leaving disquiet and fascination in her wake.

Not all Makara are aquatic, but all of them bring the fear of the depths. Depths of the ocean, certainly, the crushing pressure and endless dark, but also the depths of the earth, the depths of knowledge. They bring of fear of knowing that one has passed a threshold and that turning back is no longer possible.

Mystically minded, the Leviathan feels a deeper connection than most with the Mother of Monsters and strives to learn her secrets. She is patient, though. Water is relentless. It erodes mountains, carves canyons, and washes away cities. The ceaseless work of civilization is to hold it at bay, but in the end, water *always* wins.

Namtaru

Navajo legend tells of the Eye Killers, twins abandoned to die in the wilderness by their mother. They grew into beasts with owl heads, serpentine bodies, and rending bear-like claws. They were so terrifying they could kill with a glance. Shamans tried and failed to exorcize them, but the Eye Killers slew their assailants *en masse*. Finally, a man named Monster Slayer blinded them long enough to bludgeon them to death with his club.

Gorgons take the cruel lessons of such stories to heart. If you are different, unclean, or unwanted, you will be cast out. You will be reviled, feared, and treated as subhuman. They know because they, too, have been untouchables, forced to live apart or in hiding: outsiders, freaks, and nonconformists.

The truth, though, is that normal doesn't exist and beauty itself is a lie. The Namtaru knows that now. People scrub themselves raw, paint their faces, and douse themselves in perfume to hide from the knowledge that everyone dies and everything rots. Now the Gorgon revels in the grotesque. If only others could see it, too. She will open their eyes; if that means bringing the pretty people down to her level, so be it.

Ugallu

Ugallu are shrewd predators. They watch and wait until their prey is vulnerable and then snatch them from above. Some kill quickly, breaking the creature's neck or piercing the heart with their talons. Others, like the golden eagle, carry the victim aloft and let her fall, dashing her body on the rocks below. Either way, their prey lives in constant fear of an invisible enemy who can strike at any time.

Killing is simple, though. Raptors are nothing if not calculating predators –– and easily bored. A person can fall in many ways, from betrayal, to destitution, to loss of faith; Ugallu find ways of acquainting their victims with each and every one of them. The loftier the victim, the more they have to lose. Sometimes, the Raptor insinuates himself into their lives so he can enjoy it up close and personal.

Whether up close or from a distance, Ugallu thrive on exposure, stripping away a target's armor and protection until he is naked and weak. They do not make their foes powerless like their brutish Anakim brethren do. They wait, patiently, then swoop in

The View From Without: Ken Aten, Daeva of the Carthian Movement

I ran with a coterie of "the Children" for the better part of five years. They're not Kindred, but they treated me more like family, more like a clan, than any of my fellow Serpents ever did. I have to assume that part of that is because we weren't competing for the same food. Or maybe they're just wired differently, hard to say.

Never let it be said that they aren't capable of backstabbing, though. One of them was a big, brutish guy name Zane. Another was this little Filipino woman named Anna. Zane and Anna had a... relationship, I guess. One day they were fuck-buddies, the next they were picking out rings, by the end of the week they were barely civil. I never quite understood it.

One night Zane killed Anna's sister. Not another one of the Children, like her real flesh-and-blood sister. I still don't know why he did it. It didn't seem to be anything personal against Anna, just that Zane was really hungry and that's who he wanted.

We all went to the funeral — I was late, but I made it — and the vibe there was weird. The rest of the coterie (they'd say "brood") had this resigned "well, that's what had to happen" kind of feeling about them. Anna was pissed at Zane, but she got over it.

I kept waiting for the revenge, for Anna to poison the big fucker or something. But it never happened.

to snatch away another talisman, another piece of cover, another ally, until nothing is left and the target is truly, completely exposed.

Beast Culture

The Children do not have a world-spanning society. A Beast in one city probably knows nothing about her siblings in others. Beasts do have their own culture, however, based upon millennia of shared dreams and familial history. When one Beast brings another into the fold, or when a Beast who was spontaneously Devoured finds others of her kind, they share their knowledge about the rest of the family and the expectations of the Dark Mother. Beasts express this with three simple principles.

We Are All Family

The Children are all part of a greater family, stretching back to the Dark Mother. Observance of this principle is why they refer to themselves as "Begotten," even if She isn't literally their birth mother. Beasts consider it their responsibility to take care of one another. Sometimes that means tough love, of course; a Beast who can't or won't curb her predatory impulses attracts attention from Heroes or extended family, and that endangers all of the Children. For the most part, however, Beasts are expected to try and figure out *why* one of their siblings is out of control before taking violent or punitive action.

We Are Allowed to Be What We Are

Beasts are monsters. They can't be otherwise. They must be allowed to hunt, feed, and even kill. Beasts debate over *how* monstrous they're allowed to be before some intervention is appropriate, and some of that debate involves the specifics of the region, what kind of extended family is about and what their priorities are, what Hero activity has been like, and who the Apex is (if any).

Eat to Live, Don't Live to Eat

Beasts must be more than their Horrors. The Horror only wants to sate its Hunger, but a Beast isn't *just* that Hunger. A Beast can use her Hunger to teach the world, to bring it wisdom (not knowledge). Beasts expect their siblings to do so, to bring *some* kind of lesson with them when they choose their victims. Feeding for survival, of course, is different; if the choice is "feed without teaching" or "starve," no Beast would begrudge a brother a little mayhem. At the same time, though, Beasts encourage one another to consider how their feeding affects the world. They must be more than the monsters from the stories, otherwise the Heroes are right about them.

The Brood

The human need for companionship never goes away, even when humanity does. If anything, a Beast feels its loss more keenly. The Devouring opens the door to a Family the Beast never even knew he had. They accept him for what he is, no questions asked, and stand by him when the Hero comes to shed his blood.

Beasts sense each other in a general way. They instinctively *know* someone is in their city and will eventually cross paths in the Primordial Dream. The call of Family is strong, especially the cry of a hungry, newly awakened Beast. The newcomer is found trying to find his kin and make sense of what he is now, his big brother or sister (if any) nearby and dozy from consuming his soul.

Beasts band together for the same reasons humans do: camaraderie, convenience, and mutual protection. They lack the world-spanning secret societies of mages and vampires, but the bonds they share are far more intimate. Indeed, the brood *is* Beast society as far as its members are concerned. Each is a

surrogate family with its own territory defined by their collective influence on the Primordial Dream and how many people they affect. A brood can host any combination, not just Family members. Even other creatures, such as vampires and werewolves, are welcome to join.

Beasts are a clannish lot. They help their kin when possible — and convenient — but nothing compares to the bond between broodmates. They cling to each other and jealously guard their territory against outsiders. Separate broods may exchange information and cooperate against a common threat, but they do well to keep their distance otherwise.

The Hive

Within a brood, the bond shared between broodmates is more than mere friendship. They have a common soul and sense of identity. Their Lairs stitch themselves together over time, creating an expansive shared hunting ground in the Primordial Dream. White cliffs descend from an Ugallu's mountain roost and drop into the frothing ocean where a Makara makes its Lair, and a Namtaru broods within an adjoining underwater cavern.

Using their shared Lair, broodmates can communicate in their dreams regardless of real world distance, though traveling far apart feels wrong under any circumstances. Furthermore, an individual Beast is no longer limited to aspects of his own Lair. He can draw strength from places resonant with his broodmates' Lairs as well. He can even learn to use their Nightmares and Atavisms as they grow more and more alike.

That bond comes with risks, though, the greatest of which being a Beast whose Horror is starved and running rampant. The entire brood is endangered when the Hero hunts him down, a confrontation that can only end in their shared Lair. Hunger is no longer an individual concern, as everyone's safety is at risk.

An individual Beast, or a brood, can choose to wall their Lairs off from a hive. In some ways this is a safe thing to do; if the Lair is not part of the hive, creatures with the ability to move in dreams (including other Beasts) can't find the Lair through another point in the hive. Isolating one's Lair has an element of risk, though. If a Beast's Horror cannot roam freely throughout the Primordial Dream, its hunting territory is very small. It can repeatedly attack the same people in nightmares, and this kind of repeated trauma can lead to, among other things, Heroes being more easily able to track down the Beast.

The Apex

Beasts have an odd relationship with cities and population centers. So many people in a small area raises the chance for a brush with the supernatural, and therefore raises the chance of forming Chambers. The Chambers in a given area are unconnected, unless Beasts add them to their Lairs and join them with Burrows. The Chambers in a hive, though, all share some similarity, some small aspect granted by who- or whatever supernatural figure looms largest in the area's Primordial Dream. The Children call this being the *Apex*.

This similarity reflects the most powerful supernatural being in a region, whether or not that being is aware of its influence on the Primordial Dream or of the Children in general. The being, however, must have regular, direct contact with humanity. An elder vampire that dwells in an isolated home and has his meals (as it were) delivered by underlings probably doesn't qualify, because he doesn't interact with people often enough or in varied enough contexts to become entrenched in the Primordial Dream. A mighty werewolf hunter, though, who leads her pack through the dark alleys of the city hunting her quarry, might have spawned enough nightmares and inadvertently created enough Chambers to become the city's Apex. Beasts are slightly more likely to become an area's Apex than other supernatural beings, simply because the nature of their Hunger means that they interact with humanity on a regular basis, but it varies heavily based on the city in question and the practices and mores of the locals.

An Apex Beast is not necessarily a leader. She might take no interest at all in the other Beasts of a region, focusing only on her own goals, lessons, or Legend. She might also set herself up as a dictator, using her power in the Primordial Dream to enter other Beast's Lairs and subjugate them, send nightmares to their human friends and family, and force their Legends to bend to hers.

The Children have an odd relationship with such cruel Apexes. They feel the pain and abuse of the situation as keenly

The View From Without: Mr Tin, Psychopomp Saboteur

Strangest job I ever did was in Reno. I don't even know who gave me the job, really. They wanted me to break into someone's dream and kill a monster. Not the sort of thing I usually do, but I'd done something similar over in Germany. So I went out to Reno, found the target, ripped open a gate, entered the dream, and saw the monster.

And that's when I realized I wasn't being paid nearly enough.

Oh, I did the job. Not that night — I had to back off and do more research, but I did it. It was not easy and it cost me... something I'd rather not have given up.

Yes, I'll tell you how I did it. Once you pay up.

as anyone, but they also often feel bound by their own principles. That doesn't mean they blindly obey the Apex — the Apex, after all, draws on no authority that she can't defend — but that a patient and careful Apex can dominate the Primordial Dream of an entire area for decades, bringing multiple broods to heel. This is especially true of a Beast who has achieved the Incarnate Inheritance.

Extended Family

The dead girl is a good listener. She scribbles in her book, swiping absentmindedly at her hair, and lets John spill his guts. She never touches her coffee.

She looks up when he finishes. His knuckles are white on the table. He forces himself to relax, his talons digging into the Formica surface. He takes his own coffee with what looks like a human hand.

"You don't believe me, do you?"

"I believe everything." Alice gives him a crooked smile, showing the edges of sharp teeth. She covers it as the waitress passes. "I want to help you. Believe me, I know the importance of family. But you have to do something for me first."

"What?"

"More." She taps her pen on the paper. "I need more. I need everything."

Kinship extends beyond the Families to their cousins, the other supernatural denizens of the World of Darkness. An Eshmaki in search of kin sometimes turns up a pack of werewolves or a coterie of Gangrel vampires instead, and he has a lot of explaining to do. Beasts have their own explanations for why their "cousins" don't feel the same connection to the Dark Mother.

Some Beasts feel that other supernatural beings, like Beasts, share an intrinsic connection to the Primordial Dream, but chose somewhere along the way to solidify that connection. That is, a vampire is a very specific kind of nightmare creature — it is a human corpse brought to life by the blood of another vampire that burns in the light of day. A werewolf is a human being that changes shape, becoming a vicious predator, but silver is Anathema to it. The vast cultural beliefs that both of these creatures share are not invalid — werewolves really *are* the spiritual children of Father Wolf, while changelings really *are* people who escaped captivity in the service of otherworldly beings — but all of that stems from the Primordial Dream.

Other Beasts note that while this explanation does have the advantage of granting the Begotten a kind of "elder sibling" status, it doesn't have a shred of real evidence beyond "some supernatural creatures map, in a sideways manner, to the fears of humanity." The Children that spend a great deal of time with other beings are generally more inclined to believe that their professed mystical origins — whatever they might be — are probably the correct one. After all, a Beast wouldn't accept a werewolf's explanation of the mind of the Dark Mother, so why should the Beast expect that the werewolf would accept his ruminations on Father Wolf as true?

The truth of the matter is that Beasts seem to have an intrinsic connection to *the supernatural* in general, but that doesn't indicate a common origin with other *supernatural beings*. The Primordial Dream responds to all sorts of mystical phenomena, and the Begotten are inextricably part of the Primordial Dream. This, in all likelihood, is the source of their connection with other beings, the kinship that they feel, and the reason that they can use their powers to amplify and mimic the ability of other creatures. Of course, this doesn't stop Beasts from trying to find deeper answers.

Kinship cannot be denied. Beasts have many ways to aid their cousins and bring them back into the fold: helping feed their alien Hungers, augmenting their supernatural abilities, and even teaching them how to walk the Primordial Pathways. If their bond is strong enough, Beasts can even bring them into their Lairs.

Beasts put their cousins in perspective as Family members or entire lost lineages, but this understanding does not cut both ways. Ironically, other supernatural beings are likely to believe every Beast is unique. One werewolf is much like another. Not so Ugallu. What do a roc, a wyvern, and a storm-demon have in common, from a vampire's perspective?

That said, supernatural beings are used to sharing the world with other monsters, some of whom even Beasts don't understand. Allies — or pawns — are invaluable against their common human hunter enemies, as well as other adversaries. Temporary alliances sometimes grow into sprawling, extended families of mixed monsters.

Vampires

Few Kindred look their bestial nature in the eyes. Even vampires belonging to the Circle of the Crone get agitated when Beasts mention the Mother of Monsters, whom they call Echidna, but both sides understand Hunger and the lengths they must go to in order to sate it. A vampire has a "Beast," after all, that part of its undead makeup that wants to be safe and, above all, *fed*. The Children can relate to that. Relationships between the two are always fraught with tension, though, especially if Beasts compete with vampires for prey and influence. Moreover, vampires have an all-too-human capacity for treachery; their controlling nature makes them problematic as allies.

Werewolves

The wolf must hunt. Bound by this law, Uratha embody the Hunger for the Prey; they are blood brothers to Beasts with similar appetites, right down to competition over who is the better predator. Pack loyalty more than makes up for any conflict, though, if they can be won as friends. Moreover, Uratha have a natural affinity for the Primordial Pathways, which are not too different from navigating the Shadow.

Mages

Mages are more human than many other kin, but they Hunger just the same. The Awakened hunger for secrets; the Collectors among the Beasts understand that once a secret becomes knowledge, it isn't a secret anymore. Mages and Beasts often play a

THE VIEW FROM WITHOUT: MICAH, OGRE EARTHBONES OF THE SUMMER COURT

Here's what I know. I pulled myself out of a goddamn swamp, so filthy I thought I'd never see my real skin again, mouth full of peat and eyes burning, and Nyx offered me a hand up. I went back to my house and found another guy wearing my clothes and kissing my wife, so Nyx lured the fucker to the swamp so I could send him back.

Yeah, I know what she does. I know she chases people down, jumps on them from rooftops, marks them. I know it, and it turns my stomach a little. But you know what? I asked her, "you never take them? Never take them away." And without missing a beat, she says, "god, no. They get to go home. I just want them to *look around* a little more."

I think I'm OK with that. Wish I'd looked around a little more, myself.

cautious, protracted, and even (depending on the personalities of those involved) flirtatious game of cat-and-mouse as they decide how much to reveal to each other. Since Beasts often find themselves involved in deeper mysteries of the World of Darkness, though, they have enticing bait with which to lure a mage.

Prometheans

The Created are a puzzle. Their Disquiet causes nightmares similar to those of a hungry Beast and their Refinements are draped in mythic symbolism. Their Lineages were created by human demiurges, however, and a Promethean's ultimate goal is humanity — making them the opposite of Beasts in many respects. Unfortunately, while Beasts are welcome to accompany them on their Pilgrimage, the Created are rare and disappear without a trace when their time is over, making it difficult to learn more about them.

Changelings

The Lost *are* Beasts as far as the Children are concerned. They too are dream-walkers steeped in legend, and Seemings and Families share some similarities. Changelings are not born, however, but *made* out of Durance from the True Fae. Attitudes about these "Fair Folk" vary among the Children. On the one hand, they understand having to sate a Hunger. On the other, the Fair Folk are so far beyond human that even a Horror can't penetrate their dreams, and this makes the Children very nervous.

Sin-Eaters

In many ways, death is the root of all fears; no one goes untouched. Accordingly, it has unmatched potency in the human psyche. The Primordial Pathways touch on the Underworld just like any other realm, and Beasts suspect the geists of Sin-Eaters are Horrors of a different kind; perhaps the remnants of a long dead Family clawing its way back to life. Perhaps the Dark Mother herself lairs in the Underworld, sustained by endless fear.

Mummies

Their memories in tatters, the Arisen defy death with a combination of contempt and weariness; their existence is as mysterious as their Nameless Empire. Given the similarity between the Sickness they cause and the nightmares of a rampant Horror, Beasts sometimes wonder if mummies are not subjugated Children who have been bound to their deathless state by human sorcery. Like them, the Arisen are compelled by instinctual urges, but theirs are externally imposed, particularly by the enigmatic Judges of Duat.

Demons

The Unchained are extraordinarily secretive and seem to hold the Children in contempt. Encounters between the two frequently terminate in violence and vicious rivalry, particularly if the Beast sees through the demon's human façade. The stories of the God-Machine that Beasts have pieced together lead them to believe demons are something apart from the Primordial Dream: industrial-age monsters masquerading as divinity. Whatever they are, they are *not* kin.

Food & Drink

Everyone's been hungry.

Beasts are hungrier.

Hoard, Power, Prey, Punishment, Ruin: such simple words for such monstrous needs. *Hunger* is a word that suggests eating, but the Hunger of a Beast isn't so base as appetite. Hunger is the stuff of legends. It inspires epics of the wars fought against it, of the empires it breaks, and of the people who die at its feet. When a Beast hungers, humanity does not sit idle.

Mother's Milk

The Dark Mother hungered, too. Hunger was her greatest gift to her Children, a mythic drive to explore her world and carve out a piece of it. She left no true record of what her Hunger was, of course, but she left many legends.

The Children honor their Mother by feeding, but sating Hunger is more than that. Many Beasts feel that the world has grown too loud and people too numerous for the Primordial Dream to have the influence it once did. Dreamers — Beasts-to-be, waiting to realize their true nature — hear it, but fewer other people do. Feeding, then, should teach a lesson. Satiety comes from catharsis, the moment when the victim "awakens"

Tiamat spawned the universe, the waters of chaos and night. Marduk, jealous sun, loathed her divine disorder, and warred on her with an army of treacherous gods. Tiamat birthed many monsters to fight them, but cowardly Marduk blinded her with his light. The usurper king rent Tiamat with cursed weapons and cast her to the North Wind. Reveling in his stolen glory, he did not see his mistake. Tiamat's children gathered her remains and sealed them in sacred vessels, scattering them to the far corners of the earth to await the time of awakening. For Tiamat was not truly slain, but sleeps and dreams the Primordial Dream. Her restless nightmares guide us to her embrace, and we exact revenge on Marduk's ordered world in her name.

In those days, humanity was savage, little more than apes. Humans had no needs but those derived from instinct. They did not dream. The Dark Mother was a woman, a huntress of her tribe, and though she could kill with little more than a flick of her blade, she hungered to be greater than she was. That hunger consumed her, even in the depths of sleep. In this way, she became the first dreamer. The first Beast. She tamed the wilds of the Primordial Dream, home of all conception, and took it as her lover, filling herself with its endless possibilities. She cracked the world open with her labor pains. No more would humans suffice on instinct, for we were her gifts: greed, tyranny, murder, injustice, and hate. The fires of civilization.

A dragon and a hero. A serpent and a god. You know this story. Indra kills Vritra, Krishna slays Kaliya. Some upstart warrior destroys a progenitor of monsters. It's called Chaoskampf, and it's a narrative common to just about every religion on earth. That's because it's true. Not literally, no, but we don't give our ancestors enough credit. They understood how the universe works, that it's one big wheel of order and chaos. Heroes like to think that lends them credibility, that life triumphs over death in our most primal tales. They're mistaken. Chaos wins in the end. That's entropy. That's science. There's no Dark Mother, just the heat death of the universe. That's the nature of Hunger, and we're here to hurry it along.

(whatever that means in the context of the Beast's feeding) and realizes that the dream has ended and morning has come.

The Horror doesn't care, of course. The Horror feeds more deeply when someone dies. The Horror doesn't need the victim to learn anything, to see sunlight streaming in his window, to realize that the terrible things that *might* have happened have not, in fact, come to pass. The Horror just wants the Hunger sated in the deepest and most brutal way possible.

Beasts do not shame one another for feeding their Horrors. Everyone must, and sometimes indulgence is liberating. A Beast who never exercises moderation, though, will eventually either fall into slumber or attract attention from Heroes. In that instance, she might find her siblings reluctant to stick their necks out for her. If her acts are overt enough, her siblings might feel the need to run her out of town, or worse.

Feast

The audience is unwilling, but the choice is out of their hands. Five-foot-two, bespectacled, and groomed within an inch of his life, Sin-you is a clashing color on the palette of the 24-hour greasy spoon. His eyes are posing questions no one wants answered.

What does he know?

Did he see me do it?

A trucker lumbers out of his booth and settles up. Sin-you knows what comes next. He smelled it in the man's dime-store deodorant, and he sees it in the exact change he counts out over the cash register. Not a nickel over the bill. The hostess forces a smile as she drops a receipt like a piece of garbage.

Sin-you's smile stretches like a stab wound.

Miles away, the trucker's mind is wandering up the interstate. The waitress he pinched. The waiter he called a faggot. The call girl with the bloody lip. They're crawling over the walls of his cabin, tearing out soft pieces of his body and screaming obscenities he can't hear but understands in the pit of his belly. He pulls his rig onto a side road before it slams into a concrete barrier.

"Guilty," whispers Sin-you. It's the most obvious thing in the world. An ivory spike, notched like a horn, drags down the trucker's cheek, and Sin-you gorges on judgment. The trucker isn't sure if he's still dreaming, but his heart is beating so fast he can barely breathe. He doesn't see Sin-You. No one ever does. He remembers, though.

He remembers how he treated the people he met on the road. Maybe next time he'll remember they are travelers, just like him.

Sin-You slips out of the back of the truck and waits for his broodmate to arrive.

Hunger is pleasure. Anticipation is primal, an emotion that was branded into brains before brains learned to make thoughts. It's the flood of endorphins as the fork passes the lips. It's the relish of grilling *filet mignon* so rare it bleeds blue. It's the thrill of stalking a wounded deer and its stuttering trail through the woods.

Whatever call the Dark Mother heeded, Beasts hear its echo. Hidden deep in every instinct, she whispers, chiding her Children to grow up just like her. That whisper is the reason a Beast gets up in the morning, or carries on when her brood is slain and an ax-happy Hero prepares his *coup de grâce*. Only a Beast gets to decide when she's cut off. For every hurt, for every disappointment, for every loved one who walks away, she remembers her Hunger — that which fed her when the world was fallow.

Living with Hunger is dangerous, yes, but a dragon's gold is never a burden. The Hero might call it profane, but in his heart of hearts, he envies its glory. He'd be lucky to have such a light to guide his way. Instead, he's left with the solipsism of vendetta; Hunger is a lodestar, not an addiction as the Heroes claim. As if a Beast could detox off instinct. Grendel wars on Heorot because killing Danes is the only way he keeps his sanity stapled together. He savors the blood spattering on his skin, and the bones crumbling in his fists, but that's all empty calories. Hunger drowns out doubt. If it didn't, he'd throw himself on their spears.

Abundance

When a Beast is nearly full to bursting, her Nightmares flow. As the Horror grows content and slothful, the Beast wrests away a scrap of its strength. With that borrowed power, she commands fear with the precision of a general.

A sated Beast knows how to break out her prey's best terrors. She knows how her victim obsesses over his looks, as well as his nagging suspicion that if they fade, he will too. She knows all about his dreams of limbs melting like wax and of a fast, anonymous decay into old age. She knows how to make fear fact. Now, whenever a chill hits the air, his bones ache and his hands tremble; whenever he looks in his mirror, he sees what he'll become.

A sated Beast can tear away mental blocks. Drugs, therapy, and money went into repressing his hit-and-run, but the Beast makes sure her victim still dreams of the homeless woman he killed, dying as her blood leaks memories into shattered glass. The slurs of pedestrians. The agonies of withdrawal. He sees her in every beggar downtown and in his own shadow as he turns out the lights.

A sated Beast takes the pain that threw her victim's life into a spiral of self-hatred and sorrow and says *I can do better.* She tortures the world until it feeds her again.

But as the Horror gluts on the Beast's victims, its appetites grow more exacting. It won't take just any gold or destruction; it takes

THE VIEW FROM WITHOUT: GIANNA IONESCU, IRRAKA STORM LORD

I had a bad night, once.

I don't want to talk about how I got there. Let's just say there was no moon and no one to see it. I ran them off the road. The car was smashed up against the tree, and I walked down from the street. I wanted blood and flesh and bone, and I found it. Two of them were dead and one was gasping his last.

And then in the trees above me, I smelled her. She was...slinking, I guess. She smelled like cinnamon and metal, and I looked up and saw her eyes. She wasn't there to judge me. She was there to join me, I think.

I didn't do it. I thought about it, thought about changing and feasting, but I didn't. I ran, got back in my car, and went back to my pack.

I don't know what I saw that night, but I think it was there to show me what I might have become. If I'd eaten.

Fort Knox bullion and a car thrown through a penthouse window. The Horror has no use for temperance when gluttony is a virtue.

Then again, that can become too much of a good thing. As the stomach swells, the muscles wither. If a Beast gorges herself to capacity, her Horror falls into a food coma, slumbering in the Heart of her Lair. That leaves the Beast as weak as any human. If her enemies find her dazed atop her hoard, with her belly exposed for the world to see, her Horror won't stir from sleep to save her hide.

Famine

A man snores beneath the cracked lights of a bus shelter. Through winter rain, the ticking of his Rolex synchs with Ana's heart. She needs that watch more than anything she's ever needed.

She thought she could get by on scraps. The cops are watching all her haunts: the subway, the tourist traps, even the fucking library. She hasn't had a real meal in weeks, and the night her neighbors woke up screaming about deep, dark oceans, she knew cold turkey wouldn't work.

Watch-guy's not going to be sleeping on that bench tomorrow. He's not going to be there in five minutes. That's the message Ana's Horror is thrashing into her on typhoons of stomach acid. Her bones chill as if it's dragging her back to the sea, but really, it's just dragging her to him.

She finds her hand on his wrist before she can think the desire to put it there. Her goose bumps brush against his as she hesitates.

He wakes.

Not just from sleep, but from the polite fiction that Ana is anything but a monster. He grabs a handful of hair and slams her into the bench. The rain twists around him, robbing him of balance. He tries to club her head with his briefcase, but she swings her leg further than a human knee allows, smashing him through the shelter's cheap glass.

Her goose bumps grip his skin like suckers as she crushes his chest and rips the watch from his arm.

Somewhere in the space between the rain, the ticking, and Ana's heart, her Horror roars.

Hunger is pain. Nausea slithers from the stomach and spreads through the body. The head throbs as limbs move like broken machinery, gasping for a final drop of fuel. Skin itches with the nagging fear that the last meal really was the *last* one, and every distraction blurs except the irrepressible urge to gorge.

Hunger is another word for starvation.

Satiety waxes and wanes with the demands of the hunt. Arson, murder, and theft aren't easily hidden, and neither are social vampirism or power mongering. Block associations sic SWAT teams on teenagers with spray paint, let alone a Beast dining out. Her meal ticket is always in danger of running out, whether from Heroes, human attention, or short supply. Deprivation is inevitable.

But nothing hunts like a hungry tiger.

Scarcity

Starvation is fire. Skin blisters as the Beast forges weapons from her own body, with the hammer of the Horror's mania shaping her designs. In exchange for pain, the unsated Beast gains focus and guile; as her Hunger pangs grow, so do her Atavisms. Her irises warp into daggers and venom drips from her claws. She can smell threats that others can't and sees the labels of *friend* or *foe* in every stranger. She becomes the pinnacle of survival, at least until the next meal.

Reward comes with risk, however. If a Beast expends her reserves or goes without a meal too long, her Horror goes feral. It has no logic to understand poor feeding prospects, nor the motives that might put its Beast on a diet. It has needs that outweigh consequence. It shatters the confines of the Lair and hunts through human nightmares. Like any predator, it revisits the same hunting grounds over and over again. A single nightmare feeding leaves a person bleary and edgy the next morning, but one a night for a week makes the victim sick, depressed,

and spiritually weakened. Worse yet, so much activity in the Primordial Dream attracts Heroes.

Gossamer's Hunger is a brilliant spectrum. She only collects the best — paintings, antiques, first editions — anything the beautiful people covet. One day, though, it all dries up. Her glittering inroads to high culture erode, and her shadier connections won't even humor her with forgeries. Is this the work of a Hero, or has Gossamer's double-dealing finally caught up with her? And would she rather go hungry or turn to more direct methods of procuring her feast?

The people love him. For decades, Vikram's fellow citizens have been his loyal — not subjects. No. *Constituents*. Loyal *constituents*. Who could argue with those numbers? That's why he wasn't prepared for a real election. This dark-horse candidate has some serious machinery backing her. She's uncovering scandals even Vikram can't remember, and that predatory gleam in her eyes at debates isn't the cameras flashing. Now he doesn't have enough clout to get out of a parking ticket. As he slips in the polls, he'll need to resort to more than just character assassination.

Luka's a Predator, the kind who uses every part, from skin to sinew. Zie thinks other carnivores are the best prey, and being hunted in return gives hir a special sort of thrill. Normally zie'd describe hirself as a conservationist, but sometimes the bleeding hearts go too far. The new laws mean a lot more rangers snooping around the woods looking for poachers. If they catch hir with a bloody bowie knife and a bear carcass, zie'll have to answer uncomfortable questions. Luka's Horror is hunting on its own now, and it's acquiring brand new tastes. Ugly ones.

They say that internal affairs is for slimeballs, and that describes Hollis well. He's always had a strong sense of right and wrong, as well as an unerring eye able to exploit that quality for his own edification. Woe to the cop who comes across his desk, because whether or not she's right, she'll always be wrong. Playing that game can be delicate, though, and now he's faltered. He's been suspended for all kinds of violations (if only they knew), and the review board's going to throw the book at him. Starving outside his red tape empire, it's time for Hollis to make good on his rolodex of spite. Time to show these cops what justice really is.

He has always needed to burn. As a kid, Levin played with matches and brought fiery doom on ant hills, so when the salamander in his dreams turned out to be him, everything *clicked*. Now the local news calls him the Eastside Pyro. Despite the disappointing nickname, his Legend grows in the warmth of the media's attention. Or rather, it did. The concrete walls of the county jail make poor kindling. Now his Horror's torching every dream it can, and rumor has it that his fellow inmates plan on snuffing out his light for good.

If You Are Lukewarm

The Beast who walks the middle path walks a tightrope. Middle Satiety gives her a clear head, neither softened by the sloth of fullness, nor gripped by the anxiety of starvation. But that's the opportunity the Hero's waiting for. Half-full Beasts are out of communion with their Horrors. The primordial self doesn't care what side the Beast chooses, but it can't abide the middle. It wants rage or contentment. It wants *anything* but boredom.

Beasts in the middle are open to Anathemas, the banes Heroes exploit to strike at the hearts of their foes. Anathemas take many forms, from holy spears to words of power, but what the Hero believes to be a fissure in the Beast's armor is really something he forces on her. Anathemas are the ultimate expression of the Hero's narrow view of the world: the belief that a Beast must have a weakness. When a Beast is soft from the Horror's dissatisfaction, the Hero can wrench the narrative back in his favor.

Lessons

The Primordial Dream teaches a lesson, and that lesson is simple: Survival. Fear of the unknown is what kept early humans alive. Curiosity, willingness to experiment — these are useful traits, too, but in the dark, with predators circling the fire, fear is the better bet.

Fear doesn't grant knowledge, though. It grants wisdom. Pain and terror show a person that he *does not want* to experience something again. Human psychologists draw a distinction between negative reinforcement (teaching a behavior by associating it with the stopping of something unpleasant) and punishment (teaching to avoid a behavior by *following* it with something unpleasant), but few Beasts feel the need to split that hair. The Primordial Dream isn't subtle or refined or nuanced. It teaches the wisdom of experience through exaggerated, horrific nightmares.

The modern world's relationship with fear has become strange and muddled. People fear occurrences that have virtually no chance of ever actually happening, while ignoring the dangers right in front of them. The sheer number of people alive at any given time means that a sea of strangers surrounds an average human being, resulting in generalized anxiety about the world and the people in it. Meanwhile, the visceral, blood-and-bones wisdom of the Primordial Dream has to be filtered through so much noise that it has the wrong effect. People fear each other but ignore supernatural danger. They fear terrorism but rationalize hatred. They fear a disease that will almost certainly never touch them but disbelieve the slow death of their planet.

The Children, though, feel the Primordial Dream. They are born of it. In the moment of the Devouring, they feel the Dark Mother reaching out to them, saying *teach them. Show them fear. Show them what they have forgotten. Make them wise.*

Over time, Beasts came to expect this behavior. Whether or not this was the Dark Mother's message, it became what the Begotten told each other. They don't *require* each other to teach a lesson while feeding — how could they? Who would police it? — but cultural weight and family expectation can be strong, even oppressive. If a Beast hunts but pays no heed to the lesson she is teaching, other Beasts are likely to question her, perhaps even try and convince her otherwise.

The lesson has a practical effect, though. If the Beast leaves a victim alive to learn a lesson, the Horror doesn't feed as deeply as it would otherwise. The Horror remains active and aware rather than slipping into slumber. If the Beast kills, or kills too frequently, the Primordial Dream responds strongly and Heroes sense this response. They instinctively track the Beast's activities even if they don't find the Beast herself, meaning that any of the Children in the vicinity are in danger.

Choosing a Lesson

Beasts sometimes speak of instinctively knowing the lesson they "must" teach after coming out of the Devouring, but this is probably simply a matter of a Beast combining experiences from her own life, her pre-Devouring dreams, and the urges of her Horror and taking them for a "mission." The truth of the matter is that any Beast can teach whatever lesson moves her. Some Hungers are better able to teach certain lessons than others (see Chapter One), but the lesson comes from the Beast.

With that said, after the Devouring, Beasts don't dream anymore. When they sleep, their Horror wanders the Primordial Dream and brings nightmares to dreamers in the local hive. The Beast is never really separated from the Horror (it's effectively the manifestation of his soul, after all), and so some Beasts advise that Children unclear on how to choose a lesson simply let their Horror roam and pay attention to the nightmares it causes. The lesson that the Beast should teach is there.

Example Lessons

Not every lesson is benign or even helpful. Sometimes a Beast takes "teaching a lesson" in the colloquial sense, meaning "impart harsh punishment." Just as many of the Begotten, though, take it seriously. Some of the more common lessons, in general terms, include:

- **Humility:** A common lesson of Anakim, Tyrants, and Ravagers, humility shows the victim that some things are simply beyond his control. The victim might be a very powerful, rich person, or just someone who tries to exert control over others in his life. The Beast might display this lesson by destroying something important to the victim, physically or social dominating him, or simply showing him a nightmare vista in which he is a subjugated, whipped slave.

- **Caution:** Nemeses, Predators, and Eshmaki of all Hungers enjoy teaching the lesson of caution. This lesson reminds the victim that he is fragile, and that while risk is inevitable, it is manageable and often not worth the rush. Victims of this lesson tend to be users (though not necessarily addicts; Beasts can usually understand the difference between thrillseeking behavior and the illness that is drug abuse), daredevils, and other people who risk themselves unnecessarily. Some Beasts who favor caution restrict their lessons to people who risk *others'* lives.

- **Acceptance:** Acceptance is an especially harsh lesson. Predators, Ravagers, and Namtaru are its most common proponents. For a victim to learn this lesson, he must be brought low, losing friends, family, home, shelter, even himself. A beneficent Beast teaching this lesson (if such a thing exists) does it in a dream, where loss and death evaporate with sunrise. Beasts find this lesson an especially difficult one to teach, though; people don't give up easily and they instinctively rail against horror and injustice. The lesson that "this is just how things are" is rarely one that they appreciate.

- **Cooperation:** What saved humanity when the species was young? Community. The ability to live in groups and work together toward mutual survival is perhaps the most positive bit of wisdom that the Begotten can impart. Namtaru, Collectors, and Predators favor this lesson. It must be applied skillfully, because to do it right requires teaching a small group of people that if they cannot work together, they will not survive. A Beast that teaches this lesson feeds well, and broods of Begotten often work together to impart it. The favored targets for cooperation are loners, control freaks, and misanthropes.

- **Attention:** Many people wander through life with their heads down, keeping their attention fixed on whatever reaffirms their worldview. Beasts who wish to teach the lesson of attention find that unacceptable. From a purely pragmatic point of view, keeping one's eyes open to the world around is just a safety issue. Besides, life is so much more fulfilling for people when they *notice* it. Ugallu, themselves superlatively attentive, favor this lesson, as do Nemeses and Collectors. They visit it on people who spend their time glued to screens or who

Teaching Through Fear?

Make no mistake, not all Beasts are good teachers. Some make weak stabs are teaching but really only want to feed the Horror. Many bring their own prejudices to bear and wind up teaching lessons that they themselves could stand to learn. Effective Beasts have mentors who help them find their strengths, craft lessons that both nourish the Horror and strengthen the subject, and leave that subject intact and wiser.

Teaching a lesson through terror is morally reprehensible to most people...but Beasts are not people. They use lessons to give context and purpose to their feeding practices. If Beasts are honest, they admit they use the concept of "lessons" to make what they do more palatable. Some Beasts rail at that notion, claiming divine purpose. Others try to make the lessons matter and improve humanity — whether the Dark Mother charges them with it or not, it's a noble pursuit. Still others shrug, cast off even the idea of a higher calling, and just feast.

remain in homogenous circles, never bothering to try and understand anything outside of themselves.

- **Appreciation:** It's a truism that some people don't know how good they have it. Teaching this lesson is a time-honored tradition and is the subject of several very well-known works of fiction and cinema. No one teaches a person to appreciate his life — or his tongue, or his limbs — like a Beast. Collectors and Predators take similar approaches to this lesson; the threat of losing something precious, be it a priceless heirloom or an eye, tends to make people see what they love in a new light. Eshmaki, too, enjoy the lesson of appreciation, and find satisfaction in teaching people to hold their loved ones close — who knows what waits in the dark?
- **Effort:** No reward without sweat. No knowledge without study. No gain without pain. People parrot such aphorisms, but the truth of the matter is that when they can get something for nothing, they jump at it. Beasts who teach the lesson of effort deny the easy path. They strand people in unforgiving vistas, bury them under rubble, or hobble them with poison and force them to push through the pain. They target the lazy and the greedy, those who rely on the graces of others and do not do their fair share. Anakim, Tyrants, and Collectors excel at this lesson.
- **Passion:** One of the effects of the modern world is that people have instant access to beauty, art, humor, and whatever else they might wish to experience. Feeling becomes difficult as people become jaded. Even people who work to better others suffer from dulled emotions; stress, compassion fatigue, and burnout numb the better angels of our natures. The Begotten have a good fix for that: mortal terror. The pure, elemental nature of fear stirs the heart and the mind. Collectors teach this lesson by stripping away items of comfort, while Ravagers do so by calling down fire and wind to change a person's perspective. The Makara, adept at stirring the emotions of humanity, also favor the lesson of passion.
- **Tradition:** Traditions become traditions for a reason. People tell stories as cautionary tales, but also as reminders and out of reverence. Then again, traditions can also outlive their usefulness. Years after a practice is no longer relevant, people stick to it because "that's the way it's always been done." The lesson of tradition can therefore be either to uphold or reject the old ways, depending on the proclivities of the Beast in question. Makara, Tyrants, and, of course, Nemeses favor this lesson, whether to support or subvert.
- **Perseverance:** The lesson of perseverance is superficially similar to the lesson of effort, but while Beasts teach effort to the lazy or the short-sighted, they save perseverance for people who start but do not finish, or are subject to adversity and contemplate giving up. It's a harsh lesson, true, but necessary — giving up is death. Sometimes a much more painful episode is necessary to keep perspective; the Beast, having visited terror upon her victim, leaves him with a simple reminder: don't let the bastards grind you down. Ugallu, Tyrants, and Ravagers favor this lesson, and bestow it upon people whom they dearly hope take it to heart.

Delving in Darkness

Not all hungers are Hungers. The world is riddled with veins of occult lore, and Beasts believe their Mother had a hand filling them all. Unearthing those secrets grants her Children the guidance they so sorely need in her absence.

Where lesser beings lose their minds, creeping truths drive a Beast to follow her bliss. Knowing what hides in the dark teaches her what she has to compete with — what she has to aspire to. Likewise, while most other creatures create Chambers in the Primordial Dream, few of them have the ability or desire to make any use of them. By learning about the activities of the supernatural, the Beast can use the local hive to build up her Lair.

Home

Beasts explore the world to expand their domains. The Primordial Dream is raw possibility, but it requires refinement; nightmares have no purpose when they lack meaning. Beasts search out places that resonate with the metaphysics of their Lairs and pull impressions of those places out of the material

The View From Without: Menkhaf, Sesha Hebsu

I remember your kind, but you seem...different. Unfocused. Hungrier, somehow. I saw you before, but you haven't always seemed so desperate to feast.

What is it that has changed? I think that people — living people — know too much. They have learned too much, and what they have not learned, they can create. I think that, perhaps, they don't *need* your lessons anymore.

So, of course, you must make yourself a purpose. It is terrible not to have a purpose. It is death.

world to expand them. Failing that, they force the issue, pushing victims to the brink of sanity to draw out the raw building blocks of nightmares. Every place and broken person is another candle burning off fog in the Primordial Dream.

The Collector poaches devil birds, whose calls portend death for those unfortunate enough to hear them. She keeps her pets in a special habitat and offers admission for a small fee. With each new nest in her collection and every new guest, her hunting grounds grow outward in a storm of shrieking.

The Nemesis has a riddle. She offers it to whomever she meets, but never the same way twice. Never the same tense, never the same words, never even the same punctuation, and never adding up to anything. Her unsolvable puzzle plagues countless sages and philosophers. For each life it envelops, she finds new ways to twist her Lair into a labyrinth of dead ends.

The Predator explores the back alleys of Skid Row, patronizing godforsaken drug dens or any other places where time slows and the world falls away. Her Lair is a sea of illusions set against an endless city, drawing prey in with the promise of fantasy and vice. She stalks them, hiding behind fever dream walls, and strikes them down with fears wrought large.

Pompeii, Pearl Harbor, Hiroshima. These are the Ravager's fantasy getaways: anywhere the restless dead are anchored by disaster. The Ravager's not interested in helping them, though. He wants to revel in mass destruction, to make his Lair an instrument of entropy. No better way to learn of death than from those who can't escape it.

The cult worships the Black Queen. Every action is surveyed and analyzed, and through the crucible of their monarch's Panopticon, they gain strength. The Tyrant is a devoted member. Aided by the paranoia that the Queen instills, the Tyrant knits the fabric of her Lair into a prison of claustrophobic cells and finely tuned torture devices.

Hearth

When delving into darkness, it's best to bear many lights. The brood is the vanguard of mystic exploration, as Beasts are ill advised to take on the world alone. Every brood is different with its own special methods, but some fall into common patterns, merging and splitting in the shifting face of the occult.

- **The Corporation:** When a secret is unearthed, it becomes a commodity, and Beasts often form cartels to capitalize on their pools of lore. The Predators in one brood study the bizarre agendas of shadow owls, trading insider information with paranoid vampires. Ravagers in another group study the effects of hauntings on dreams, and trade their results to Sin-Eaters in exchange for unique services.

- **The Detective Agency:** Occult mysteries attract Beasts like moths to flames, but these broods take that pull and give it structure. Each member brings a special skill: occult forensics, parapsychological profiling, or just plain blood-spatter analysis. Investigatory broods often run into cabals of mages with similar agendas. At best, the two groups share resources and collaborate. At worst, it's akin to a loner P.I. running afoul of city hall.

- **The Institution:** Sometimes broods settle down. They find a mystery to their liking and milk it for all it's worth. Perhaps rooms at the old asylum randomly open into the Primordial Dream, or a cabin out in the woods saps the essence of supernatural creatures. These mysterious places can be sources of power for years, and the broods that guard them will do so with their lives.

- **The Mystery Religion:** The Begotten are scions of a primal goddess. Their divine heritage can bloom into a full-fledged religion, or at least cults. These broods task their adherents with sacred quests, either to help them better understand the Dark Mother's world or to see if religious fervor can better regulate the needs of Hunger.

Family Secrets

Fellow Beasts aren't the only resources the Begotten have, though. Other monsters are the foundations of the World of Darkness, and their secrets are terrifyingly potent. Vampires have spent millennia building a society predicated on one big secret, while mages are addicted to solving mysteries in a reality they think to be a Lie. It's only natural that Beasts would want in on the action. Through Kinship, a Beast can expand her Lair further or even learn new Nightmares modeled on the aptitudes of other monsters. With a little care, she can even feed her Hunger.

The vampire spreads madness. Shunned by mortals and Kindred alike, she's going to fall into a deep slumber if she keeps going hungry. Asklepian wants to help and offers her shelter for service. The little starving vampire can crack sanity with her bite the way he crushes ribcages with his coils, and every brain she breaks for him becomes a ward in the madhouse of his Lair.

The werewolves of Ythan honor the Black Dog of the Moors. The land belongs to him; only by his goodwill may the pack remain. On the night of the full moon, they make a special hunt: any spirit who walks the moors without permission is fair game. The Black Dog does not participate. He doesn't need to. He watches from the shadows, feeding on trespasses repaid.

The mages offer Zaratan a deal: "Let us study your soul. Let us come to know it with our own. Our gods can show you depths you could never reach. They can show you a place that would give your Dark Mother uneasy dreams."

Tupilaq travels back roads with a strange throng of Prometheans and discovers that the strain they put on the land lights a pale fire in the Primordial Dream. It wards humans away with painful, alienating emotions. Tupilaq learns to harvest that fire into an element of her Lair, and creates a safe haven for her constructed friends.

Changelings live and breathe fate, just as the Norn does. In exchange for her help in hiding from their mad gods, they re-craft her Hero's destiny. With his Legend untwined from hers, the fae show her new and subtle ways to flip narratives in her favor.

Ubume plants seeds from a Sin-Eater's garden. The blooms

tell her who is close to death and who is not close enough. With the roots, she prepares a tea that keeps sickness from the weak and invites it in the strong.

When the mummy wakes, Selket is waiting. "I like that trick you do. The one where fear spreads like a plague. Show me how it works, and I'll give back that jar you love so much. Don't worry, no one can find it. Not in my dreams."

Mr. Void steals the Hero's soul. Wendigo doesn't mind, though. He likes to watch skins change hands. He can learn so much as the demon's mask crumbles with his new, despicable obligations, and even more when tungsten angels come to drag him back into service.

Myth & Legend

Mystics have long known of a spiritual plane called the Astral Realms that connects humanity to the soul of the world. It is envisioned as three nested spheres, symbolizing the soul's journey from egotism to greater consciousness. Most people barely scratch the surface, being confined to their own dreams, but a few can access its deeper reaches via lucid dreaming, ceremonial magic, or intense meditation.

- *The Oneiros* is the realm of the individual soul, composed of that person's thoughts, memories, and imaginings. His own dreams are reflected in his Oneiros, but no more than his hopes, fears, and other thoughts. Following a nightmare caused by a Beast's Horror, a reflection of that Horror lurks in the Oneiros for a short time.

- *The Temenos* is the collective soul of mankind. Every story has a representation here: every god ever worshipped, every idea that every passed between two people.

- *The Anima Mundi* is the soul of the universe, a chaotic landscape containing the essences of the natural world and mankind's effects on it. It is a realm of cosmic symbols such as Earth, Sky, and Water. The outermost edge of Anima Mundi is the inchoate darkness of the unknown, a vast ocean of nothingness.

The Astral is a conceptual space. Islands float within it, worlds unto themselves, such as the idea of a pristine earth or the hellish memory of trench warfare playing out over and over again. Most of it is flotsam: half-forgotten memories, vagrant ideas, and orphaned cultural images. Nothing is ever truly forgotten, though, just pushed to the margins where it becomes a symbol instead of a specific memory.

Here Be Monsters

She is born in blood again and again. The dream used to scare her; now she looks forward to it. The waking world is unreal. Only this forest matters.

The autumn chill whips over black fur. The wine-scent of rotting vegetation fills the air as she hurtles through the night after her prey. There, at last! It is her. Still a child trying to flee the monster, her feet slip-sliding on a ground cloaked in leaves.

She feels nothing for her younger self, neither rage nor pity. She feels nothing whatsoever until she pounces – effortlessly – and bears the child to the ground. Little bones snap like twigs. Flesh is rent to bone. She kills, she dies, and is reborn.

She wants this to continue forever.

Beasts know another aspect of the Astral Realms, the *Primordial Dream*, lurks in the twilight between the Temenos and the Anima Mundi. If the Temenos is the expression of humanity's ideas, then the Primordial Dream is home to mankind's collective fears. This is where Beasts make their Lairs. It is where their Horrors are born.

A Beast's Lair is similar to a human's Oneiros, with the Horror as its guardian. It reflects her history, personality, and evolving nature. It is small at first, little more than a forbidding hole in which to hide. The Heart of the Lair rests at the center and contains the Beast's primal essence, without which she cannot survive. As she grows more powerful, her Lair expands, adding new trappings and environments. Among these are new Chambers that echo meaningful locations in the physical realm, some of which the Beast creates through her interactions with people, some of which she finds and assimilates.

Chambers connect to other Chambers in one of two ways. Chambers within a Lair (either that of a single Beast or within a brood's shared Lair) connect with Burrows, sturdy bridges that are part of the larger Lair and share the same traits. Chambers within the same region (areas under a given Apex) are connected by Primordial Pathways. Horrors can wander through those pathways if they grow hungry enough, searching for prey.

The size and complexity of the Lair corresponds to the extent of the Beast's influence on the collective unconscious: how much she has imprinted herself on the human psyche. Size is subjective in the Astral Realms, but the larger the Lair, the more people fall under her shadow and are swept up into her nightmares. That is why Beasts, all else being equal, are more likely to become a region's Apex than other creatures—they can bring their supernatural influence to bear in the most direct way. That is also why the Hero must ultimately pursue the Beast to her Lair. Where else can you kill fear itself?

Beasts access their Lairs via Primordial Pathways. Doing so requires a location in the material world that resonates with one of her Lair's Traits, preferably a site reflected in one of its Chambers. She can bring others, if she wishes, and teach them how to use the web of Primordial Pathways connecting the world to other realms.

Primordial Pathways grant physical access to the Lair but its environment is far from mundane and adheres to its own surreal dream logic. Tunnels loop back on themselves. Water drips incessantly and without source. Primeval forests stretch on forever.

The Lairs of broodmates join together over time, forging a kind of shared soul that lets them communicate with each other in dreams, regardless of the intervening distance in the real world. A member can access his Lair and then cross into his brood's Lairs as easily as walking into the next room.

The Lair can even be destroyed, forcing the Horror to merge physically with the Beast. The process is devastating,

however, as the Horror's pain and rage obliterate the Beast's humanity. It is only a matter of time before a Hero (or a merciful brood) hunts down the wretched creature and destroys it. That is why Beasts go to great lengths to protect their Lairs, filling them with traps and obstacles. Broods congregate for mutual protection as much as to hold a greater portion of the Primordial Dream.

A mighty Beast has a commensurately greater hold on the human mind, becoming a potent symbol for fear. Her image echoes through the popular consciousness, emerging in fables, monster movies, and wherever a fertile and feverish imagination offers it a hold. She need not cultivate a Legend. One naturally grows up around her. The Dark Mother has the greatest Legend of all, echoing worldwide and in every era. Some Beasts think the Mother *is* the Primordial Dream and all of it is her Lair, enfolding those of her Children in a womblike embrace.

Nightmares & Dreamscapes

By her very nature, a Beast casts a shadow across the Astral Realms, influencing its landscape in proportion to the strength of her Legend. That includes the Oneiros of anyone unlucky enough to receive multiple visits from a hungry Horror. Often, the Beast's loved ones suffer first from sheer proximity, but hundreds or even thousands of people may be swept up into her nightmare, depending on how strong she is. One visit from a Horror is nothing more than an intense dream, but if the Beast doesn't feed her Horror, the Horror visits the same easy prey night after night. Over time, this has serious consequences for the individual and the collective unconscious of the area.

As the Horror runs amok, it stalks the Primordial Pathways, drawing in as many people as possible and dipping into individual dreams to hunt. People who are awake experience a sudden frisson of terror. Their hackles go up at the Beast's approach, and they catch hallucinatory glimpses of the monster — the shadow of wings or writhing tentacles — out of the corner of their eyes. Human instinct is a blunted thing, but it serves them well enough in this case. Where people shied away before, now they feel the urge to run. Where they were disdainful, they show open hatred. They instinctively recognize the Beast as the Id, the Other, the Thing on the edge of the firelight seeking to devour whom it may.

Those who are sleeping suffer even more. The maddened Horror rips them from tame, comfortable dreams and relentlessly pursues them, its environs distorted by the Beast's overriding Hunger. They are subjected to the same nightmares the Beast experienced before her Devouring, only they are defenseless against it. The victim awakens breathless and frightened, but unharmed...provided that the experience isn't repeated.

Beloved Enemies

He's smashing the door with a crowbar. Chunks of plywood burst like flak, and a piece of doorframe shoots through his swinging arm. He grits through the pain as the next swing squeezes the splinter deep into his shoulder, lodging it between bones.

Mara watches from her bedroom window, waiting for him to realize that a tank couldn't knock that door down.

Eventually, he sniffs out the basement window and thinks himself clever for it. He loses a few inches of skin to broken glass as he shoves his body through the opening, and tracks bloody, trampled daisies as he limps up the stairs. His moment is coming.

Mara wants him to have it. She wants to see triumph in his face before she strips it of dignity and flesh. They both have their roles in this game, and playing that out won't sour her victory. Not when she demolishes his self-worth with that crowbar.

The Cycle of Violence

A Hero feels the Primordial Dream. This truth is probably the hardest for Beasts to internalize.

Of course, they don't experience it the same way a Beast does. Even before the Devouring, a Beast is able to internalize the wisdom of the Primordial Dream, to look past the fear and the nightmare vistas and apply what she sees to her life. She doesn't just dream, she dreams deep. The Horror waiting for her in the Dream, the thing that will one day become her soul, speaks to her for years before she learns to recognize its full significance.

Heroes, though, don't dream deep. They dream *broad*. They have a wider experience of the Primordial Dream, seeing the effect that Beasts have on the collective unconscious of humanity. This means that as a Beast (or, worse, multiple Beasts) show up in more people's dreams, or affect a small number of people more deeply, Heroes feel that they are needed. They instinctively zero in on the damage and try to cut it out.

That by itself is understandable. The problem is that Heroes aren't really doing it because they want to put down a monster. Heroes feel that *they* should loom large over humanity's dreams. People shouldn't be having nightmares of monsters, but dreaming of feverish adulation. They Hero longs to enter a Beast's Lair, cut out its Horror's heart, and substitute his smiling, bloodied face in the dreams of all whom the Beast would have victimized.

Entering a Beast's Lair isn't always possible, though. Doing so is difficult and dangerous. Finding a Beast in the waking world is easier; killing her there, though difficult, is much simpler to accomplish. Heroes might dream of grand climactic battles in the Lair, but when push comes to shove, they'll settle for a shotgun blast or an IED in the Beast's doorway. Despite the Hero's grandiose dreams, what he really wants is to see the Beast dead.

Strip down the layers of a Hero's ego, and all one finds is murder. Murder is his only end, regardless of bystanders. He'll bloviate about the innocents he saves, but at the best of times, protecting the innocent is incidental. He pursues the Beast because his dreams are the surface of the Primordial Dream, and he sees monsters below. He pursues the Beast because he *cannot wake up*.

Not So Different, You and I

To a degree, the Begotten understand the Heroic drive. Whether it's for piles of gold or slaughtered prey, Beasts are

THE VIEW FROM WITHOUT: AGENT MIKE HADRIAN, VASCU

I'm not entirely sure what I'm looking at, here. This man — he gives his name only as "Dante," but that's almost certainly an alias — is singularly focused on killing what he terms a monster. He refers to it as "the Giant," but says that it wears the face of a normal man. Will humor him and ask for more details

Update: The Giant is dead. We found it, following Dante's specifications, and it attacked. It killed three agents and injured two more, but it died. Dante seemed elated, and I have to admit, he seems to have been right.

Update: Dante is now warning of a new menace, one he calls "the Leech." I find myself, strangely, thinking of how Beowulf killed Grendel but then found his mother to be the real threat, but of more concern is the fact that Dante has become a regular fixture in my dreams.

Update: Dante has escaped, with the aid of a junior agent. I expect they will not be hard to find. Dante is not... subtle.

equally slaves to instinct. The difference between a Beast's Hunger and a Hero's obsession is self-awareness. A Beast *knows* what she is. She learns to live with it or she suffers. Justifications miss the point of having a Hunger in the first place. A Hero, on the other hand, twists his brain to rationalize his hatred. Becoming a Hero is just a matter of experiencing the Primordial Dream without context or depth.

Is the Hero to blame for what he does? Beasts debate the question. Heroes seem to be operating on instinct as much as the Begotten. Just as the Begotten can minimize the harm they cause, though, or at least give it some context by using their Hunger to teach lessons, Heroes can discriminate in how they apply their murderous abilities, and they are capable of prioritizing a Beast that does real, reckless harm to people over one that does not. In addition, they *can* ignore their urges. If they focus on their own lives, if they ignore the hunt, if they develop some humility and stop trying to *be* the Hero, the urges diminish and stop. Few Heroes manage this, however. They have a lifetime of experience telling them that the Beast *must* die.

Inherit the Earth

Life as a Beast is complicated. Balancing the demands of the Horror with any semblance of a human life is difficult, to say nothing of the constant danger that a Hero will find the Beast and target her. That, however, is the way of it, and as a result Beasts rely on their broods, their supernatural kin, and their human friends and family.

Not all Begotten are content to live that way, however. The scales of Life and Legend too often tip into contradiction; for many Beasts, holding a balance is futile. The Dark Mother foresaw this identity crisis — she wouldn't be much of a parent if she didn't leave a breadcrumb trail back to her embrace. Beasts call it Inheritance, a threefold path to transcending humanity. Of course, only one of the three paths actually *leads* to the Dark Mother and to enlightenment.

Sometimes, Inheritance is physical. The Beast casts off her human guise and becomes a true monster of myth, standing as a challenge to future Heroes, but she loses her human mind. Unable to dream, and now unable to think or reason, her Hunger loses all nuance. She lusts for flesh, blood, and destruction.

Sometimes, Inheritance is metaphysical. Body and Horror part ways and a nightmare wanders the Primordial Dream as an ephemeral being ever after. Such a creature has some agency and capacity for thought, but like all spirits, it is so focused that it has little free will.

Sometimes, though, a Beast finds an Inheritance that is both physical and spiritual. Sometimes, she becomes the Beast Incarnate.

Rampant

Imani stands before a cave. Nothing here is beautiful, but even the rot infecting the rocks – the fungus and the beetles and the corpses – even the rot is saying, "Welcome home, Imani." But the trees that frame the entrance are begging Imani to STAY OUT because they know she'll never leave, she'll never come out again, because the oaks look like mom and dad and they love Imani, but she goes in anyway because it's the only thing she's ever needed in her life and she doesn't need mom and dad or a LIFE when the walls collapse and the moss tries to touch her and choke her and STOP HER but she pulls back she chokes the moss she chokes the cave and SMASHES the rocks into dust because she knows that this is how she WINS this is how the world ends not with a bang but with HER and she can hear a voice it's calling out it says her name again and again and AGAIN and she is in a room.

She stands before a giant. Imani's flesh is its food, and her blood is its drink. There's nothing to hide that now.

The giant crawls from the ruins of the cave. She smashes the trees and whittles them into clubs.

This is the monster who lives under your bed. It's the ache that rises in your gut when you hear the word *beast*. The hulking thing of muscle, fur, and fangs that mauls cattle and carries off peasants to their dooms. The Rampant Beast takes stock of her Life and discards it. Living in the world of people is the nightmare she needs to wake from, not the inviting darkness of her Horror.

Mythology tells us that becoming a monster is the ultimate

depravity. Sloughing off arms for wings, spitting out teeth for mandibles? It's ghastly even to think of. One who transforms into a monster is surely cursed. But then, that's what mythology says; mythology was written by Heroes.

Why live with humanity if it doesn't want to live with you? Between murderous Heroes and repressive, *human* ideas of morality, a Beast with no place in the mortal world takes up the mantle of a living nightmare. She would put her Legend to good use rather than let it go to waste in the body of a brittle thing that fears its own dreams. All she has to do is destroy her Lair. Without that, she has no barrier to keep the Horror from taking her body. In the wreckage of their broken home, they undergo the Merger Inheritance and eject from the wilds of the Primordial Dream. This new creature has only one emotion: hunger.

Unfettered

Helena breathes in salt air. She leaves paw prints in wet, cerulean sand, and little black crabs made of onyx dart through the shadow of her wing, into other shadows many miles away. Her mane is tangling on the wind, but the water has no waves. It's a mirror for the sun and moon to dance on.

The men are running. More a dash, Helena thinks. Nothing as dignified as running. They've been hurtling at her since they were dots on the crooked horizon, kicking up blue sand with the frantic lope of dogs.

She doesn't fight when they shoot her. She doesn't try to dodge or take cover. She doesn't bite when they run out of bullets and beat her with their guns.

Helena lies down in the sand. Golden blood tangles her mane, matting it in glittering chains of life. One of the men collects her life in a bucket so he can sell it. When she's hollowed out, they throw her in the water, and her brass bones drag her to the bottom. But then, she floats. She's not a Beast anymore, just a woman with curling red hair and a dead smile.

A griffin swims. It leaves Helena without a thought because Helena is gone, a half-remembered fragment of a dream. She doesn't matter. Only revenge.

This is the monster who lives in your head. It's an anxiety dream taken form, a gliding shadow stalking through jungles grown in dream logic, feeding on your deepest self-loathing, all without fear of Heroes or nagging self-control. When a Beast dies while her Horror slumbers, sometimes her Horror goes free. Usually, it's an accident: the Beast underestimates the Hero or trusts a sibling she shouldn't have (too often it's those we love who hurt us most) while she is vulnerable. Other times, it's surrender. Not all Children want the Dark Mother's gifts. The constant craving of Hunger can be all consuming, especially when it stands at odds with the Beast's moral compass.

A few Begotten journey through tormented Legends and seek conclusions. This isn't as easy as suicide. Even the most self-loathing Beast doesn't want to see the Hero win, or anyone else who shunned her for what she was. She wants the Legend to live on, even if she's incapable of carrying it through herself. To be true to herself, she walks one last journey through the Primordial Dream, perhaps with a favored enemy. At the finale, she offers her throat, and undergoes the Retreat Inheritance.

The Horror goes free. It conquers new domains, never one to suffer ennui in the face of a Hero's sword. That sword will never harm it again.

Incarnate

"I think this is bullshit," says Arnold. He would *say that.*

"Trust me," I say. "It's here." We walk down the old, slick, stone steps, and I find the door. "Here."

"Access door," says Arnold, and Mira nods. She looks scared, though.

I chuckle. "Dude, you haven't seen anything yet." I shoulder the door open, and lead them into the Underground.

An hour later, Arnold still won't shut up about how cool it all is. He's taking pictures like crazy, planning to do a full shoot down here, and he still hasn't apologized for all the shit he gave me. That's when I realize....

"Arnold?"

"Yeah?"

"Where's your sister?" He looks around, whipping his flashlight around.

"Holy shit. Mira?" He calls out, but nothing comes back but echoes. I called out her name, too, but nothing.

Nothing at first. But then....

"What if she never came back?" The voice is low. I can't tell if it's a man or a woman. I shine my light at where it came from, but all I see is something dart away before I can really catch a glimpse. "What if she's lost down here, forever, along with all the other ghosts?"

"Where the fuck *is my sister?" Arnold's screaming now. My heart pounds. I reach for my phone, but then Arnold's light goes out.*

"What if your last thought was that you should have heeded the signs?" The voice is behind me now. Something touches my neck and my legs go numb. I collapse. "What if?"

"I don't know," I whisper. "Please."

"Do something for me," says the voice. Its breath is in my ear. It smells like dust and red wine. "Tell someone else about this, once a day, for 10 days."

So that's why I'm telling you.

I'm sorry.

This is the monster who rewrote the tale. He's the Beast other Beasts fear. He and his Horror see eye-to-eye and tooth-to-tooth. They become one body without the cost of the Beast's Life, a being with no need for solid flesh who walks as mortal or monster at the whim of dreams. He transcends the bounds of his Legend without feeding, yet fears no Heroes. He needs no spool of thread to navigate his Lair. He is his Lair.

The Beast Incarnate is one who opts out of destiny. He is a Beast so steeped in the narrative of his Legend that he knows all the twists before they come up. No plot points go unforeseen: not when his brood betrays him for his hoard, nor even when his own sister takes up the mantle of Hero. Through this self-awareness, he sees the tapestry of his fate laid out in full, dyed with the blood of his Family: the monster, the warrior, the confrontation. The slaying. He gazes at the loom of inevitability and rips out the threads.

Beasts kill Heroes all the time and gain little but wormfood. A Beast who lusts for transcendence doesn't waste time on nickel-and-dime Heroes. His enemy is a worthy foe, and he makes a mockery of that. He betrays Gilgamesh. He devours Saint George. He burns every piece of Osiris until only ash and Isis's tears remain.

Monomyths

This isn't how it was supposed to go down.

The judge is sitting like some goddamn magistrate, lording over the court as if he's important. As if any part of this show trial matters.

"...racist..."

"...hate crime..."

"...Neo-Nazi..."

Oh, these newspeak platitudes. This isn't how a man's treated. I didn't target her because she's black. I targeted her because she's a monster.

She's sitting all solemn, little crocodile tears blotting her mascara. If I look hard enough, though, if I look past the skin suit, I see it hiding. I see its coils sucking the life out of the room. You don't fool me, bitch. I got your friends. I burned them all.

It doesn't take long.

"...the jury, find the defendant..."

She smiles. A smile for me. Mistake.

"Die, bitch!" I rip my cuffs off and jump the table. The bailiff unloads a round into me, but I don't care about pain anymore. The only thing I care about is choking her with the chains she put me in.

She smiles.

I scream in her face. I scream at these stupid fuckers to see what she really is!

She smiles.

I choke harder.

She. Keeps. Smiling! Smiling even when her eyes bulge and her face turns blue. The bailiff hesitates because he can't get a shot in without it going through her. Do us both a favor, pal.

Then, I feel my heart explode.

The coils are wrapped around me. In me.

Her smile falls as I drop.

"You burned them," she whispers. "My brothers. My sister. You burned them. They weren't like me." She has tears in her eyes, again, but this time I believe them.

I try to say something, but honestly, I can't think of anything. This wasn't the way it was supposed to go down.

The Hero of the story is an earthly paragon. He's the light that holds the dark at bay. He takes up the call to adventure, he learns wisdom and sacrifice, he dies and resurrects. He's Dionysus, Jesus, and Rama.

The villain of the story is a Beast. She's a raw element, razing villages and befouling crops, with no inner life beyond sin. An obstacle for the Hero to overcome. That's all she's meant for in this model, though perhaps she can rise to the lofty heights of moral of the story (*Don't become a monster, children.*). But that's the best she gets.

It's not always so literal, but the monomyth—what Joseph Campbell called the Hero's Journey—is so basic that it's difficult to find stories that don't follow it. It's the founding narrative of Western literature, religion, and art, from Shakespeare to the Bible to *Die Hard*.

Beasts know this song and dance well. They see it every time some loner shows up with a machete and a death wish. That doesn't mean they play along, however. Beasts call out narratives. They undermine them. They break them over the heads of Heroes.

Subversion

"This doesn't end here."

We're standing in the middle of LaGuardia, just a girl and her stalker. My hero. *He doesn't have a weapon, though. I guess he's not crazy enough to bring one to an airport, but I bet it killed him not to.*

"I've got a flight to catch, Frank. I'm not coming back," I say.

"You need to listen–"

"I've heard everything. Every bullet," I say, hoping no one else can hear this. I can't afford a fight, especially not with Homeland Security.

"I'll find you, Elisabeth," he says, like saying my name will give him control. But his heart's pounding right along with mine, and the flop sweat's starting to crawl up his shirt. For anyone else, I'd feel sorry.

"You don't have money for the bus, let alone a plane," I say, trying to shove past him.

"Because you ruined my life!" he shouts, pulling the gaze of sleepy commuters. The edge in his voice isn't violent, though. He's a child who didn't get his favorite blanket.

I snap. "If you want this, you do it here. The big kill, in front of everyone. Go ahead. They'll chain you up and toss you away, where all you'll have is the satisfaction of knowing the world thinks you're another broken vet who slipped through the cracks and went postal."

A tinny voice warbles. My flight. I wait for him to make a move. Gods know he's desperate enough to–

"Why didn't you kill me?"

Because if I killed a hateful, sad, old man, I'd be everything he thinks I am.

"I'm better than you," I lie.

I grab my carry-on. He steps into the crowd and out of my life.

The Hero has expectations. Forget his delusions and his ego, and even forget the monsters in the deep that his mistook for his destiny. It's not the Beast who taught him how the tale is told. He goes to the movies; he reads books; he plays video games. His culture's rammed the plot into him since he could understand words. The story belongs to him.

Sometimes the Hero's not perfect, but it's always about *him*, no matter how dynamic the villain may be. The Hero could be summed up in totality by his chiseled jaw and his big gun, but the camera always owes allegiance to his shallow perspective. That structure manipulates us into believing what the Hero believes: that deviation is abnormal, immoral, and subversive. These narratives build him into the worst kind of Hollywood mogul, the director-writer-producer-star, wrapped up in a crusader's moral compass.

Beasts set out with the same cultural cues as their nemeses, but they learn to see through the self-aggrandizing Heroic media. The Beast knows the Hero doesn't earn his title without *her*. The story isn't told if the monster doesn't burn the countryside. This is the truth Heroes can never hide; the Beast is the actor. The Hero reacts, defined by what he opposes, doomed to wait out his life hoping some troll will carry off a goat.

The View From Without: Alistair Hodge, Silent Gatekeeper

We are all so fragile. Even us, even the Bound — take a long enough view, and all of us meet our ends.

And yet...must it be so? We can change the nature of our stories, or rather, of the stories told around us. We can change our fates by changing the roles that we must fulfill. This involves meddling with forces far stranger and more dangerous than most people, even most night-folk, ever face.

But how deep does this go? Is anyone truly what they appear to be, or are our roles interchangeable? Does the monster of the story deserve to eat the knight? Should the knight be cast down and burned? What of the king who sent the knight? What of the knight's unquiet ghost?

I suspect that the Begotten — for so they call themselves — may hold the answer. If we are all players in some grand narrative, they are a brush to blot out the pages, and they bleed ink.

Of course, the Beast *always* acts. It's not any one particular Beast that spurs the Hero to action, although some of them do try to make it personal. Horrors impact the Primordial Dream; Heroes see the ripples, but they can't tell how deep the disturbance goes. They react quickly, decisively, out of all proportion to the inciting incident. In the Hero's story, this is important and appropriate. If the Hero wastes time identifying the problem or trying to find out whether the monster is a real threat, the monster "wins."

Deconstruction

I've seen them at my shows a few times, watching me with the same foregone conclusion they always have drilled into their dumb eyes. They're the kind of guys who haven't met a collar they haven't popped.

They follow me after my gig, and I walk them into the crappy park downtown that city council never bothered naming. They're carrying – I shit you not – golf clubs. One of them is packing a Glock! My kind of night.

"Jesus, boys. Is this, like, a rumble?"

They don't bother verbalizing their battle cry into English, just grunts and slurs they imagine scare me. I let their leader take a few swings with his nine iron to get my blood pumping. I call him a piece of shit, and that's when the night starts to sizzle.

Glock-bro draws his piece, but he's not pointing it at me.

The boy I called out starts convulsing and they know exactly what he is. The half-crazed, mean motherfucker they all are on the inside. Covered in boils, seeping pus, and hate. And maggots. Lots and lots *of maggots. The Hero ascendant.*

That's what he looks like to them, at least.

"You've got the wrong monster, men!" I shout at the others, bending them to my cause. Without a thought, Glock-bro shoots him in the stomach. He screams; they swarm. He begs; they break his legs. His skull cracks on pavement as I walk on.

Heroes are more than the instruments of death they fashion themselves to be. They're the world's antibodies, a nagging reminder that the Begotten don't belong. The Hero's best weapon is alienation. If he can learn how to wield it, he's already won.

Heroes are hardly social animals, though. It's called a *mono*myth for a reason. Heroes have no use for friends, no matter how fanatical their followers may be. Did Theseus care that Ariadne slept on Naxos as he sailed away? His Legend speaks of his weeping and rending of garments, but actions speak louder than tears. Ariadne betrayed her father and her people; her spool of thread helped slay the Minotaur, her own half-brother. For all that love and devotion, Theseus raised anchor. Disregard for those we love is the definition of otherness.

That said, loved ones may be excess baggage to Heroes, but at least they're still loved. A Hero saves his spite for his other fellow Heroes. Wars are more congenial than the alliances Beast slayers make. Their egos might be able to handle short partnerships in the name of a greater good, but a smart Hero always keeps a spare knife ready in case his allies decide that honor is for chumps. No Hero really wants to share in the glory of the kill. They'd rather have fawning lackeys than an equal to share their victory.

They find lackeys, though. Heroes can infect the dreams of people much like Beasts can, but they're *much* more subtle about it. A Hero becomes the idol, the mighty champion that the people can rally around. In centuries past, when "the people" was the few hundred people in a village, that made sense — the Hero saw the Primordial Dream and reported on it, keeping the people informed and helping them to interpret the nightmares. Over time, though, billions of voices drowned out the Hero's ability to see into the Dream. A Hero can no longer be Joseph, speaking truth to power. It's all he can do to be David, spinning the sling. Either way, though, people listen to them, and if Heroes can provide the slightest shred of proof that there are *monsters* out there in the dark, people follow them with torches and knives. Who wouldn't? It isn't the villagers that will strike the death-blow, however. The villagers' role is to get picked off, one by one, as the hunting party grows closer to the monster. The Hero knows that and, on some level, sickeningly, so do his followers,. They are not equals.

But Beasts, though? Alien, *outsider* Beasts? They're family. A family that fights at times — as all families do — but a family nonetheless. At times, broods are truer families than blood relations. Humans don't Hunger, no matter how much they may care about their Begotten relatives. No parent could possibly understand why their daughter would burn down the neighbor's house and claim that it prevents random strangers with an all-consuming urge to murder her from tracking her down. Hunger is immune to logic, and sometimes, a parent's love. But the brood accepts all sins. It fights for the Beast's right to sin again.

There's a halo forming around the vision in Raul's left eye. The baseball bat almost detached his retina, but that's the least of his worries. This guy means business. Concussion grenades business. Scooping out guts and dancing in entrails business. Raul hadn't foreseen his Legend ending in an alley behind a boarded-up Blockbuster, but here he is.

"What the fuck are you doing to him?"

The halo's turned into haze, but Raul can see two shadows enter the alley.

"This doesn't concern you," the Hero snarls.

"Get off him, or I'll kill you," says a man.

"And I'll eat you," says a woman.

"I told you this doesn't–"

The woman leaps. The man howls, and then he gets bigger.

The Hero doesn't hesitate to run – smart guy – but he's already dead. The woman lands on the other side of him with a knife through his spine. As she tears out viscera, her companion turns his ribcage inside out. It only takes seconds.

"Raul?" says the woman.

"Thanks...for being...so prompt."

"Don't be an asshole," says the man, once more the size of one.

One of the werewolves swings Raul over a shoulder as the other calls an ambulance. Raul passes out thinking that friendship is a strange thing.

BROOD

Ben had never followed anyone before, but then, he'd never met anyone like her before either. She was young, blonde, and pretty, but in truth that barely registered. He'd spotted her in the mall on his break, of all places, coming out of an upscale teashop. A single look and he knew, just knew she was like him.

"You know, if you want to be more obvious, maybe you should just start yelling 'I'M FOLLOWING YOU,'" said the blonde, stopping without turning around. A nearby sports car lock chirped off.

"You're like me," Ben said, hating how dumb he sounded. He'd been working on what to say since he spotted but none of it wanted to come out.

"Except I know the value of subtlety," the blonde said, turning to face him. Though shorter than he was, she loomed larger in his sight, and as he looked closer he saw her Horror, something huge and vaguely feline. "You're too loud, kid. Someone's going to find you."

"Kid?" Ben stiffened. "You're not much older than me."

"You're sweet to think so," she said, smiling a little. "Seriously, though. You're drawing too much attention. That's why we wanted to chat."

"We?" Ben asked, looking around. As he watched, the shape of a man detached itself from a nearby light post, rapidly resolving into an older man in a sharp suit. Behind him, his Horror coiled in sinuous lengths beneath a vast head of dripping fangs. His mouth was set in a severe line and his eyes were narrowed suspiciously. The feeling of power coming off him struck Ben like the heat of a fire, and he instinctively stepped back.

"This isn't just your territory, you know," the blonde continued, as if nothing was wrong. "We've spent a lot of time putting down roots. Fixing up our homesteads, right? Making sure things run smoothly around here."

"Then you come along," the older man said, each word as deliberate as a rock dropped in a pond, "and start lighting fires all over town. That, by the way, stops now."

"Homesteads?" Ben thought of the dark water and rolling surf he'd learned to visit, the place where his Horor roiled beneath the waves when it wasn't out feeding. "You guys have places like that too?" Another thought caught hold of him. "And who's going to find me?"

The blonde looked to the older man and something passed between them, though Ben couldn't quite catch it. "We'll get to that," she said after a moment. "But yes, people like us all have our own places. Way you're going, you have to learn how to defend it, too." She put out her hand. "Hi. I'm Robin."

"Ben," he said, taking it.

"I'm James," the older man said, pointedly not offering his hand, though his look softened a fraction. "Let's go grab a shake or something.

TALES OF THE DARK MOTHER

DAVE

"Meeting's in five minutes."

Dave looked up at the bathroom mirror. Gerald was standing behind him. He'd obviously come into the men's room to check up on Dave. Dave ground his teeth and didn't answer.

"Did you hear me?" Dave could almost hear the implied 'boy' at the end of the sentence.

"Yeah, I heard you, Gerald." Dave enjoyed the bristling look. Gerald hated that Dave got to use his first name now.

"OK, then. See you in there." Gerald walked out, and Dave stared into the mirror.

But the bathroom wasn't behind him anymore. It was a mountaintop. Dave turned, and saw the sky, immense, endless, clear and blue. Down the mountain, miles away, he saw creatures running and playing and fucking...oblivious.

Dave — not Dave, not the man in the suit and the tie and the polished shoes, but still Dave, somehow — leapt off the mountain. Immense wings blotted out the sun and cast a shadow across the creatures below. They ran in fear, but he could see them wherever they ran. He swooped, diving towards his prey, and talons large enough to uproot trees pierced flesh and bone. He took the sky again, carrying his prey back to the mountain.

He landed at the mouth of the cave, and walked back into the dark. He felt something above him, something like the immense creature he had become and yet still bigger, something more horrifying than he could ever be and yet something that loved him.

He lifted his head, and pressed his against Her neck. She whispered something in his ear, and Dave understood.

Dave's vision cleared, and he was standing there in the men's room, staring into the mirror. "What...". He glanced down at the sink.

There were gouge marks in the porcelain. Striations made with impossibly sharp claws.

Dave straightened up. Someone was coming. Gerald opened the door. "Hey, Dave. You about ready yet?"

Dave turned and fixed his gaze on Gerald. "Yeah. Are you?"

МИР

Chapter Three
Character and Traits

The Begotten straddle the physical world and the world of human fears that lurk just beneath the subconscious. For all of their ties to the earliest, most primal and predatory concepts of life, they are complex creatures with motivations beyond their core drives. They may not be human, but they're still people.

This chapter presents the game systems for playing a Beast. You've been introduced to the Families, the Hungers, and concepts like Nightmares, Atavisms, Kinship, and Satiety. In this chapter, we'll explore how all of that works at the table. We start off with creating your very own Beast.

Character Creation

With this system, we turn a raw idea for a character into a full-fledged Beast, defining her traits according to the game's rules. By the end of the process, we'll know who she is and what she can do. The character sheet in the back of this book is your map to exploring your **Beast** character. We'll go through the basic steps from initial concept to final details. Even then, many of these steps paint the character in broad strokes. It's up to you as a player to fill in the finer details as they arise over the course of play.

"Sometimes I think there's a beast that lives inside me, in the cavern that's where my heart should be, and every now and then it fills every last inch of my skin, so that I can't help but do something inappropriate. Its breath is full of lies; it smells of spite."

–Jodi Picoult, *Handle With Care*

Step One: Character Concept

To begin, come up with a rough idea of who you want to play. Who was she before she discovered her connection to the Dark Mother? What did she do? While the Begotten are not really human (and maybe never were), the character did lead at least part of her life within the confines of human society, which shapes who she is now just as much as her birthright does. Condense the core, driving aspects of your character into a short, succinct statement no longer than a sentence or two: ideally, a short phrase. Examples include "devoted stay-at-home parent," "disillusioned war veteran," "IT manager by day, drag king by night," or even simply "rock star." You can then draw inspiration from some of the tropes associated with these concepts, either by playing the stereotype to the hilt or turning it on its head.

If you have trouble prioritizing traits later on in character creation, go back to your concept and take the path that fits closest to the concept. For example, if you have a hard time deciding which Skills or Skill Specialties to select, ask yourself what a stay-at-home parent would need to know to take good care of his children, or what the war veteran learned in basic training or during her tours of duty.

During this phase, choose three Aspirations. Aspirations are goals, short-term or long-term, that you want your character to pursue during play. When choosing your character's Aspirations, choose one or two that reflect her Begotten existence. Does she want to become the Apex in her city? Does he want to find a find a new family after his birth family disowned him? Does she want earn the Incarnate Inheritance? In addition, choose at least one Aspiration pertaining to his associations with the mortal world. Does she want to keep her children safe? Does he want to finish his master's degree in astrophysics? Aspirations are one of the most important ways

you can earn Beats and Experiences to advance your character. In addition, Aspirations clearly tell your Storyteller about the types of things you want your character to experience in the story she crafts. It's important the Storyteller takes note of all the troupe's Aspirations. This way, she can add hooks in the chronicle to touch on something for everyone.

Starting Aspirations can also help establish relationships in the members of a brood. For example, let's examine two characters in a starting brood. One has a Hunger for Punishment and another has a Hunger for Ruin. The Nemesis can have the starting short-term Aspiration "Kill the drug dealer who killed my wife" while the Ravager has the long-term Aspiration "Destroy the illegal drug trade in the city." While the Aspirations of brood members don't have to dovetail perfectly, they can establish brood dynamics and jumpstart the chronicle.

Lastly, easy short-term Aspirations work well for story hooks, especially in the first session or two of play when everyone at the table is trying to feel out characters and story flow. Get the other players' characters involved in accomplishing your character's goals to help establish good group rapport both in and out of character.

If you're struggling with Aspirations, you can revisit this step later and use the selections you've made to come up with appropriate Aspirations for your character.

Step Two: Select Attributes

Now we step into the most basic traits that define the character's capabilities. Attributes tell us how strong, how smart, how charismatic she is, either through raw talent or cultivation from years of experience. Look at the three Attribute categories: Mental, Physical, and Social. As you'll see on your character sheet, your character gets one free dot in each Attribute. Choose the category you think is most important for your character. That category gets five more dots to distribute among the three Attributes associated with it, in addition to the free dot in each Attribute. Then, choose which of the remaining two categories is more important. That category gets four more dots to distribute, while the final remaining category gets three.

A single dot represents a deficient Attribute, in which a character struggles with the basic tasks associated with that Attribute. Having two dots in an Attribute represents average human ability. Three dots represents above average capability, with some additional training or just natural talent. Four dots is a remarkable specimen, a rarity among humankind even with training. Five dots is the pinnacle of human capability.

When selecting Attributes, consider how your character's distant birthright tries to shine through, or which of the three categories takes precedence with the day-to-day activities that go with your concept. Where is he exceptional? Where can he afford to be merely average? Is it appropriate to the concept to be deficient in a specific Attribute, and if so, where? Don't be afraid to give your character room to grow as she advances through Beats and Experiences, even in the areas where she is most competent.

Step Three: Select Skills

Next, you'll select your character's Skills. These have the same categories: Mental, Physical, and Social. You'll prioritize these three categories as you did before. Beasts begin play with one dot of the Occult Skill to reflect the instinctive knowledge that the Horror and the connection to the Dark Mother brings, but otherwise Skills do not receive free dots. Your primary category gets eleven dots, the secondary category gets seven dots, and the tertiary category gets four dots. You can prioritize these three categories any way you wish, regardless of how you prioritized Attributes.

Think about your character's background as you're choosing Skills. Why does your character have the Skills she does? Use your concept to inform your selections for the Skills you have at higher levels, but also think about what happened in your character's past that contributed to their proficiencies. It stands to reason that the IT manager has at least a couple of dots in the Computer Skill, but what if he isn't as proficient as his resume leads others to believe and just aced the interview? He may be covering for himself with a few dots of Subterfuge.

One dot represents some basic skill and training. At two dots, you could conceivably make a living with that Skill. Three dots represents extensive training and near-daily use. Four dots means you're a well-established expert and others seek you out for instruction or refinement of their own training. A character with five dots in a Skill demonstrates world-class ability; she's among the best of the best in her chosen field.

Step Four: Skill Specialties

Skill Specialties allow you to refine where your character truly shines in the Skills she possesses. Choose three Skill Specialties, giving a narrower focus to the training or experience she has in a given Skill. Storytellers should also take note where the player characters' Skill Specialties lie, since they will likely try to solve problems using those Specialties. A character with the Knives Specialty in the Weaponry Skill fights differently than a character with the Polearms Specialty, and only one of those is particularly useful in a small, confined space. In addition, a character with the Mystery Cults Specialty in the Occult Skill comes by methods to commune with the Dark Mother differently than a character with the Rituals Specialty. (Whether such an endeavor is a wise idea, regardless of Specialties, is up for debate.)

Step Five: Add Beast Template

After you've built the character's traits considering her human life and background, it's time to awaken the Beast.

Family

A Beast's Family is her lineage of descent from the Dark Mother. This lineage cannot change once play starts. Your

choice of Family affects which Atavisms you will have an affinity with later. Look over the five Families: Anakim, Eshmaki, Makara, Namtaru, and Ugallu. Choose the one that calls to you instinctively for the character and the story you want to explore with her. While playing into stereotypes works well, challenging established norms can also be very fulfilling. While an Anakim may like a natural fit for a businesswoman dominating the corporate ranks, a Namtaru could provide a unique challenge to the same goal, rising through rough, indelicate efficiency more than outright subjugation of those beneath her.

Hunger

Hunger is the way a Beast keeps her primal Horror satisfied. While these Hungers don't automatically translate into a separate social group, Begotten with common Hungers tend to congregate with each other out of instinctual understanding. Look over the five Hungers: Hunger for Prey, Hunger for the Hoard, Hunger for Power, Hunger for Punishment, and Hunger for Ruin. As with Family, choose the one that calls to you for the character and the story you want to explore with her.

Legend and Life

A Beast's Legend describes the behavior her Horror urges her to pursue. It's the trait that illustrates her methods in fulfilling her Hunger and sets the expectation for what she will be known for in the future.

A Beast's Life is who she is behind closed doors, when dealing with private matters. It's the small part of her that ties her to humanity. It's what her Horror can easily make her forget when her Hunger has not been satisfied.

For each of these traits, choose an adjective that best suits the character. We've provided a sample list for you to choose from, or you may craft your own. By acting in accordance with her Legend or Life, the character can regain Willpower.

You can find more information on Legend and Life on p. 87.

Legend and Life Examples

Legend	Life
Relentless	Cautious
Seductive	Honest
Unexpected	Loyal
Vicious	Parental
Watchful	Shy

Kinship

Every Beast possesses Kinship. At the moment of their Homecoming, Beasts immediately gain access to a number of innate abilities that allow them to traverse the Primordial Pathways (either alone or with another), recognize their kin in other supernatural creatures (no matter how distant the relation maybe), confer some of the Dark Mother's power to the monsters among them, and even gain power from another's hunt. All Beasts have these powers immediately, and as the Children grow stronger, so do the effects of their Kinship with other monsters. You can read more about the specific abilities Kinship confers on p. 87.

Horror

Your character's Horror is how he appears in the safety of his Lair. When characters see his aura, they see this manifestation of who he is inside, past the meat and bone of his human body. Describe your character's Horror in broad, evocative strokes; avoid creating an extensive catalogue of every scale, claw, or pustule. Give his skin texture. Point out key distinctive features, like fists as big as truck tires or painfully smooth facial symmetry.

Nightmares

Nightmares are the extensions of the Beast's Horror that reach out into the world to terrify the mortal flock. Beasts may learn these Nightmares from other Children or adapt the abilities of other monsters to suit their needs.

Choose two starting Nightmares. If you start play with Kinship established with another supernatural creature, you have your character begin play with a Kinship Nightmare based on that creature's type (such as vampire, werewolf, and the like). This doesn't require any special traits or Merits, but you should clear it with the Storyteller.

Atavisms

Atavisms are the extensions of the Beast's Horror that the Children can manifest in the physical world. As the strength of her Lair increases, these manifestations grow more potent. Each Family has a high affinity for certain Atavisms. Choose two starting Atavisms. At least one of your starting Atavisms must be aligned with your Family. You can find more on Atavisms on p. 121.

Lair

Lair is a Beast's home in the Primordial Dream. She draws power from this place. The potency of her Lair or the strength of her connection to her Lair determines how much of her Horror can hold sway in the physical world.

All Begotten start play with a free dot of Lair. You may use your Merit points to purchase one or two additional dots in Lair. Additional dots in Lair cost five Merit dots each.

You automatically start with the Heart of your Lair, one additional Chamber, and a Burrow to connect the two. Choose two Lair Traits to describe your Lair, which you can use to impose environmental Tilts in the physical world. One of those Lair Traits must be minor, but the other can be minor or major. You have the option of not taking the additional Chamber in your Lair and gaining two Experiences to use elsewhere.

You can find more information on Lair on p. 93.

Step Six: Merits

Merits are additional advantages your character enjoys, such as a steady income, allies, contacts, unusual size, and the like. Choose ten dots' worth of Merits. The full list of Merits available is on **pp. 111-121**. Remember that you can choose to spend your Merit dots to increase Lair instead (five Merit dots buys one dot of Lair).

Step Seven: Determine Advantages

Use the following rules to generate Advantages.

Willpower

Willpower is the measure of a character's mental fortitude and perseverance. The player can spend points of Willpower to add dice to rolls, as explained on **p. 157**. A Beast's Willpower rating is equal to her Resolve + Composure dots.

Satiety

A Beast's Satiety score represents his ability to understand humankind and reconcile his existence with it. All Beasts start play with at minimum Satiety of 2, but may have a maximum Satiety of 7, as described below.

The answers to these five questions determine the starting Satiety score for your character. In addition, they provide additional insight into how the character behaves on a daily basis. Beasts don't have breaking points in the same way mortals do; after all, human morality means remarkably little to the Children at large, even if an individual Beast still tries to cling to it. That said, a Beast still cares about many things. Seeking to protect what is important to him may lead him to do things outside his comfort zone.

- **Who are your kin?** No matter who they might be, a Beast frequently has someone she can call family, whether it's her human family, fellow Children, or another supernatural creature with whom she shares Kinship. These individuals understand her on a deeper level. She trusts them as confidantes, even if they don't reciprocate that same trust in her. Those she considers family are worth fighting (and possibly killing) for; an easy way to catch her off-guard is to threaten her family. Beasts with supernatural cousins as close kin also have an easier time feeding, due to Family Dinner **(p.90)**.

  If your character considers another supernatural creature kin (that is, non-Beast), take a point of Satiety, as they provide an additional source of Satiety beyond the normal hunt.

- **Does your belly fill easily?** A Beast can sate his Hunger in many ways, either keeping it in check for long periods of time before devoting himself fully to one sitting with drastic results, or seeking multiple outlets at any given time. Preying on multiple individuals provides greater risk of discovery, but larger, less-frequent feasts that leave the Beast full to bursting risk the character's Horror falling to lethargy.

  If you strive to sate your Hunger with small bites, as it were, take a point of Satiety, since you strive to consistently keep your Satiety at a steady level.

- **Are you a social predator?** Every Beast hunts differently. Some prefer solitary pursuit of their prey, if only because their methods work best with only one predator involved. Others require the kind of silence that only one of the Children can provide. Still, hunting with a partner or a Brood makes a feast more likely and provides more opportunities to find the fears they crave. This works especially well for Beasts whose Hungers complement each other.

  If you sate your Hunger in the company of other Children, take a point of Satiety. A full hunting party frequently has a higher success rate than hunting alone, and safety in numbers mitigates trouble later on, especially if a Hero takes notice.

- **How frequently do you show your true self?** Sometimes, the Children find that showing bits and pieces of their true selves makes accomplishing their goals that much easier. After all, if one has an advantage, why not use it? Of course, this advantage does not come for free. Beasts who frequently activate Nightmares and Atavisms find themselves depleted more regularly, and thus have to hunt more frequently to maintain high Satiety.

  If you save the manifestations of your true nature and showy displays of power (using the Satiety expenditure abilities of Atavisms and Nightmares) for rare occasions when you have little other choice, take a point of Satiety, as this behavior helps you conserve what you do have.

- **How drawn to your Lair are you?** The longer a Beast lingers in the world, the more power she gains. Once she has her Homecoming, she cannot deny the instinctual draw of her Lair, no matter what she does. If her Homecoming was recent, she still feels a draw to her human self, however, and might be less inclined or even reluctant to let her inner self out.

  If you start with a Lair of 1 (as opposed to spending Merit dots to increase it), take a point of Satiety, as the Children tend to become more active as they grow more powerful, and thus expend more Satiety.

Others

A Beast's Defense score is equal to (the lower of her Wits or Dexterity Attributes) + her Athletics Skill rating. The default Size of a Beast is 5, though Merits may alter this. A Beast's Health is equal to her Size + Stamina, and her Speed is Strength + Dexterity +5. A Beast's base Initiative modifier is equal to her Dexterity + Composure. Beasts don't have an Armor rating unless a Merit or an Atavism grants one, or unless the character habitually wears armor.

Beast Creation Quick Reference

Here are the very basics for creating a Beast character.

Step One: Concept

Choose a concept. Come up with three Aspirations.

Step Two: Attributes

Prioritize categories. They receive 5/4/3 dots, distributed in any combination. Each Attribute starts with one free dot.

Step Three: Skills

Prioritize categories. They receive 11/7/4 dots, distributed however you wish. Beast characters receive one free dot of the Occult Skill.

Step Four: Skill Specialties

Choose three Skill Specialties.

Step Five: Add Beast Template

Choose Family, Hunger, Legend, Life, Kinship, Nightmares, Atavisms, and Lair.

Step Six: Add Merits

Select ten dots of Merits.

Step Seven: Advantages

Willpower is equal to Resolve + Composure. Size is 5. Health is Size + Stamina. Speed is Strength + Dexterity + 5. Defense is (lower of Dexterity and Wits) + Athletics. Initiative modifier is Dexterity + Composure. Satiety is 2 + the results of the five questions on p. 80 (maximum 7).

Beast Template

Family

Anakim: Creatures of brutal dominance, the Giants revel in their prey's hopelessness at encountering a vastly superior foe.

Eshmaki: Stealthy hunters, the Lurkers bring swift, silent destruction that mankind cannot hope to weather.

Makara: Born from the cradle of life that is the ocean, the Leviathans revel in drowning their prey, pulling them down into a crushing embrace.

Namtaru: Creatures of terrible hideousness, the Gorgons embody the terror of pure, visceral revulsion.

Ugallu: Patient predators, the Raptors are the terrors in the sky, lurking just out of reach and stripping away their enemies' protection.

Hunger

Hunger for Prey: Predators feed by pursuing and hunting down their chosen targets like hounds after foxes.

Hunger for the Hoard: Collectors sate themselves by amassing great quantities of a specific object, whatever the cost.

Hunger for Power: Tyrants feast by exerting control over those around them so that even thinking of opposing them fills their lessers with dread.

Hunger for Punishment: Nemeses increase their Satiety by punishing others for their darkest, most profound misdeeds.

Hunger for Ruin: Ravagers glut themselves on glorious, wanton destruction.

Lair

Lair starts at 1 dot. Additional dots may be purchased with five Merit points each. A maximum of two dots may be purchased in this way.

Atavisms

Anakim: Cyclopean Strength, Looming Presence, Mimir's Wisdom, Titanic Blow

Eshmaki: Dragonfire, From the Shadows, Limb from Limb, Relentless Hunter

Makara: Alien Allure, Heart of the Ocean, Monster from the Deep, Siren's Treacherous Song

Namtaru: Basilisk's Touch, Infestation, Shadowed Soul, Unbreakable

Ugallu: Eye of Heaven, Needs Must, Storm-Lashed, Wings of the Raptor

Experienced Beasts

Storytellers may choose to allow players to make more experienced characters to start play. These bonus Experiences allow characters to start beyond that level.

Rank Bonus Experiences

Around the Block	5
Terror of the Town	10
County Folklore	15
Urban Legend	25
Mover and Shaker	35
Ancient Legend	50
Eldest of the Eldest	100

Nightmares

Common Nightmares: All Your Teeth Are Falling Out, Behold My True Form, Bugs Everywhere!, Everything You Do Is Worthless, Fear Is Contagious, Flying and Falling, Run Away, They Are All Around You, You Are Alone, You Are Not Alone, You Can't Wake Up, You Cannot Run, You Deserve This, You Must Obey, You Will Never Rest

Kinship Nightmares: You Are Infected, We Know All Your Secrets, Your Rage Consumes You, Your Tools Betray You, You Are Better Than Them, The Void Is Waiting, Everyone Hates You, You Cannot Kill It, You Are Lost, You Are an Impostor, Death Is a Prison, You Can't Take it With You, Tabula Rasa, Cursed Object

Experience Costs

Attribute: 4 Experiences per dot

Merit: 1 Experience per dot

Skill Specialty: 1 Experience

Skill: 2 Experiences per dot

Nightmares: 3 Experiences

In-Family Atavisms: 3 Experiences

Out-of-Family Atavisms: 4 Experiences

Lair: 5 Experiences per dot

Experience

A player earns Beats for his character in many ways. When your character earns five Beats, those Beats convert to one Experience, which can then be used to improve your character's capabilities.

When spending Experiences, think of what your character has done and what you would like your character to achieve in the course of play. Ideally, these things dovetail well together, with the Storyteller working in concert with the players to interweave the story with the characters' goals. If the story leads you to want to spend Experiences on something you or your character would not pursue independently, do it without hesitation. Use the opportunity to learn new things as a jumping-off point for your character to grow and gain new Aspirations as old ones get fulfilled or become obsolete.

Beats

Gaining Beats can happen as frequently or as rarely as the characters and the story allows. Here's a list of ways that characters can gain Beats in the course of play.

- If your character fulfills an Aspiration, take a Beat. At the end of the game session, replace the Aspiration you fulfilled with a new one.
- Each Condition has criteria for resolution. Take a Beat when you resolve a Condition.
- Some Conditions provide Beats for actions other than resolution. When you perform those actions, take a Beat.
- Once per scene, when you fail a roll, you may opt to make it a dramatic failure and take a Beat.
- If your character takes damage in one of her rightmost Health boxes, take a Beat.
- At the end of any game session, take a Beat.
- The Storyteller can award a Beat for good roleplaying, a great idea, or an addition to the story that makes her character's life more interesting at her discretion.

Optional Rule Group Beats

Under the rules as written, players who understand the rules and work toward resolving Conditions and Aspirations will receive the most Beats and therefore Experiences. While your troupe may appreciate this reward system for learning and using the rules, some players would rather just play their characters and only glance down at the character sheet when the Storyteller asks them to roll something. Either approach is fine, but if you have a mix of the two approaches, characters can advance in a lopsided fashion.

One solution is for all Beats to go into a pot (use coins or beads or spare dice to represent them). At the end of the chapter, Beats get divided evenly among the players. This way, all players are encouraged to help one another realize Aspirations, resolve Conditions and otherwise take Beats. This should help the players work as a team. This approach is especially appropriate for **Beast**, given the game's focus on characters as family.

Example of Character Creation

Magda is making a character for her friend Orson's **Beast** game. Orson has told the other players in advance that he wants to explore the concept of family and what that means. He's set up a chronicle based in what looks like a normal suburb, complete with white picket fences and PTA meetings. It's a perfect hiding place for a brood of Children (the players' characters) to set up, inciting and feeding on the mundane fears and terrors of its residents. When Orson first hears Magda's idea, he likes it, but is a little unconvinced about how it'll mesh with the rest of the group. Still, he allows it anyway to see what Magda does with it.

Step One: Concept and Aspirations

Magda lays out her concept: "Mrs. Winters, the whole neighborhood's grandmother." She watches over some of the neighborhood kids after school to help supplement her social security check, which only stretches so far every month. She's likely been in the neighborhood the longest out of all of the Children, but came into her Devouring late in life after her own children were grown. Orson asks Magda if her character came to her Beast nature on her own, or if another of the Begotten helped her through it. Magda thinks about it, and decides that it makes more sense for her concept of Mrs. Winters if the Devouring happened spontaneously.

Magda has at least one Aspiration ready to go for her character: "learn more about her Begotten nature and figure out why (and how) she managed to hold it back for so long." Other Aspirations don't come to her quite as easily, though, so she opts to go back to it later on in the creation process if something strikes her.

Step Two: Attributes

Magda takes a look at the three categories of Attributes and chooses them backwards. She knows Mrs. Winters probably won't have significant physical power, so she puts three dots in her Physical Attributes, assigning two dots to Dexterity and one dot to Stamina. Mrs. Winters can knit like the wind and get about without tiring herself out too easily, but her bones aren't what they used to be.

Magda then reviews her Social and Mental Attributes. Magda opts to prioritize Social Attributes over Mental, assigning them five dots and four dots respectively. She assigns two dots to her character's Presence, one dot to Manipulation, and two dots to Composure. Mrs. Winters is a charming old lady who keeps her cool, but doesn't have much need to get by on lying or misleading people (yet).

Finally, Magda comes to her character's Mental Attributes. She allocates one dot in Intelligence, two dots in Wits, and one dot in Resolve. Mrs. Winters was never a genius, but she can think fast when something goes wrong. Still, she won't say no to sampling a cookie or two before the bake sale starts.

When Magda finishes allocating her Attribute dots, Mrs. Winters has Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2, Strength 1, Dexterity 3, and Stamina 2.

Step Three: Skills

Magda immediately assigns top priority to Mental Skills, followed by Social Skills, then Physical Skills.

For Mental Skills, Magda puts three dots in Crafts, two dots in Medicine, two dots in Investigation (for sussing out the neighborhood gossip), two dots in Politics from visiting all those open city council meetings, one dot into Computers so she can use that fancy laptop her son gave her, and a dot of Occult to represent what she has learned so far about her nature as one of the Children. She fills in a second dot of Occult since, as a Beast, she gets one for free.

For Social Skills, Magda allocates two dots to Socialize, two dots to Empathy, one dot to Expression (for reading stories out loud at the library), one dot to Persuasion, and one dot to Subterfuge for all the little white lies she has to tell ("Of course there's a Santa Claus. Don't be silly.").

For Physical Skills, Magda puts one dot in Drive, one dot in Athletics, and one dot in Brawl to represent the t'ai chi class Mrs. Winters takes to keep herself fit (quite valid if she does the moves at full speed). Magda puts the final dot in Weaponry, because knitting needles make a fine weapon in a pinch. Orson shifts uncomfortably when Magda says that.

The dots in Politics make Magda go back to the Aspirations she has for Mrs. Winters, to which she adds, "Prevent the city council from rezoning and demolishing the neighborhood." Orson grins widely and takes some notes.

When Magda finishes allocating her Skill dots, Mrs. Winters has Crafts 3, Computers 1, Investigation 2, Medicine 2, Occult 2, Politics 2, Empathy 2, Expression 1, Persuasion 1, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 1, Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Drive 1, and Weaponry 1.

Step Four: Skill Specialties

Magda picks the Knitting specialty for Crafts, because it came up twice already (Orson reminds her that doesn't let her apply it to Weaponry rolls to stab people). She also takes the Local Specialty for Politics because it dovetails well with her recently chosen Aspiration. For her third Specialty, Magda chooses Sympathetic Ear in Empathy, representing that Mrs. Winters makes a wonderful confidante for her neighbors, who share both their opinions on the other neighbors and their deepest fears for the future.

Step Five: Add Beast Template

Right now, Mrs. Winters looks like a sweet, benign old lady who just wants to protect her neighborhood. At this stage, Magda adds the details that make her not so benign.

Magda chooses the Eshmaki as Mrs. Winters' Family. The more Magda thinks about the character, the more she sees Mrs. Winters claiming her birthright when her husband died and her children left the nest. The echoing darkness of the empty house haunted her dreams, especially the impossibly quick scrabbling of claws on the hardwood floors. Finally, she listened very hard, cutting through the echoes to follow the sounds. This led to her Lair, where she realized the scrabbling sound was her own long, curled talons along the floor and claimed her birthright as one of the Lurkers.

Magda chooses the Hunger for Punishment for Mrs. Winters, letting her seep into the dreams of those who confide in her, berating them for their failings and filling them with the terror of their secrets being discovered. While Mrs. Winters won't outwardly judge those who confide in her, she stalks them in the Primordial Dream, never letting them rest comfortably while they try to hide their illicit affairs, abuses, and other guilty pleasures. If they come clean, though, tell the truth and clear the air or otherwise make amends and cease their bad behavior, she leaves them alone. Fair's fair.

Orson points out that she could also sate herself on the children who misbehave under her watch, if she so chooses. Magda isn't sure how she feels about that; Mrs. Winters has children of her own and understands that a child behaving badly is very different from an adult doing so. She decides that maybe this is a point of internal conflict for Mrs. Winters. She knows that sating her Hunger by punishing children is easy, and maybe she's done it once or twice when her Horror was starving, but it's not something she feels good about. This inspires Mrs. Winters' third Aspiration: "protect the children in the neighborhood, even from themselves."

Magda gives Mrs. Winters the Judgmental Legend while taking the Maternal Life. They make perfect sense with traits in Mrs. Winters' character that Magda has already established. Magda then describes Mrs. Winters' Horror. Long, ragged fingernails and toenails immediately come to mind to start with, and Magda draws the rest from traits she notices in elderly people and turns them up to the extreme. With her small frame, Magda pictures Mrs. Winters' Horror as a hunched-over sack of skin and bones with little to no fat stores, scant-looking musculature, pale, clammy, paper-thin skin, and filmy, cataractous eyes. After all, with such a dark Lair, who needs to see? Magda makes a note to herself that this might manifest in Mrs. Winters' physical body as deteriorating eyesight. Orson warns her that he might give Mrs. Winters the Blind Condition later on in game as a result, which Magda accepts.

Mrs. Winters only gets a single dot of Lair, since she just recently claimed her Birthright. She takes both the Heart and an additional Chamber in her Lair, just to have the additional security if a Hero wanders in. Magda chooses Echoing and Darkness as her Lair Traits, emulating the empty house that awakened her Horror. She also tries not to notice Orson scratching out a few lines in his plot notes as a result.

Nightmares and Atavisms are almost too easy for Magda to choose. She takes two common Nightmares: You Deserve This and You Are Not Alone. For Mrs. Winters' Atavisms, Magda selects From the Shadows (an Eshmaki Atavism; she has to choose one) and Shadowed Soul. This makes her revisit her Skill selections; she removes the dot she put in Athletics and allocates it to Stealth in order to better take advantage of her Atavisms.

Step Six: Merits

The additional details Magda established previously makes Merit selection easy. Magda takes two dots of Resources (from her social security check and her side business of watching the neighborhood kids), Small-Framed (which costs two dots), Common Sense (which costs three dots), one dot of Allies for her connections on the city council, and two dots of Contacts (one for her neighbors and one for the city offices).

Step Seven: Advantages

Magda does a bit of quick math to determine the rest. Mrs. Winters' Speed is 4 (Size) + 1 (Strength) + 3 (Dexterity), which equals 8. Defense is the lower of Dexterity and Wits (both are 3), plus Athletics, which is at 0 because Magda swapped out Athletics for Stealth, so her Defense is 3. Base Initiative modifier is 3 (Dexterity) + 3 (Composure), which equals 6.

Magda then digs into the five questions to determine her starting Satiety.

- **Who are your kin?** Mrs. Winters has no Kinship to start with. Magda wracks her brain to think of a way to pre-establish Kinship, but nothing seems to fit well for her, even when Orson offers to make one of her neighbors a mage. Magda opts not to try to shoehorn getting an extra point of Satiety from that question.
- **Does your belly fill easily?** Mrs. Winters' position as the neighborhood grandmother figure provides ample opportunities to find potential meals. Since she knows where all of her victims live and they're all relatively close to her, she can easily linger in the dreams of multiple offenders in a single day, taking only a little from each one. Magda takes a point of starting Satiety when answering this question.
- **Are you a social predator?** Magda decides that Mrs. Winters is disinclined to hunt with other Begotten, especially since her primary targets are her neighbors. She would rather not deal with the judgmental attitudes that other Beasts might bring (or, indeed, expose the neighborhood kids to a Beast with a bloodier Hunger than hers). Magda does not take the point of Satiety for the third question.
- **How frequently do you show your true self?** Mrs. Winters probably shows her true nature a little more than she should, especially using her Nightmares to keep unruly suburbanites in line. By Magda's logic, if she "scares them straight," she can spend less time actually having to watch them and more time knitting.
- **How drawn to your Lair are you?** This one is a no-brainer. With Mrs. Winters' Lair at 1, Magda takes an additional point of Satiety, though she admits that with her answer to the fourth question, Mrs. Winters is settling quite nicely into her true self as one of the Children and will be drawn much more deeply to her Lair in the future.

Answering the questions sets Mrs. Winters' starting Satiety at 4. She's about middling (and stars with the Sated Condition), but she could stand to feed soon. With herself, the Storyteller, and the rest of the players well and truly spooked, Magda now has a fully developed player character for **Beast**.

Legend/Life

Each Beast has two core aspects of herself that govern the balance she strikes between her horrific heritage as an offspring of the Mother of Monsters and what endears humanity to her (or endears her to humanity). These core aspects are called Legend and Life.

Legend

Legend represents the expectation of a given Beast's behavior as one of the Begotten. This single adjective illustrates the style in which a Beast sates her Hunger. If someone who encountered one of the Begotten in dreams had to describe the most terrifying aspect of the Beast's personality in a single word, that word would correspond to her Legend. This behavior defines the Beast in question to a fault; that trait is so ingrained in her nature that she will behave accordingly, even to her detriment. Canny Heroes can use this tendency against their quarry, predicting her next move or luring her into a trap by encouraging or enabling that behavior.

Your character regains a point of Willpower through her Legend when she reveals her primordial nature to another in order to scare, impress, convince him to assist her. Successfully activating a Nightmare or acting in accordance with her Legend without supernatural aid could both qualify for regaining the point of Willpower, depending on the context of the scene. However, unfurling one's claws to scare a complete stranger just to regain a point of Willpower could have unforeseen circumstances.

Your character regains all her Willpower when she acts according to her Legend even when she knows it will endanger herself or alienate her loved ones. The expectation that monsters in folklore can dependably act in a certain way comes from this tendency. While the Children can play up their Legend intentionally, they find it remarkably easy to do so. To them, it's their first instinct; it's just what they would do,

regardless of the consequences. If the bar patron mentioned above is the Begotten's abusive and creepy supervisor at her day job and she unfurls her claws with the express purpose of scaring him straight, she may risk her job and her livelihood in human society, but she still plays to her nature.

Players may see using their characters' Legend as a quick and easy way to regain Willpower that requires little effort and gives them a chance to revel in their characters' otherness. For some games where Willpower fluctuates just as much as Satiety and the players want to explore that as an ongoing theme, that works just fine. That said, acting downright beastly for a quick hit of Willpower can (and should) have consequences that reach out further than the scene. Indeed, those consequences could even become more costly than the situation that triggered the action in the first place. Keep this in mind when looking for ways to regain Willpower via your Legend, or when Storytelling for players looking to regain Willpower this way.

The examples below provide situations where a Beast might regain Willpower by acting in accordance with her Legend. These are guidelines; the Storyteller has final say on what behavior or acts constitute appropriate triggers for regaining Willpower.

Examples for Legend

Judgmental: Regain one point of Willpower if your character openly passes judgment on another, filling the target with shame for what they've done regardless of whether or not it was the right thing to do. Regain all points of Willpower if that passing of judgment drives a rift between yourself and another character in the scene.

Relentless: Regain one point of Willpower if your character doggedly pursues a target who knows he has someone following him. Regain all Willpower if she knows that by pursuing him she is running right into danger, such as a Hero's path or a police blockade.

Unexpected: Regain one point of Willpower when your character reveals her presence to someone who thinks she is nowhere near him. Regain all Willpower if she startles a whole room of people previously unaware of her presence.

Seductive: Regain one point of Willpower when your character lures someone and she comes closer to him, even against her better judgment or personal tastes. Regain all Willpower when your character lures someone closer to him who is in the company of a known Hero.

Vicious: Regain one point of Willpower when your character goes over-the-top in hurting someone, whether physically or emotionally, such as breaking both arms of a victim when a verbal threat would get the desired response, or revealing knowledge of shameful secrets. Regain all Willpower when doing this with witnesses who are neutral or sympathetic to the victim, or when the witnesses are loved ones who know little to nothing of who the Beast in their midst really is.

Watchful: Regain one point of Willpower when your character, while not revealing himself, makes it clear to another character in the scene that she is not alone. Regain all Willpower if someone discovers your presence despite all efforts to remain unseen.

Life

A Beast's Life describes the aspect of her personality that maintains her ties to the human life she once led. If she completely lost herself to her primordial nature, this would be the last recognizably human trait left to her. These traits lend the Children some sympathy in the eyes of humanity. It might even give a young, inexperienced Hero pause when confronted with their first prospective kill, which serves the Children well in their own defense. A classic example of Life is Grendel's mother protecting her injured son when Beowulf comes to their lair to kill him.

Your character regains a point of Willpower if she acts in accordance with her Life in a supernatural situation. When dealing with unusual circumstances, such as encountering things that the normal consensus of reality deems impossible, a Beast's Legend seems a more natural response. Instead, when calling on her Life, the Beast, for a time, rejects the notion that she is a slave to her more primal impulses, which can make her a more sympathetic creature. It may even save her life in the long run.

Your character regains all of her Willpower if she acts according to her Life instead of being the primordial terror the world expects. In all the old stories, the hero always wins against the unequivocally evil monster. Instead, your character bucks that narrative. Selfless acts that paint the Begotten in a better light than the enemies she faces definitely qualify for regaining all Willpower, as do actions that deny a Hero his chance to prove himself as the bastion of all that is right and good, either in word or deed.

When acting according to his Life to regain full Willpower, the Beast rejects the notion that he should just act what humanity defines as monstrous because his nature is decidedly not human. The ethics and morality of humankind can and do still resonate with the Children. Ideally, embodying one's Life creates a compelling story that not only benefits the player taking the action, but, at the very least, does not inconvenience the other players at the table to such a degree that it makes the game no longer fun.

The examples below provide situations where a Beast might regain Willpower by acting in accordance with her Life. These are guidelines, and the other players around the table, especially the Storyteller, have final say on what behavior or acts constitute appropriate triggers for regaining Willpower.

Examples for Life

Parental: Regain one point of Willpower when you step forward to protect an innocent creature, keeping in mind that "innocent" may simply mean "having no part in the current conflict." Regain all points of Willpower when you take care of a creature, whether young or injured, that either others could use to get to you or who could herself cause you great harm when she recovers or matures.

Shy: Regain one point of Willpower when you opt not to reveal your nature when doing so could reap significant

benefits, such as gaining an ally or Kinship. Regain all points of Willpower when your taciturn demeanor gives your enemies pause or makes them think they incorrectly perceived the threat you pose.

Cautious: Regain one point of Willpower when prudent behavior helps you dodge a metaphorical bullet, such as revealing your nature as one of the Children before a vampire attempts to drain you dry. Regain all points of Willpower when this caution urges you to do unto others before they do unto you, such shooting your enemy while he distracts himself with his own heroic monologue challenging you to single combat.

Loyal: Regain one point of Willpower when your refusal to betray a human loved one puts you at a small discomfort or inconvenience, such as undergoing torture when you refuse to give up the location of another Beast's Lair. Regain all points of Willpower when you refuse to fight a loved one or selflessly put yourself in dire harm's way to protect another.

Honest: Regain one point of Willpower when you reveal an uncomfortable truth about the supernatural world, such as the existence of other supernatural creatures, your own nature and fallibility as one of the Begotten, or a moment of failure. Regain all points of Willpower when confessing your reluctance to fight or an intimate secret to the Hero that has just cornered you.

Selfless: Regain one point of Willpower when you go out of your way to help someone in need, such as giving your last dollar until payday to a homeless stranger. Regain all points of Willpower when you risk a substantial part of yourself, even your own life, for the greater good, such as throwing yourself between peaceful protesters and a SWAT team with a propensity for excessive violence.

Kinship

Apart from the bonds of Family, the advantages of Atavisms, and the limitless potential of Nightmares, Beasts also possess a number of innate traits as a result of their ties to the Primordial Dream — and through it, to the Dark Mother herself. Collectively referred to as Kinship, the Children see these attributes as extensions of their mythic lineage. Even the most recalcitrant Beast must admit they offer some powerful benefits, particularly when Heroes come calling.

Kinship is also important when it comes to dealing with the "siblings" of the Children, namely the other supernatural denizens of the World of Darkness. By calling on their common ancestry, Beasts become incredibly good at sniffing out supernatural beings and building ties with them.

A Question of Lineage

Kinship abilities function differently based on whether a target is considered to be descended from the Dark Mother, or is "merely" a fundamentally human being with supernatural powers.

- **Descended from the Dark Mother:** Vampires, werewolves, changelings, Prometheans, Sin-Eaters, mummies, fetches, inhuman spirits. In general, any being that was never human, or was human but has since been totally transformed into or merged with a supernatural being, falls into this category.
- **Fundamentally Human:** Mages, psychics, mediums, slashers, and ghosts. As a rule, any character who can be described with "mostly human, but" falls into this category.
- **Kinship Does Not Apply:** Demons, as described in **Demon: The Descent**.

All of this raises an important question: Do these supernatural beings *actually* share some sort of spiritual ancestry with the Begotten? Do vampires, werewolves, and the rest spring from the Primordial Dream, somewhere in the forgotten shadows of humanity's origins? The Children think so. Other beings might disagree. That's about as objective as anyone is able to get.

Thicker Than Water

Beasts have a natural affinity, not just with each other, but with all children of the Dark Mother. This doesn't guarantee

Family Ties

Beasts are capable of forging close metaphysical connections with other supernatural beings. They do so via the Family Ties Condition **(p. 323)**. This Condition grants a number of benefits to various Kinship mechanics. Beasts place this Condition on other characters; it does not apply to other Beasts.

Note that if more than one character in a brood wishes to establish Family Ties with the same character, they must each do so individually, but each member of the Brood that already has this Condition established with the character in question adds one die to all relevant rolls for his fellow members, cumulatively.

With regard to other player-controlled characters, the target may choose to accept the Family Ties Condition, or she may decide the Beast must use Social maneuvering (and the target can still choose to accept a Beat instead of the Condition; see **p. 82**). Even if the target is willing, the two still must spend considerable time together, endure common hardship, hunt together, or otherwise become close before this Condition can be applied.

Placing the Family Ties Condition is also a requirement for a Beast to create custom Nightmares based on that target's nature and supernatural powers, which offers a potent incentive for the Children to cultivate these connections.

It is worth noting that the relationship does not have to be affectionate or even friendly for this Condition to apply; all it requires is that the Beast and the target be close. Associates, rivals, or even genial enemies thus potentially qualify for this condition as well, though it will likely be significantly harder to maintain more hostile connections.

peace or goodwill by any means, but it certainly does go a long way toward allaying the natural fear and suspicions that many supernatural beings have when they're approached by someone they don't know who also seems to know their big secret. Especially when that person turns out to be something they most likely have never encountered in the past...and if anyone fits that description, it's a Beast.

Effect: Unless she acts in a hostile fashion, treats the target poorly, or abuses their relationship, your character is considered to begin with at least a good impression for the purposes of Social maneuvering when it comes to other supernatural beings, including other Beasts. Thicker Than Water applies to fundamentally human types such as mages and psychics, but only bestows an average impression instead of a good one. **(See Social maneuvering, p. 161.)**

Note, though, the situational context applies. If a Beast's first meeting with a supernatural being involves the Beast taking hostile action against that being or that being's friends or allies, Thicker Than Water doesn't mean that the character needs to be friendly to the Beast. The Storyteller is, as always, within her rights to decide that circumstances modify the impression level for the Beast, even taking Thicker Than Water into account. *All else equal*, the Beast's impression level starts at good. Note, too, that Thicker Than Water doesn't give the Beast's player any bonus on Social actions beyond Social maneuvering. It simply means that if the Beast reaches out to her kin in a respectful manner, the other being is generally willing to receive it. Thicker Than Water is not a mind control power, but merely a social lubricant.

A Beast may even attempt to use Social maneuvering against feral supernatural beings, though what she can accomplish is much more limited — asserting dominance as a pack leader or discouraging rivals by presenting as a superior predator might be possible, for instance, but enacting a sophisticated attack plan is asking too much of a feral intelligence. The Beast adds her current Satiety rating to all Social maneuvering rolls with beings of this type.

Thicker Than Water does not apply to the Unchained (as described in **Demon: The Descent**).

Family Resemblance

Though their family tree may be gnarled, twisted, and blasted, the Children still recognize their supernatural cousins, no matter how distant the tie may be. A Beast instinctively senses another Beast on sight and can intuitively sense the shape of her Horror. This recognition is automatic and requires no roll, unless the other Beast is using some kind of supernatural ability to conceal her nature, in which case it becomes a Clash of Wills **(p. 222)**. If a Beast wishes to gain more information, she must spend a moment intensely studying the other Beast, at which time the player may roll this ability normally.

Detecting a vampire, werewolf, changeling, or other full-fledged supernatural being is relatively easy for a Beast and happens reflexively if the Beast is physically in their presence. Success is automatic unless the target is hiding her nature by supernatural means, in which case the Beast must win a Clash of Wills before using Family Resemblance. Each Beast processes the sensation of recognition differently — as scents, as sounds, as visual phenomena, etc. — but each creature type is always distinctive. A Beast might taste ashes in her mouth for vampires, for example, smell freshly turned earth around Sin-Eaters, and hear a single discordant chime for changelings.

Individuals who are fundamentally human but still wield supernatural power — such as mages, psychics, and mediums — are harder, though not impossible, to detect. Some Beasts claim these talents must stem from a tie to the Dark Mother somewhere in the target's ancestry, no matter how distant, while others claim it is simply the Horror stirring in the presence of supernatural ability. Regardless of the reason, a Family Resemblance roll is still reflexive. If the individual has not used any supernatural abilities in the same scene as the Beast encountered him, subtract his Integrity rating from the roll as well as Composure. If he does not have an Integrity score, its analogue may be substituted instead.

Family Resemblance does not detect spirits, ghosts, or other ephemeral beings unless they're using the Materialize Manifestation. Nonhuman spirits are treated as full-fledged supernatural beings, while ghosts are considered to fall in the "fundamentally human" category. Ghosts may add their Integrity when applicable and do not count Materialize as a recent use of a supernatural power in terms of being detected. Use of any other Manifestation or any Numina, however, does count.

It is important to note that while Family Resemblance does identify creature type with a fair degree of specificity — "vampire," "mage," "werewolf," etc. — it does not explain anything more about that creature type, their organization, their strengths or weaknesses, and so on. That is for the Beast to learn, but at least she won't be starting completely in the dark.

Dice Pool: Wits + Occult + Lair – target's Composure

Action: Reflexive

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The target is aware that he is being observed and takes an instant dislike to the Beast. He is treated as hostile to the Beast for the purposes of Social maneuvering. While he won't necessarily act violently, he regards the Beast with deep suspicion and generally assumes the worst about her intentions.

Failure: The Beast learns nothing about the target.

Success: The Beast is aware of the type of creature she is looking at, as well as his approximate power level **(expressed by their Supernatural Tolerance rating; see p. 222)**. She is also roughly aware of how "well fed" the creature currently is, in terms of his current power currency reserves (Blood, Glamour, etc.). With regard to another Beast, this extra scrutiny allows her to identify her target's Family as well as a rough idea of his Satiety level.

Exceptional Success: As above, plus the Beast instinctively knows the general nature of the target's most powerful supernatural talent: "gifted at mind control," "extremely hard to

RAGE AND THE MACHINES

The demonic entities that call themselves the Unchained present a strange case to the Begotten. They are most decidedly not descended from the Dark Mother, for one. Meetings between demons and Beasts tend to result in swift and sometimes brutal displays of dominance. Family Resemblance still has a chance to detect them, but first the demon has a chance to "spoof" identification as a supernatural being (**Demon: The Descent,** p. 112).

Even if the Beast manages to penetrate this defense, treat an exceptional success on the Family Resemblance roll as regular success. To complicate matters further, the demon is automatically aware that her nature has been revealed. An immediate Clash of Wills ensues, as the ancient bloodline of the Dark Mother clashes with the alien will of the God-Machine. This is reflected as a roll of the Beast's Lair vs. the demon's Primum (Supernatural Tolerance) rating.

If the Beast's player rolls more successes, the Beast's predatory nature asserts itself, and the demon gains the Shaken Condition. If the demon's player scores more successes, the Beast feels drained and gains the Leveraged Condition. In addition, he must reveal some important personal information — home address, personal number or email account, place of employment, etc. — that the demon learns from her momentary connection. If they are tied for successes, both the Beast and the Demon gain the Spooked Condition with regard to the other.

Even if they manage to get past this initial difficulty, Beasts and demons face some obstacles as allies. A Beast cannot place the Family Ties Condition on a demon and cannot bestow Mother's Kiss on her. For their part, demons often see little practical benefit to working with the Children — chief among the problems being that they cannot forge a pact with a Beast. Any attempt to forge a pact always fails, with full costs paid but no benefit to either side.

Exactly why the Begotten and the Unchained are so viciously at odds is a matter of conjecture — demons don't seem interested in discussing it, and if the Dark Mother knows, she hasn't shared it with her children. In the meantime, the two sides generally do their best to avoid attracting each other's notice.

injure," "transforms physical matter with ease," etc. If the target has several equally powerful talents, the one used most recently is detected. This heightened insight into the target's nature also removes two Doors on the next Social maneuver the Beast makes against the target. If the target is another Beast, the user learns his Hunger and receives a brief vision of the appearance of his Lair, including how many Chambers it contains.

Mother's Kiss

Having the blood of the Dark Mother in their veins isn't just a blessing for Beasts — they can also exploit the primal power it contains to boost the capabilities of other supernatural creatures (but not other Children). Beasts call this ability "Mother's Kiss," and its potency is often enough to sway dubious supernatural allies — not to mention terrorize their common enemies.

In order to bestow Mother's Kiss, a Beast must be in the presence of her target — the two can be separated by walls but must be in the same immediate area. (Distance and barriers may impose penalties on the roll, however, at the Storyteller's discretion.) The Beast must shed some of her own blood as she says the target's name. Any amount of blood will do — a bitten lip, a scratched arm — but it must be shed as the name is spoken.

If Mother's Kiss is successful, the target feels a sudden rush of power. Each individual perceives it a bit differently, but whether it's an electric surge on their skin, a swirl of light, the sound of a great beast roaring, or some other sensation, the effect is always pronounced and unmistakable.

A target may only be under the effect of one use of Mother's Kiss at a time. He cannot receive another use until he has expended the dice from the current usage. Any unused benefits from this ability are lost at the end of the scene — they cannot be "banked" for later.

While still potent, Mother's Kiss has notably less effect as its target grows more powerful. Explanations for this vary, but it seems as though the more "established" the target has become in his monstrous nature, the less the raw power of this ability is able to affect him.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Stamina + Satiety – target's Supernatural Tolerance. If a target of Mother's Kiss has the Family Ties Condition with the Beast, the Beast adds three dice to her pool.

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Beast not only fails to boost a target's powers, but loses 1 Satiety as her Horror rebels against being ordered about in this fashion. In addition, the target suffers a dramatic failure on the next use of a supernatural power this scene (the target receives a Beat when this happens). He may not receive another use of Mother's Kiss until after this failure occurs.

Failure: The Beast fails to augment the target's powers.

Success: The target gains a pool of dice equal to the player's successes. For the rest of the scene, he may add these dice to any roll for a supernatural power. Dice must be allocated before a roll is made; they cannot be added afterward. Once dice are

used, they are removed from this pool. If a power does not require a roll, the Storyteller may allow it to receive a narrative benefit based on the number of dice expended — the more dice spent, the greater the benefit potentially generated.

Exceptional Success: As above, plus the target immediately refreshes 1 Willpower point, plus an additional Willpower point for every success above five. This may take her over her normal Willpower maximum. Any Willpower points in excess of her maximum rating are lost at the end of the current scene.

Passing Resemblance

Though the Children often form bonds with their younger siblings, other members of the same supernatural community can be extremely aggressive when it comes to outsiders entering their culture. Passing Resemblance allows a Beast to defuse some of these suspicions by registering as a particular type of supernatural creature, provided she has bonded with a member of that community.

This ability can be invaluable in passing through dangerous territory or escaping immediate harm or suspicion upon meeting other supernatural beings, but it is not without risk. The deception does not bestow any new capabilities, for one, so a Beast mingling with werewolves is going to have trouble blending in if her contacts all shift into wolves and expect her to join them. A Beast who intends to hide out among another supernatural population is thus advised to avoid situations that call for capabilities she does not possess and would be wise to cultivate powers that mimic those of the "natives."

On a social level, most supernatural communities are secretive by nature and do not take kindly to being "infiltrated" — the longer the Beast maintains her charade, the more harder it may be to explain to her allies why they shouldn't consider her a serious threat to their safety when her cover is finally blown. Not to mention that depending on how the truth comes to light, it may be very difficult for her allies to trust her going forward.

Effect: A Beast must have Family Ties with a supernatural creature of the type she wishes to resemble and spend 1 Willpower point to activate Passing Resemblance for a scene. During that time, her appearance does not change, but she is detected as a supernatural creature of that type by any applicable powers or senses. This ability may be ended at any time as a reflexive action, but cannot be used again until the next scene.

Passing Resemblance automatically fools passive abilities that identify creature type, such as a vampire's instinctual recognition of another vampire. If the Beast is actively scanned with a supernatural power that could potentially reveal the deception, it becomes a Clash of Wills. Note that the power must specifically identify creature types to qualify. A werewolf sniffing the Beast with heightened senses would not necessarily have a chance to break Passing Resemblance, unless he can normally detect supernatural creatures by scent with that power.

If a Beast has a high Satiety rating (7+), this deception also includes superficial but convincing illusory elements such as turning pale and appearing not to breathe while imitating a vampire, for example, or even projecting a crude fae mien (based on the Horror) to pass among changelings. These changes are entirely illusory and convey no real benefit — the Beast may not appear to breathe, for example, but she still requires oxygen. The Storyteller has the final say on what sorts of changes are allowed, but these changes will never disguise the Beast's basic appearance or project radical changes to her size and shape.

Family Dinner

One thing that Beasts understand better than any other monster alive is the nature of Hunger — while other creatures feel the need to hunt and feed, a Beast *is* her need. This fundamental instinct connects the Children with all of their younger siblings. It allows them to satisfy some of the endless demands of the Horror by accompanying other supernatural creatures as they sate their own dark appetites. Doing so can be difficult, even dangerous work, but it allows the Beast to appease their Hunger less directly than normal, which can be a welcome relief all its own.

System: In order to use Family Dinner, a Beast must accompany a supernatural being as he hunts, feeds, or both. It doesn't matter whether it's a vampire thirsting after blood, a werewolf stalking an intruder in his territory, or a changeling feeding on human emotions, so long as he is actively tracking prey and/or taking sustenance from a hunt. The Storyteller has the final say on whether or not an activity counts, but it must involve a monster's supernatural nature or appetites directly; mundane hunting or feeding does not invoke Family Dinner.

If the Beast witnesses a successful hunt — one that results in taking down the intended quarry, either literally or figuratively — she immediately regains 1 Satiety. If she observes a successful feeding, she also gains 1 Satiety. These benefits are cumulative, so a hunt that also results in a feeding nets 2 Satiety total. The actual number of creatures involved in the scene does not matter. The Satiety gained is based on the acts witnessed, not the number of participants.

Note that the Beast does not need to make her presence known to the other supernatural being in order for Family Dinner to apply. Viewing the act directly is sufficient. Each successful use of Family Dinner removes one Door on an effort to place Family Ties on a target, to a maximum of the Beast's Composure rating. When it comes to getting to know someone, few methods are better than seeing how he chooses to sate his appetites, after all.

If the Beast has the Family Ties Condition with at least one monster involved in Family Dinner, she adds 1 Satiety to the overall total gained from the experience. A Beast may choose to regain fewer points of Satiety from a hunt than the possible maximum, if she wishes to "stay hungry" for the scene.

As potent as this ability is, it does have certain key restrictions. Tame targets such as vampiric minions who willing allow themselves to be "hunted" do not qualify as proper targets for Family Dinner; the hunt must be genuine. In addition, remote observation or watching recordings after the fact does not carry the necessary visceral connection for this ability to function — the Beast must be physically present, even if hidden.

The Horrors Just Off the Path

As the masters of the Primordial Pathways, Beasts enjoy a nearly unmatched freedom to wander the different planes of existence. Very few things can keep them out if they desire entrance. The Begotten can use to their advantage to command respect among even the strangest denizens of the spirit world.

Skeleton Key

Given their instinctive connection to the Primordial Pathways, Beasts are capable of opening otherworldly gateways they come across. Whether it's a secret door to the Hedge, an Avernian Gate to the Underworld, or a verge into the Shadow, a Beast can make use of any gateway.

While it does not damage the portal, the use of Skeleton Key is definitely not normal to those familiar with the typical workings of a particular gateway. An almost palpable sense of overwhelming force being applied ripples through the area, as though some great presence was close to tearing the door off its hinges right before it opened. Even if a portal resists being opened in this fashion, the frustrated rage of the Horror resonates through both worlds, leaving its mark on the Beast instead. It is immediately evident to any beings familiar with the gateway's routine operation that it is not functioning normally.

Note that the Beast has no innate capacity to sense the presence of a gateway, so he must locate it some other way: research, observation, even social manipulation. Once he knows where one exists, however, he may make use of this ability even if he lacks the owner's permission or any other typical safeguards. This ability functions on either side of the gateway — the Beast may return to the mundane world just as easily from the other side, provided he can find a doorway.

Finally, the Beast can use Skeleton Key to force a supernatural gateway to open to the Primordial Dream, even if it normally connects to another realm. The Horror casts a shadow across all realities — just like in a nightmare, no matter what path a victim takes, he might wind up walking into the monster's hunting ground.

The ability does not allow a Beast to access a demon's private "bolthole" (see **Demon: The Descent**, p. 120), and any attempts to access such a location automatically fail. However, the Beast could still use Skeleton Key to force the bolthole's entrance to act as a gateway to the Primordial Dream, if he desires.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Resolve + Occult + Lair vs. Supernatural Tolerance of the gate's creator or current owner, whichever is higher. If no such rating readily exists, the Storyteller should assign a rating based on how well-used the gateway is, with very active gates being easier to open. If the gateway has a security rating of some kind, add that to the resistance roll.

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Beast not only fails to open the gateway, but it slams shut on her, causing a psychic backlash. Roll the gateway's Supernatural Tolerance — the Beast suffers one level of bashing damage per success on this roll. In addition, the owner of the gateway, if any, is immediately alerted to the fact that someone who is not one of his kind attempted to force the crossing.

Failure: The Beast fails to open the gateway.

Success: The gateway opens, allowing travel between worlds for a number of turns equal to successes rolled or until the Beast wills it closed as a reflexive action. This applies even if the gateway is normally open for a much longer or shorter period of time. A gateway can only be connected to one realm at a time — either its normal destination or the Primordial Dream. If the Beast wishes to switch the destination, she must end the current use of Skeleton Key and activate it once again.

Exceptional Success: As success, but using this particular gateway does not require a Willpower point for the rest of the story — the shadow of the Horror lingers on the portal, removing some of the difficulty in crossing between worlds for the Beast. A roll is still required as normal.

Under the Bed

Though it's easiest for a Beast to enter the Primordial Dream by way of their Lair, it is possible to establish a sort of "back door" using a mortal mind. In order to do so, the Beast must sate her Hunger in the target's presence. The target can be an accomplice, a victim, or simply a witness to this action. The mortal does not need to know exactly what is taking place, but there must be no question that the Beast is responsible for what is going on, at least from his point of view.

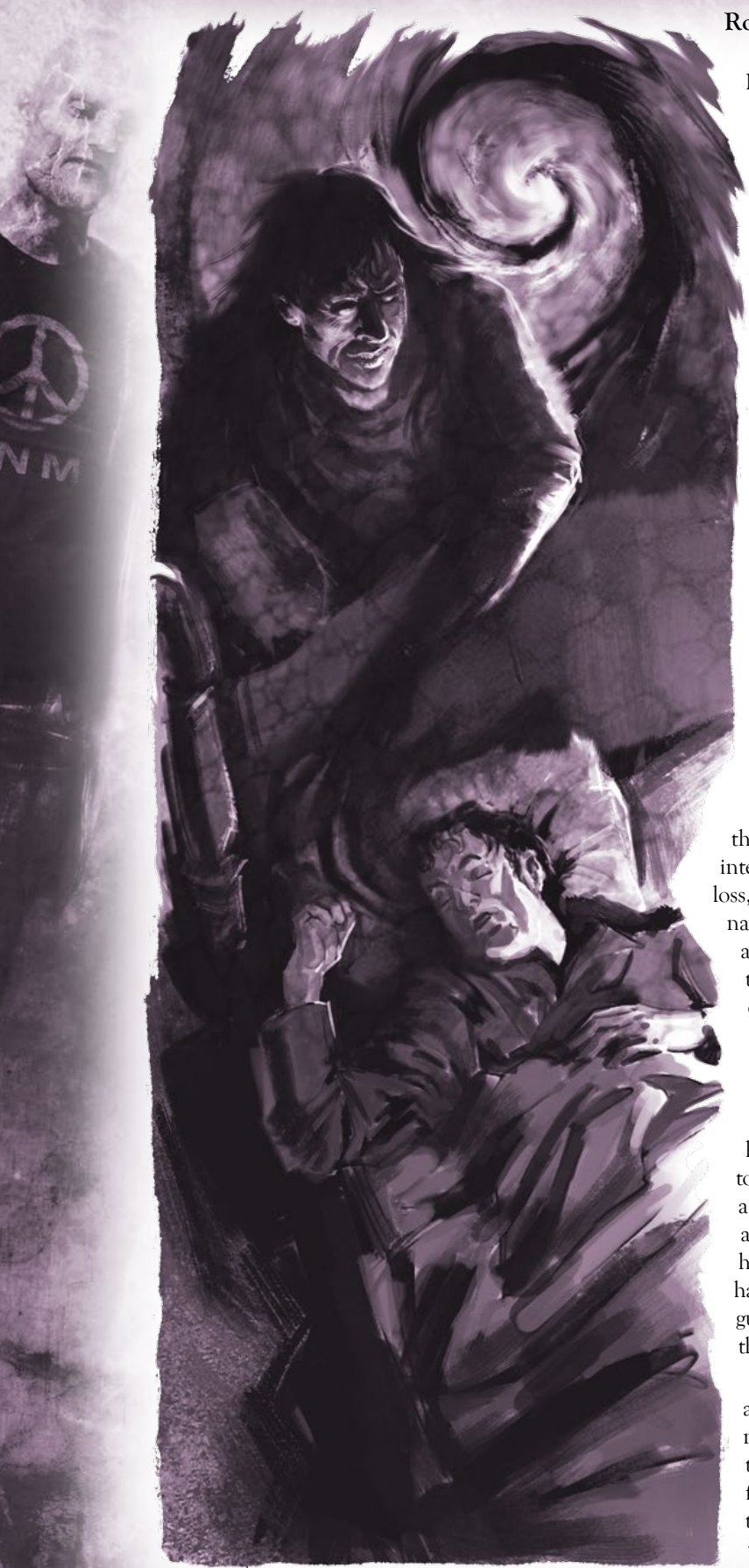
After the Beast indulges her Hunger in the target's presence, the player may spend 1 Satiety to create this connection, which lasts until she chooses to end it. A Beast cannot have more of these connections at any one time than she has dots in Lair — new connections simply replace older ones. She may not attempt to establish this connection with supernatural beings, since they possess an innate resistance to such tampering (the Supernatural Tolerance trait).

In order to use this ability, the Beast must approach the target while he's sleeping and expend a point of Satiety. She does not need to actually touch the target, but there must not be physical barriers between them. This infects the mortal with a savage nightmare, which in turn opens a brief gateway the Beast can use to access the Primordial Pathways. The Beast's physical body vanishes, and she appears briefly in the subject's dream before moving on to the Primordial Pathways.

Cost: 1 Satiety

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety vs. Integrity. If the Beast is a blood relative, she adds 3 dice to her roll.

Action: Instant



Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Beast is unable to enter the Primordial Pathways through the target's nightmares, and the resulting psychic turmoil reverberates through the Primordial Dream. Any Heroes in the same region feel the reverberations and can track the Beast's location (see p. 206).

Failure: The target's mind shrugs off the Beast's efforts to infect them with a suitable nightmare; no travel to the Primordial Pathways occurs.

Success: The Beast is able to step through the target's nightmares into the Primordial Pathways. She cannot bring others along — this passage is an expression of her connection to the target, and the passage itself reflects a distorted version of the events in the target's mind as a result. The target gains the Spooked Condition regarding the Beast and that night has terrifying nightmares involving the Beast and her Hunger. While the target may not wake up assuming that the Beast is actually a supernatural being, he will likely be a bit wary around her for a while, even if he can't exactly explain why. The Beast gains no Satiety from this dream, however, as the Horror doesn't linger in the dream.

Exceptional Success: An especially potent connection to the Primordial Dream is created; the Beast may make a number of additional trips equal to her Lair rating before rolling again, and the target does not need to be asleep for the Beast to use this ability. The Beast must still be in close proximity to her target and spend Satiety for each trip.

Unfortunately, a nightmare this powerful is very hard on the target's mind — he suffers a breaking point as a result of the intense nightmares. Even if he successfully wards off Integrity loss, the target awakens with absolute certainty of the Beast's true nature; if he was already aware of it, he sees the worst possible aspect of the Beast. He is considered hostile to the Beast for the purposes of Social maneuvering, requiring tremendous effort to repair relations.

Hold the Door

A Beast may choose to grant an outsider one-time access to their Lair. She must be at an entrance to her Lair and grant her express consent. If she does so, any target so named is able to enter the Lair along with the Beast. If the Lair is shared by a brood, the other members instinctively know when outsiders are given access through this ability. If the other brood members have met the invited individual before, they know exactly who has been allowed in. If the brood members have not met the new guest, they receive an image of the individual and will recognize them if they cross paths, unless the guest changes her appearance.

Both mortals and supernatural beings may be granted access using Hold the Door. However, this permission does not grant special protection from what the target may find on the other side. Mortal visitors might suffer a breaking point for entering the Lair, though they should receive bonuses on the roll if the Beast has prepared them for the experience or they have visited in the past.

A Beast may be bullied, bribed, or coerced into granting this consent, but outright supernatural domination cannot force it from her — it must be given of her own free will, however grudgingly.

Effect: The target character is able to enter the Lair, as well as depart the same way he came. He must enter at the same time the Beast does; if he does not, the permission expires. Once he leaves the Lair, no matter why he did so, he cannot re-enter unless the Beast once again grants him permission or he finds another way to enter. If the Beast is part of a brood, the visitor gains access to any connected Lairs as well, assuming he can find the right Burrows to reach them.

Be My Guest

A Beast may also grant a target free access to his Lair, allowing her to enter it just as the Beast does. This is a rare and closely guarded privilege for many reasons; not only does potentially invite danger into the Beast's most closely guarded sanctum, but it also allows someone free access to a place that is an intimate expression of the Beast's true nature.

If a brood shares the Lair, the other members are instinctively aware of this permission being granted and have the same chance of recognizing the guests as described in Hold the Door, above. Needless to say, giving someone this level of free access to the Lair without consulting other brood members first is considered a serious *faux pas* among the Children.

Effect: The Beast must grant the target his express consent to come and go from the Lair as she pleases, and seal the invitation with the expenditure of 1 Satiety. As with Hold the Door, this consent must come of the Beast's own will — he may be coerced by mundane means, but outright supernatural domination cannot compel him to grant access to a Lair in this fashion.

Be My Guest has another potent benefit, specifically shielding a mortal's mind from some of the innate strangeness of traveling to the alien space of the Lair. A mortal who has received this benefit does not suffer a breaking point when visiting this particular Lair, though other worlds and even other Lairs may still trigger one normally. This does not mean that the experience can't still be profoundly strange and disturbing, but the Lair recognizes the mortal as a valued guest, and so it eases off on the pressure it normally applies to outsiders.

A Beast may grant access to as many individuals as he likes using this benefit, but the offer must be made in person and he must pay the Satiety cost for each individual invited. A Beast may rescind his invitation at any time as a reflexive action; if the individual is currently in the Lair when the permission is rescinded, she does not have to leave immediately, but suffers a breaking point and will be unable to return after she departs from the Lair.

As with Hold the Door, a visitor to a brood's shared domain has access to any connected Lairs as well, provided she can find the right Burrows to reach them.

Lair

Every dragon has her cave, every kraken his ocean. A Beast is both a human being and an ancient, Primordial self: his Horror draws other souls into itself as their hosts sleep and sates its hunger in their nightmares. Beast and Horror are permanently entwined — at any time, a Beast can concentrate and see through his Horror's eyes, deep in the Primordial Dream. When the waking world is especially similar to his inner landscape, he can even step through physically, vanishing to fully inhabit his other self.

The monstrous form that victims see in their dreams is only part of a Beast's Horror, albeit an important one. The dream-landscape the Horror hunts in is as much a part of the nightmare as the monster at its heart, and equally vital to the Beast. That landscape grows as the Beast explores his Legend, incorporating places from his physical life as it expands. It's his sanctuary within the Primordial Dream, his hunting grounds — his *Lair*.

Lair in **Beast: The Primordial** is an Advantage rated from 1 to 10 dots. It determines both the raw power of the Beast's Horror and the size and traits of the Lair it resides in. As Beasts explore their Legends, their Lairs expand.

Lair	Max. Number of Chambers	Lair Traits (/ Scene)	Attribute/ Skill Limit
1	3	2(/1)	5
2	3	3(/1)	5
3	4	3(/2)	5
4	4	4(/3)	5
5	5	4(/3)	5
6	5	5(/4)	6
7	6	5(/4)	7
8	6	6(/5)	8
9	7	6(/5)	9
10	7	7(/6)	10

- **Maximum Number of Chambers:** As Beasts explore their Legends, they encounter locations that resonate with the Primordial Dream and incorporate them into their Lairs. A Chamber is a defined "setting" within the Lair, and higher-dot Lairs can support more Chambers. Chambers also define where a Beast can open a Primordial Pathway, allowing others to enter her Lair. The first Chamber, the pocket of the Primordial Dream that forms after the Devouring, is called the Heart, but even a new Beast has the potential to take on up to two more Chambers during play. Starting characters begin with one Chamber besides the Heart, but the player can choose not to define this second Chamber and take two Experiences instead.
- **Traits (/Scene):** These keywords (explained starting on p. 102, below) define the resonance of a Beast's Lair. By finding situations and places in the material world that share that resonance, the Beast may gain the advantages

associated with those Traits. When within the Lair, any Lair Traits the Beast wishes to activate apply. When acting in the material world, Beasts have a limit on how many different Lair Traits they can call upon in a single scene, which rises as the Lair expands. When the player buys a dot of Lair, she can immediately choose additional Traits as appropriate.

- **Attribute/Skill Limit:** Once a Lair becomes truly expansive, the sheer power involved seeps into the Beast's very being, increasing her maximum dot rating in Attributes and Skills.
- **Supernatural Tolerance:** Add a Beast's Lair rating to contested dice pools where she is resisting a supernatural effect. This is a Supernatural Tolerance Trait. Most other supernatural beings have an equivalent Advantage they add to their own contested rolls (see p. 222).
- **Lifespan:** Beasts with well-established Lairs can live unnaturally long lives, prolonged by the power of their Horrors. Every dot of Lair past the fifth adds 50 years to the Beast's life expectancy, barring accident or illness.

The Primordial Dream

No one is an island. Every human being is connected on a spiritual level, their individual lives like the fins of a great leviathan showing above the water, with the creature that joins them moving unseen beneath the surface. Lucid dreamers, meditative pioneers, psychics and the truly inspired — or insane — chase glimpses of other lives deep within their psyche. Go deep enough into any human soul and they all become one. Call it the inner world, Temenos, racial memory, or the collective unconscious. Beasts call it the Human Dream or the Bright Dream. It contains every concept shared between people — the sum total of all human civilization and culture, from the temples of gods to popular television.

Beasts were human until the Devouring. They know how seductive and overpowering community can be, but they also know that it isn't all of the human spirit. Go deep enough into the collective unconscious and you find a wild, dangerous place where shared ideas give way to the primal, animalistic fears lurking behind sapience, where great Beasts stalk prey that runs on two legs, where nature isn't tamed, and where the dreamer has no protection against the world. This is the Primordial Dream, or Dark Dream, the kingdom of nightmares and unexpressed animal urges. To a Beast, it's home.

The Hive

All of the Chambers in a region are part of a larger system called the *hive*. The Apex of the area (whether he knows it or not) exerts an influence on the hive, resulting in a similarity that flows through all of the Chambers. If the Apex is a werewolf known for swiftly and mercilessly hunting down foes, the Chambers in the hive might carry the sound of howls, the scent of blood, or the uncomfortable closeness of a dense forest. If the Apex is a mage specializing in manipulating storms, the hive might echo with thunder or be prone to lightning strikes. If the Apex is a Beast, the hive reflects that Beast's Lair; if the Apex is a Makara, for example, a river might run through the Chambers of the hive, becoming swollen and raging when the Apex is angry.

The Horrors of the Beasts in an area roam through the hive while the Beasts sleep. If they are hungry, they enter the dreams of sleeping humans and cause nightmares, feeding on their shock and fear. These nightmares are no more damaging and traumatic than any other dream, but repeated feeding on the same subject can disturb the Primordial Dream and attract Heroes.

Beasts can choose to sever their Lairs from the hive, removing the connection to the Apex and restricting their Horrors' movements. This has some advantages, depending on the nature of the hive. Not every Apex is beneficent. Some of them use the connection that the hive grants as a way to invade other Beasts' Lairs, establishing themselves as dominant and forcing them to provide food for the Apex's Horror. Some use this kind of brutality as a step in their quest for the Incarnate Inheritance.

Chambers and Burrows

Only a very young Beast has his Horror confined to a single "location" in the Primordial Dream. Even one mere days from realizing his Primordial self has the potential for growth. As Beasts age and explore their Legends, their Lairs expand to incorporate additional Chambers based on locations they encounter in the physical world. Within the Primordial Dream, the different Chambers of a Beast's Lair act like rooms, connected by dream "passageways" called Burrows. Beasts have a much easier time accessing their Lairs in locations resembling one of their Chambers. They can even open Primordial Pathways to allow others access, but the more Chambers a Beast has, the further her Horror ranges when starving and the more opportunities a Hero has to break into the Lair.

Expanding the Lair

The Primordial Dream is a deep, almost animalistic layer of the human soul. It exists beneath the veneer of sapience and civilization that comforts the World of Darkness' population. It is this unsettling layer in which Beasts make their Lairs. To expand the Lair and add an additional Chamber, a Beast must find a location in the physical world that resonates with both her Legend and the Primordial Dream.

A location qualifies for inclusion in the Primordial Dream if it meets the following requirements:

- The environment must contain at least one element matching a Lair Trait in the Beast's Lair.

And *either*

- The Beast must have achieved an exceptional success on a Nightmare activation roll within the scene

Or

- Another character must have lost Integrity (or some supernatural equivalents; see sidebar) via a breaking point *with the Beast present*

Or

- A human character must have lost Integrity in the location, stemming from encountering the supernatural there. If the Beast was not present for this occurrence, she needs to learn what happened in the location and what supernatural being was involved before she can add the Chamber to her Lair.

When she encounters a Chamber, whether the actual Chamber in the Primordial Dream or the physical analog in the waking world, the Beast instinctively knows it for what it is. She does not, however, automatically know what kind of supernatural being triggered the creation of the Chamber. If the Beast wishes to investigate the matter, she must remain in the area for a scene, studying the location, touching the walls or the ground, and letting her Horror "tune in" to the Chamber in the Primordial Dream. She can then glean some information about how the Chamber was formed. Chambers that are not part of a Lair still connect to one another via Primordial Pathways, and are part of the local hive.

Chambers formed this way last approximately five years, and then fade away into the Primordial Dream if not added to a Lair. At the Storyteller's discretion, a particularly intense event might resonate longer. If multiple such events take place in a given location, the Chamber might grow larger and more diverse (encompassing more Traits).

Dice Pool: Wits + Occult + Lair

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Horror takes a strong, instinctive dislike to the Chamber and whoever spawned it. If the Beast's Satiety falls below 5 during the next week, the Horror automatically seeks out the mortal whose Integrity loss caused the Chamber and feeds on his dreams. The Beast can never add this location to her Lair.

Failure: The Beast cannot find any information about the Chamber this way, but can still investigate the area by mundane means.

Success: The Beast sees a brief, muted vision of the incident that led to the creation of the Chamber. If she sees the supernatural being or the mortal victim again, she recognizes them. If the Beast investigates the incident further, the player may add the successes on this roll as a positive modifier to any involved rolls. Each of these dice can be used only once, but they can be split between multiple rolls during the investigation. For example, if a player rolls three successes on the roll to learn about the Chamber, and later rolls to persuade a contact to tell her about what happened in that location, she can apply a +3 modifier (using all of the dice) or apply a +1 or +2 modifier and keep the remainder for other actions.

Exceptional Success: As above. In addition, the Beast can follow the psychic trail of either the supernatural being or the victim (not both) to wherever they went after the incident. The trail goes cold after approximately half a mile.

Modifier	Circumstance
–5	Integrity loss occurred within the last five years
–4	Integrity loss occurred within the last year
–3	Integrity loss occurred within the last three months
–1	Integrity loss occurred within the last week
+1	Beast's Satiety is below 5
+1	Integrity loss occurred since the last sunset or sunrise
+2	Beast has encountered a supernatural being of the same type that caused the Chamber
+3	Beast has encountered this particular being (knows its name, has spoken with it directly)
+3	Supernatural being that caused the Integrity loss was a Beast
+4	Beast has encountered the mortal who lost Integrity in the location
+5	Beast has the Family Ties Condition with this supernatural being

If the location meets these requirements and the Beast has an available Chamber slot due to her Lair rating, the player simply pays 1 Satiety and the new Chamber forms with one Burrow of the Beast's design connecting it to any already existing Chamber.

After the effort to trigger the Lair's expansion, the process of adding to the Primordial Dream is taxing. A Beast can only add one additional Chamber to her Lair per story.

Once a Chamber is added to the Lair, it is set. Beasts can "collapse" (remove) Chambers with effort, as described on p. 100. Intruders can force a collapse, but unless that happens Chambers stay in the Lair indefinitely. Once a Chamber becomes part of the Beast's Lair, it takes on the Traits of that Lair. Any others fade.

The Heart

A Beast's first Chamber is called her Heart, the nest of her Horror at the center of the Lair. A Heart acts like any other Chamber except for the fact that it doesn't correspond to a location the Beast has encountered, so is less useful when opening Primordial Pathways and is more secure against unwanted intrusion. Most Beasts hide their Hearts deep in the Lair, behind as many Chambers as they can employ. If the Heart collapses, the Beast dies.

Burrows

While Chambers are distinct dream-settings matching locations marked out by fear and subsumed into a Beast's Lair, Burrows are fluid connections *between* those Chambers. They're dream-narrative bridges that characters use to move between Chambers, experiencing them as moving through a portal, travelling down a defined route, or taking an exit inside the Chamber. A Burrow usually has cosmetic aspects of the two

KIN AND INTEGRITY

Only humans use Integrity — the supernatural inhabitants of the World of Darkness all substitute their own traits instead. Some of these provide the opportunity for Lair expansion when they lose a dot, while others don't, depending on what exactly the trait represents.

The breaking point method of Lair expansion works because in the terrible moment of self-realization that comes with Integrity loss, the character is jarred close to the Primordial Dream. The Beast's Horror taps into the distress of a soul forced to confront its own flawed nature. This only works if the Beast is actually present in the scene, however; the Chamber doesn't linger. When supernatural beings suffer the same kind of trauma from their own breaking point equivalents, Beasts can use them to add Chambers in the same way as humans.

Of the published and upcoming World of Darkness games, the following traits are useable for Lair expansion:

Humanity (**Vampire: The Requiem**), Wisdom (**Mage: The Awakening**), Pilgrimage (**Promethean: The Created**), Clarity (**Changeling: The Lost**), Memory (**Mummy: The Curse**)

The following traits, however, are not;

Cover (**Demon: The Descent**), Harmony (**Werewolf: The Forsaken**), Synergy (**Geist: The Sin-Eaters**)

UNUSUAL SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

Beasts *usually* expand their Lairs and forge new Chambers from locations in the physical world; the Bright Dream of humanity contains reflections of all shared concepts, so hungry Horrors can still open Primordial Pathways to the Astral based on Chambers that were originally physical. Nothing, however, stops a Beast from using a more esoteric scene as the foundation of a Chamber. The requirements a location must meet to qualify as a Chamber are the same, whether the Beast is spreading Nightmares through the Underworld, observing a mage fall from Wisdom in the Astral Realms, or chasing a changeling in the Hedge.

Chambers it links. In some Lairs, this can seem logical — for example, two Chambers resembling a hospital and a factory might manifest a Burrow as a road between them. Where the Chambers aren't so thematically similar, however, Burrows don't have to make any kind of sense. A Makara whose volcanic Chamber links to a back-alley Chamber can link them just as easily as any other connection, and the Burrow will adapt.

Every Chamber in a Beast's Lair has at least one Burrow, leading to another Chamber. Beasts may add additional Burrows by paying one Satiety each time, and may re-map any or all of their Burrows by spending a point of Willpower as long as no one is currently using the Burrows being changed. As with incorporating new Chambers, the Lair needs time to recover from being altered, however; Beasts can only redefine the connections in their Lairs once per chapter.

Brood Lairs

All Lairs are carved out of the Primordial Dream. All Horrors are, in some ways, the same Horror, just as all human souls are joined in the Bright Dream. Beasts often connect their Lairs together for mutual protection, companionship, or even to attack one another. The result is a brood Lair, a greater whole than the sum of its parts. Brood Lairs allow associated Beasts to use one another's Lair traits, greatly expanding the situations in which they may act at full power.

A brood Lair may result from two different scenarios.

First and most common is that by associating with another Beast for long enough, Beasts develop kinship to the other Begotten. This kinship isn't enough to create a new Chamber, but it can create Burrows. After spending a chapter in the company of another Beast (they don't need to be inseparable, just to interact meaningfully for the majority of the chapter) a Beast wanting to connect his Lair to the other may pay a point of Satiety instead of Willpower when redefining his Burrows. He may then define one Burrow in his Lair as connecting one of his Chambers to one of the other Beast's Chambers. Beasts not wanting their soul's privacy invaded may resist with a Clash of Wills by redefining their own Burrows, and may continue to try to pull the Lairs apart by making a Clash of Wills roll in any future redefinition.

Second and most intimate is that two Beasts can use the same location as a Chamber, either by both being present for a breaking point or both gaining an exceptional success with a Nightmare in the same scene, by one Beast coming along after the first has already left and meeting the prerequisites for Lair expansion in an independent event, or by finding the location and researching its history as described previously. In this case, the second Beast adds a Chamber in the usual way, but pays an extra point of Satiety to superimpose her Chamber over any already existing one in a different Lair based on the same location. The Chamber is treated as existing in both Lairs simultaneously; both Beasts may define Burrows to it, and by accessing one another's Burrows move deeper into the other Lair. This kind of brood Lair is both much more stable and secure than the first, as although the two Beasts can't pull away by redefining their Burrows, either Beast may decouple the Lairs by collapsing their version of the superimposed Chamber with no way for the other to affect their decision.

Accessing the Lair

An empty Lair is just a stage devoid of action, with the Beast's Horror wandering from Chamber to Chamber. The Horror is capable of acting independently, but Beasts can see

DRAWING THE LAIR

Large Lairs, especially brood Lairs with three or more Beasts connected, can become difficult to conceptualize, but when the Heroes break into your character's Lair you'll want to know exactly how the Chambers link up forming your inner defenses.

The simplest method is to draw the Lair out as a diagram. On a sheet of paper (such as the back of a character sheet) list the Chambers your character has incorporated into her Lair, enclosed in "bubbles." Then draw the Burrows as lines connecting them.

through the Horror's eyes and direct its actions at any time, or choose to vanish from the physical world entirely and fully inhabit their Primordial self.

Soul Communion

Even when acting in the physical world, a Beast is constantly aware of her Horror's Satiety and mood. She doesn't know exactly what the Horror is doing within the Lair, but feels its emotions mingling with her own; if intruders attack the Horror, her body surges with adrenaline as though she's in combat herself.

At any time, no matter where she is, a Beast can concentrate to experience the inside of her Lair from her Horror's perspective. This is a reflexive action to merely peek at the Lair, but *controlling* the Horror requires an instant action, such that she can't act independently in the material world. A Beast attacked in the material world while communing with her Horror loses her Defense.

Primordial Pathways

When acting in the Horror's stead isn't enough and a Beast wishes to target a human soul as her prey, when her Horror is so hungry it breaks its bonds, or when a Beast exploring kinship wishes to visit the realms wandered by her supernatural cousins, she utilizes a *Primordial Pathway*. The Pathways are connections between worlds, threaded through the Primordial Dream and touching all of the realms within the World of Darkness. Beasts — and some Heroes — can open the Pathways wide enough to slip through, stepping from world to world like moving between Chambers through a Burrow.

Beasts can't simply open Pathways between any realms they choose. As with many aspects of their Lair, it's the resonance, or similarity, between the Lair and somewhere else that affords access. Opening a Pathway to the exact location from which the Beast created a Chamber is easiest, but desperate Beasts and cunning would-be intruders can use similar locations by spending a point of Willpower during the attempt and incurring an additional dice penalty based on how well the location matches.

Pathways may be opened either from outside the Lair leading into it, or inside of it leading out to another world. Beasts can't, however, open Pathways without one "end" of the connection being the Lair. If a Beast doesn't know exactly where she wants to go, she can feel for and open a Pathway to somewhere random but still resonant within a specified world. The easiest Pathways lead from the Primordial Dream to the collective Astral Realm of humanity, the Temenos of human souls. More difficult Pathways lead to the material world, allowing Beasts and their guests to enter the Lair.

Opening Pathways is easier if the Beast first imposes Lair traits on the external end of the Pathway-to-be.

Dice Pool: Wits + Resolve

Action: Instant

Cost: 1 Willpower

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The attempt goes badly wrong and damages the Lair. The Chamber used for the Pathway loses all of its Burrows, isolating it from the rest of the Lair until the Beast can redefine them.

Failure: The Pathway does not open.

Success: The Pathway successfully opens and lasts for the opening character's Resolve in turns.

Exceptional Success: The Pathway successfully opens and lasts for the rest of the scene.

Suggested Modifiers:

Modifier	Situation
+1	The external end of the Pathway is the physical location corresponding to the Chamber in which the Beast is located.
+1	The external end of the Pathway is under the effect of a Lair Trait. Multiple Traits (including those imposed by the Beast by using Lair resonance) apply this bonus on a cumulative basis.
+1	The external end of the Pathway is in the Primordial Dream (e.g., another Beast's Lair, the nightmares of an unDevoured Beast, or an unclaimed Chamber.)
0	The external end of the Pathway is in the Temenos.
–1	The external end of the Pathway is in the Anima Mundi or Oneiros.
–2	The external end of the Pathway is in the Shadow, Hedge, or Underworld.
–3	The external end of the Pathway is in the material world (other than the area corresponding to the Chamber).
–3	The character has specified a world, but not a precise location.

Pathways aren't portals or magical doors. When opened, the Pathway causes the Chamber and the external location to "overlap." This causes Beasts to merge with their Horrors, as described on p. 99. Anyone in the external location attempting to leave while the Pathway is active instead finds themselves transitioning to another Chamber through one of the Lair's Burrows. Anyone still in the Chamber when the Pathway closes ends up in the external location. Collapsing a Chamber immediately closes any Primordial Pathways open to it.

Example: *A Tyrant Anakim has incorporated an abandoned high school as a Chamber in his Lair. On the run from a group of mortal monster-hunters (though not, thankfully, Heroes), he leads his pursuers into the school and opens the Primordial Pathway. For a few seconds, the interior of the school becomes both the material world and the Chamber in his Lair, and the Anakim immediately merges with his Horror. Faced by the hulking monster where their target once stood, the hunters panic. Two gird themselves and fight, while the third attempts to flee the school. While the Pathway is still open, however, she instead transitions through a Burrow into another Chamber. Killing one of the other hunters, the Anakim closes the Pathway – the school returns to normal, the Beast appears to transform back into his mortal body as he separates from his Horror again, and the remaining hunter who stayed returns as well. The hunter who left the Chamber, however, remains behind in the Lair, easy pickings for the Anakim's Horror.*

Invited and Uninvited Guests

Beasts aren't the only beings in the World of Darkness who can walk between worlds. Any supernatural being accessing the dreams or soul of someone inside the Lair can find themselves in the Primordial Dream, from changelings caught up when a Beast preys on a dream to mages exploring the astral realms when a Primordial Pathway opens. Other times, monsters deliberately break into the Lair from another world using their own powers or use an open Primordial Pathway. Most troubling are Heroes using the Open Gate Gift, breaking into the Lair to do battle with the Horror.

When a Beast approves of someone within the Lair and is deliberately allowing him access, he moves through the Lair with relative ease, compared to intruders. Chambers are affected by any Lair Trait the Beast wishes to use, and she can choose to protect any guest from any or all Lair Trait Tilts. The Beast may allow guests through any Burrow with a reflexive action.

Intruders, on the other hand, must cope with any Tilts in effect and have to force their way through Burrows by spending a point of Willpower and succeeding on an Intelligence + Resolve roll contested by the Horror's Power + Resistance (see below). Forcing one's way through a Burrow takes half the Beast's Lair (round up) in turns, during which time the intruder is still subject to any Tilts in the Chamber he is trying to leave. Heroes, of course, have ways to mitigate these difficulties (see Chapter Five).

Dream Form

At any given time, some visitors to a Beast's Lair may be physically present or in a dream state, depending on exactly how they gained access. Visitors or intruders using Primordial Pathways from anything other than the Primordial Dream are physically present, while characters whose nightmares touch the Primordial Dream (Beasts who have yet to undergo the Devouring, for example) are present in a dream state. Beasts exploiting Kinship with mages or changelings sometimes find themselves wandering the greater dream-realms beyond their Lairs, as well.

In the Storytelling system, a character projecting beyond their body in this way has a "Dream Form." While exploring realms away from their physical bodies, characters use slightly different rules for Attributes and Health.

Instead of the nine Attributes used by physical characters, characters in Dream Form use the three simplified traits of Power, Finesse, and Resistance. For human (and most supernatural) characters translating into Dream Form, these are equal to the mental traits — use Intelligence for Power, Wits for Finesse, and Resolve for Resistance.

Dream Health is not linked to Size as physical Health is, but instead to the determination and the potential of the dreamer. In game terms, this is Resolve + (the dreaming character's Attribute Maximum), which for humans is five but for supernatural beings usually increases when they reach high levels of their Supernatural Tolerance Trait. Beasts use the Attribute Maximum granted by Lair itself. For example, a Resolve 3, Lair 6 Beast has nine Dream Health. The last boxes of Dream Health impose wound penalties when filled just as physical Health does (p. 170). If the Beast merges with her Horror while either is injured, these injuries carry over to the merged Beast. If *both* are injured, the Beast carries only the most severe injury (so if the Horror had suffered two bashing damage and the Beast in human form had suffered two lethal and one bashing, the merged Beast would have two lethal and one bashing damage).

When a Dream Form character is "killed," he returns to his body with the Soul Shocked Condition (p. 325).

Inflicting Nightmares

If the Beast goes too long without indulging her Hunger, the Horror takes matters into its own hands, claws, or other appendages. The more powerful a Horror, the shorter the period of time it can go without being sated and the more brutal its attacks on dreamers. While the Beast sleeps, the Horror hunts.

Lair	Time at Starving	Time at Ravenous
1–3	1 week	1 day
4–6	4 days	6 hours
7–9	2 days	1 hour
10	1 day	immediate

If the time elapses without Satiety rising to 4 or higher, the starving Horror ventures out of the Lair through the Primordial Dream, searching for suitable prey while the Beast sleeps. Any humans (not supernatural beings) who are in a deep state of consciousness can fall prey to the Horror, within the Beast's Lair rating in miles. This does not *necessarily* mean dreaming individuals — it can, but it also includes people meditating, in comas, unconscious through injury, or on certain drugs. The Horror selects a target from those available at random and then attempts to enter his dream.

Dice Pool: Power + Lair – Composure

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Horror cannot penetrate the dreamer's mind and howls in rage and pain. Any Heroes in the same region as the Beast can track her, as described on p. 206.

Failure: The Horror inflicts dreams of its presence and Hunger on the targeted individual, but is not sated.

Success: The Horror inflicts dreams of its presence and Hunger on the targeted individual. He loses a point of Willpower while the Beast gains 1 Satiety. The target awakens feeling restless and disturbed, but (at least after *one* such dream), with no lasting damage.

Exceptional Success: The Horror, not satisfied with simple nightmares, seizes the targeted individual and drags him into

The Horror Itself

A Beast's Horror has a much larger, more potent presence within the Primordial Dream than others. The Horror uses the *highest* of the Beast's Strength, Presence, or Intelligence as Power; Dexterity, Manipulation, or Wits as Finesse; and Stamina, Composure, or Resolve as Resistance. In addition, the player gains a pool of points equal to (Lair x 2) to distribute between Power, Finesse, Resistance, and Size as she sees fit. Horrors have access to the Beast's Atavisms (but not Nightmares, which require more finesse than the Horror can manage). The Horror can use any aspect of an Atavism — normal, low Satiety, or Satiety expenditure, though the latter still requires spending Satiety. Also, the Beast counts as always being in a Lair-resonant location when acting inside the Lair.

When a Beast enters her own Lair (or a Lair connected to it as a Brood Lair) via a Primordial Pathway, she immediately merges with her Horror. She likewise instantly separates if she uses a Pathway to leave. The Horror itself only leaves the Lair (barring Inheritance; see **p. 234**) when Starving or Ravenous, and no power can force it to do so in other circumstances. When merged with the Horror, the Beast cannot choose to use the low Satiety version of her Atavisms unless her Satiety rating is actually low.

The balance to the Horror's great power is its vulnerability; unlike dream-walking prey, it is *wholly* present in the Lair. If the Horror is killed, it and its Beast actually die.

the Lair via a Primordial Pathway. The Horror then hunts down the individual and attempts to "kill" him. If he loses all Astral Health within the Lair, the Beast gains the victim's Willpower dots in Satiety. When the victim awakens, he has the Soul Shocked Condition (p. 325). Any Heroes in the region can attempt to track the Beast, as described in Chapter Five.

If the Horror's feeding does not raise Satiety to Medium, it feeds again after another interval. If no suitable prey is available, the Horror feeds on the first human in deep consciousness that comes into range.

Repeated Feeding

If a Horror feeds on a given target once, the target normally doesn't suffer any lasting ill effects. He has a nightmare — an intense one, granted, probably enough of a shock to merit some time holding a loved one, maybe even prompting him to reconnect with an estranged parent or something similar, depending on how he copes with fear. Even if the Horror drags the person into its Lair, the worst that happens, mechanically, is that the victim is out of Willpower for a few days. As long as he gets some rest, he'll be fine.

The problem comes when the Horror feeds lightly and the Beast doesn't pick up the slack. The Horror is a predator, and it goes for the easiest target it can find. It follows familiar "game trails," as it were, and hunts people it knows it can feed on. Left to its own devices, the Horror continues feeding on the same person, night after night. *This* can have consequences.

Every time a Horror feeds on the same person, the roll to enter the dream receives a +1 modifier. This eventually makes an exceptional success more likely, and thus, intervention from a Hero.

Beasts are aware of this phenomenon, of course, and while using it as a method to terrorize or punish a human enemy isn't encouraged (since it tends to attract Heroes), it's by no means unknown.

The Hive

Every hive has an Apex Trait (Lair Traits, including Apex Traits, are discussed beginning on p. 101). If the Apex Trait matches one of a Beast character's Lair Traits, *or* if the Apex of the city is a Beast and has granted the Beast immunity to that trait, the Horror has a greater area in which to roam when it hunts. Instead of (Lair) in miles, the Horror can wander throughout the hive in its search for sustenance. This doesn't prevent the Horror from visiting the same victim multiple times by itself, but the Beast can spend a point of Willpower before sleeping to "nudge" the Horror in a different direction, making sure it picks a new subject.

If the Beast has chosen to close her Lair off from the local hive, the Horror can only roam within (Lair/2) miles of the Beast's location when hunting.

Destroying the Lair

Intruders can collapse Chambers within a Lair, reducing their owner's capabilities and eventually cornering the Horror in its Heart. Collapsing a Chamber is a difficult process, during which the Beast will likely go on the counterattack. If the intruder is a Hero who is wielding Anathema, however, or if the Horror has been incapacitated, collapsing Chambers can be devastating or even deadly. Beasts wishing to close off an avenue of attack from a Hero sometimes collapse their own Chambers.

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Resolve

Action: Extended. Target number of successes is equal to three times the Beast's Lair rating for a Chamber, or five times the Lair rating for the Heart. If the Beast is conscious and resisting, the roll is also resisted by her Resolve. If the Beast is collapsing her own Lair, each roll gains a dice bonus equal to her Composure.

Time per Roll: The Beast's Lair rating in minutes.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Chamber is not collapsed, and the Beast rallies. The Beast regains all Willpower; the intruder loses all progress against the target number of successes.

Failure: The intruder makes no progress on collapsing the Chamber. He may give up or continue after taking a Condition. If the Beast was not aware of the presence of intruders within her Lair, she is now alerted.

Success: The intruder makes progress on collapsing the Chamber. If a Beast was not aware of the presence of intruders within her Lair, she is now alerted.

Exceptional Success: The intruder makes great progress on collapsing the Chamber. Choose one of the effects of exceptional success in an extended action (p. 158.)

When the target number of successes is reached, the Chamber begins to collapse. Anyone inside must access a Burrow within the Beast's Lair rating in rounds. Anyone still in the Chamber when it finally collapses is killed, or ejected if the Chamber has an open Primordial Pathway. Characters who are only present in the Chamber in Dream Form return to their bodies and suffer the Soul Shocked Condition.

A Beast attacking another Beast's Lair may instead steal a Chamber for his own use. If he has not added a Chamber this story and has a free slot, he may pay 1 Satiety while the Chamber is collapsing to add it to his own Lair. If a Chamber is stolen in this way, any characters in the victim's Chamber transfer into the aggressor's Lair, unless they use a Burrow while the victim's Chamber is collapsing.

Lair Traits

Every Beast's Lair is unique, an expression of her Primordial Self honed as hunting ground and sanctuary. By exploiting the Lair within herself, a Beast can cause the material world around her to take on some of its properties, with effects ranging from the subtle to the explosive.

Beast characters have a number of Lair Traits determined by their Lair rating (see the chart on p. 93). When the character gains Lair, the player can choose new Lair Traits as appropriate. These Traits are Environmental Tilts describing conditions within the Lair. For example, a kraken-form Makara might have the Lair Traits "Flooded" and "Freezing Cold."

Minor and Major Traits

Not all Lair Traits are equal — some are much more potent than others. Some evoke environments so extreme the Beast can never visit them in the material world. Lair Traits are divided into two types, Major and Minor. Every Beast must have at least one Minor Lair Trait, but the others can be any combination of Minor or Major.

Minor: Lair Traits are always possible in the physical world without the use of magic. They may provide dice penalties or bonuses to Skills, or count as Extreme Environments (see p. 171) up to level 2.

Major: Lair Traits may (but don't always) impose Tilts that aren't physically possible; anything from turning the skin of victims to salt to acidic rain. They may provide dice penalties or bonuses to Attributes or derived traits like Speed and Defense, or count as Extreme Environments up to level 4.

Imposing Traits

When a Beast finds himself in a situation outside the Lair where one or more of his Lair Trait Tilts is already in effect, the location is *resonant* with his Traits. While resonant, he may impose the effects of as many more of his Lair Trait Tilts as he wishes, up to the limit granted by his Lair rating within a single scene. At Lair 1, this limit is 1, so a starting **Beast** character may use the presence of either of her Tilts to cause the other.

Beasts may — and often do — create the initial Tilt through guile and manipulating the terrain, or capitalize on the powers of other supernatural beings. For example, a Makara with the Lair Trait of "downpour" may set off a sprinkler system to then use the resonance in order to impose her other Traits.

At the end of the scene, or when the Beast imposing them wishes to stop, the imposed Lair Traits vanish, though their aftereffects remain. For example, if a Namtaru whose Heart resembles the digestive tract of a gargantuan creature imposes the Corrosive and Flooded Traits to fill a room with acids, the damage to everything in the room remains when he stops imposing the Traits, without any trace of the corrosive liquid that caused it.

Environmental Immunity

The Minotaur is not confused by the labyrinth, and the ogre sees through his cave's darkness. Beasts are immune to the effects of any Environmental Tilt matching one of their Lair Traits, both those they impose and those occurring naturally. This does not confer supernatural powers for situations without a Tilt; an area might be cramped, but that doesn't mean that the Beast with the Lair Trait of "Cramped" can suddenly enter mouse holes like he could in his Lair. If he chooses to impose that Trait, of course, then he could, but would need to be careful not to leave the area covered by the Tilt while still mouse-sized.

Brood Lairs

A Beast whose Lair is part of a Brood Lair (that is, shares at least one Chamber with another Beast or has a Burrow crossing between their Lairs) may include one Trait from any other Beast in the brood when imposing Traits, either as the existing Trait used for resonance or one of those imposed. By spending a point of Willpower when imposing Lair Traits, a Beast may extend his Environmental Immunity to all other Beasts sharing a Brood Lair with him. The Beast *cannot*, however, grant immunity to naturally occurring manifestations of a Lair Trait. For example, a Beast's Lair might have the Darkness Trait. Since the Beast is immune to this Trait, she can see in natural darkness. If she imposes a Darkness Tilt on an area, she can extend her immunity to that Trait to her brood. If an area is just naturally dark, however, she is immune, but cannot extend that immunity.

Hive Traits

Every hive has a Hive Trait, chosen from the same list (or created by the Storyteller) as the Lair Traits. Every Chamber in the hive shares this trait, including any Chambers in the Lairs of Beasts within that hive. The Apex (if a Beast, or otherwise able to access the Primordial Dream) can use that trait to move in and out of any Chambers in the hive. Likewise, if the Apex grants a Beast immunity to the Hive Trait, or if the Hive Trait happens to match one of the Lair Traits of a Beast, that Beast can move throughout the hive with impunity. Only the Apex can impose a Hive Trait on the waking world, however (and again, only if the Apex is a Beast).

Chambers and Lair Traits

In a location used to create one of her Chambers, a Beast may pay a point of Satiety to impose *any* of her Lair Traits up to the limit of Traits per scene without needing the initial Tilt. As with opening a Primordial Pathway, Beasts may attempt to use a Chamber in locations that are similar, if not exactly the same, by spending a Willpower point. To impose Traits into a substitute location like this, the player must succeed on a Wits + Resolve roll, with a dice penalty based on how dissimilar the location used is.

Exact: The location is the same or is a near-perfect facsimile of that used to create the Chamber, down to its contents. Some Begotten with the means and resources to do so arrange for rooms or even whole buildings they've used as Chambers to be taken apart and rebuilt elsewhere. Using the exact location for a Chamber does not incur a dice penalty to opening a Primordial Pathway or imposing Lair Traits.

Spiritual similarity: The location is both physically similar to that used to create the Chamber, and shares the narrative role the Beast exploited to expand her Lair. Whichever of the prerequisites for expanding the Lair the Beast used, as described above, must apply in the new area. For example, an Eshmaki who has a Chamber formed in a pine forest when she stalked a lost hiker and shocked his soul with her Nightmares can attempt to open a Primordial Pathway in a *different* pine forest by recreating the hunt with a new victim. Spiritual similarity levies a –2 dice penalty.

Narrative similarity: As spiritual similarity, but lacking the confrontation with the Primordial Dream that allowed for the Chamber. For example, the Eshmaki is stalking a victim through

Choosing and Customizing Lair Traits

Many of the Traits listed here are suitable for cosmetic "re-skinning;" a Makara's entangling seaweed is just as much "undergrowth" as an Eshmaki's long grass. Players and Storytellers should decide how a Beast's Lair Traits manifest themselves.

Several Lair Traits also require mechanical customization. Is an Anakim whose Lair holds a meat-packing factory as a Chamber as cold, in terms of Extreme Environment levels, as a Makara who swims beneath the arctic ice and drags victims into the water? Consult the Extreme Environment table on **p. 171** when a Beast gains a new Lair Trait to decide what level her personal version of the Trait should be. Remember that in order to impose Lair Traits, at least one must be present (except in a Chamber). The Anakim will have a much easier time finding matching environments than the Makara, but the Makara's Trait will likely be much more potent.

the new forest, but does not gain an exceptional success on her Nightmare roll. Narrative similarity levies a –4 dice penalty.

Descriptive similarity: The Beast hasn't arranged for events to echo those she used to create the Chamber and is attempting to access her Lair based on material resemblance alone. The Eshmaki can't find any suitable prey but has to open the Pathway *now*, so she tries to use the fact that she's in a pine forest to call to her Chamber. Descriptive similarity levies a –5 dice penalty.

Minor Lair Traits

Blazing Light

Whether it's from sunlight reflecting off snow, sand, or water at just the right angle, the harsh light of a too-large sun in a desert Lair, or even incandescent terrain, the Lair is filled with light so bright it becomes painful to see. Affected characters suffer a –3 penalty to any rolls that rely on vision, and the pain and distraction causes a –1 penalty to any other rolls. Characters closing their eyes to avoid the pain suffer the Blinded Tilt in both eyes, but keeping their eyes shut in stressful situations may require a successful Resolve + Composure roll.

Blizzard

Visibility in the Lair is reduced to nearly nothing as clouds of particles, powder, or crystals are carrying in whirling winds. Despite the name, this Tilt does not necessarily mean snow, but represents any cloud of fine matter that impairs vision and blankets the ground in a thick layer that impedes movement, such as volcanic ash, ocean spray, or a sandstorm. Rolls involving seeing further than an arm's length (including ranged combat actions) suffer a –1 penalty, increasing by an extra –1 for every ten yards. Every four inches of powder on the ground applies a –1 dice penalty to rolls involving movement through it, including foot chases, Melee and Brawl combat, and Athletics rolls.

Cramped

The Lair features uncomfortably close quarters — narrow passageways, tight caves, crawlspaces or similar conditions. When taking this Lair Trait for a character, define a Size of character that can comfortably fit. All physical dice rolls are penalized by 6 minus the chosen Size dice. Maneuvering through tight spaces is also painfully slow. Speed is Strength + Dexterity only, with no species factor added.

Crosswinds

Sudden gusts of wind cut through the Lair. The wind isn't strong enough to move heavy objects (see the Hurricane Trait), but it can threaten characters climbing or trying to keep their balance on high surfaces. Physical dice rolls involving balance or movement (especially Athletics rolls) suffer a –3 penalty. Failure on the roll applies the Knocked Down Tilt.

Currents

Flowing liquid, air thermals, moving floors or invisible forces inexorably push characters along a route. When manifesting this Lair Trait, the player chooses the direction and strength of the currents, giving the latter a Strength rating of 1 to 5. Characters may resist the current's pull with a Strength + Athletics roll penalized by the current's Strength, but any who fail, cannot, or do not try to resist are carried by the flow with a Speed of the current's Strength x 5.

Downpour

Water, blood, or stranger liquids pour into the Lair, soaking everything and lashing at exposed characters. Although it stings, the downpour doesn't cause injury; the force of the elements is both loud and hard to see through. The downpour imposes a –3 dice penalty to rolls involving vision or hearing.

Echoing

Sounds within the Lair reverberate, making it virtually impossible to move silently and track others by sound. Dice rolls relating to aural perception or attempts to be quiet suffer a –3 dice penalty.

Extreme Cold

The Lair is so cold that it chills through to characters' bones, draining energy and numbing flesh. While under the effects of this Lair Trait, characters don't heal bashing damage without supernatural means, and even then only at half speed.

The Lair counts as a Level 2 Extreme Environment. After every hour being subjected to this Lair Trait, characters suffer a cumulative –1 penalty to all actions. When this penalty reaches –5, the Lair becomes a Level 3 Extreme Environment instead, meaning the injuries suffered become lethal damage.

Extreme Heat

Whether the oppressive heat in the Lair comes from geothermal vents, a blazing desert sun, molten rock, or virulent fever, characters subject to this Lair Trait quickly begin to suffer heatstroke, dehydration, or other debilitating symptoms. While under the effects of this Lair Trait, characters don't heal bashing damage without supernatural means, and even then only at half-speed. The Lair counts as a Level 2 Extreme Environment, but prolonged exposure worsens the effects. After every hour being subjected to this Lair Trait, characters suffer a cumulative –1 penalty to all actions. When this penalty reaches –5, the Lair becomes a Level 3 Extreme Environment instead, meaning the injuries suffered become lethal damage.

Flooded

Waist-high fluid or viscous material fills the Lair, making characters struggle for every step as they try to move through it. Whether it's mud, gore, dead insects, effluent, or simply water, the Lair Trait affects all Physical dice pools. Waist-high floods impose a –2 penalty to actions by characters wading through it. Deeper floods force characters to swim or hold their breath to progress through completely submerged areas.

Fog

Thick mist blankets the Lair, making everything within slick with moisture and dramatically reducing visibility. All visual Perception rolls and ranged attacks are penalized by 1 die per ten feet.

Jagged

Broken ground in the Lair poses both a trip hazard and potential injury to anyone falling. This Lair Trait can manifest as anything from strewn boulders, to animal warrens catching the feet of characters in the Lair, to ankle-height roots and sharp rocks. Physical dice rolls to keep a sure footing suffer a –2 dice penalty and apply the Knocked Down Tilt on failure. Characters falling suffer two points of bashing damage.

Maze

The terrain twists and turns without readily available landmarks, disorienting and confusing affected characters. The Lair might be a literal labyrinth, a branching cave system, or something less overtly maze-like but still effective such as a deep forest or marsh with shifting terrain. Characters attempting to trace their steps or find a way out of the area must succeed at an Intelligence + Composure roll with a 3 dice penalty.

Poor Light

Dim illumination, strobes, or flickering lights make it difficult to track movement and see clearly. Affected characters suffer a –2 penalty to visual-based Perception rolls, including ranged combat, rising to –3 at medium range and –4 at long range.

Sealed Exits

The Beast's victim can see freedom, but can't reach it. Doors are locked, windows won't break, alleys are gated, and bridges are broken. As long as the Lair Trait remains in effect, no mundane means of leaving the area will work. Supernatural means of escape provokes a Clash of Wills roll.

Slick

Whether by ice, grease, oil or some other lubricant, the surfaces in the Lair are slick. Anyone trying to keep footing to cross the affected area must move slowly. Halve the Speed of any character on the ice. Physical actions such as combat are also impeded by the Trait, with a –2 penalty to all rolls and Defense. Attempting to move at full speed doubles the dice penalty to –4 dice.

Steam

Hot steam fills the air, scalding anyone in the area and providing the Beast with cover. Steam clouds are a level 3 Extreme Environment, and anyone affected suffers a –2 penalty to rolls involving sight, including combat.

Supernatural Resistance to Lair Traits

Imposed Lair Traits aren't themselves supernatural abilities — the heat of a basilisk's Lair is part of the environment, with the *magic* involved being the basilisk's ability to flood locations in physical reality with that heat. The effects of Lair Traits are one step removed from the Beast, unlike Nightmares and Atavisms. Supernatural beings who would be immune to the effects of a Trait if it occurred naturally do not need to win a Clash of Wills or make a contested roll — their immunity carries on to imposed Lair Traits as well. For example, a vampire trapped in a room a Beast floods with water by imposing the "suffocating" Trait does not take damage. Although the flood waters arrived by decidedly unnatural means, they're still flood waters, and the vampire does not need to breathe.

The reverse is also true — nonhuman beings can suffer greater or unique debilitation or injury from a Lair Trait. A vampire caught in an imposed Trait representing blinding desert sunlight bursts into flames just as she would in "natural" sunlight, and creatures with keen senses may be overpowered or harmed by Traits such as Blinding Light, Thunderous, or Stench.

Stench

The area is filled with a foul smell, making victims gag and struggle to breathe. All physical rolls involving exertion are penalized by (5 – Composure) dice. Characters may ignore the penalty for a single roll by spending a point of Willpower. Supernatural creatures that do not breathe (such as most undead) are immune to this Trait's effect. Those with supernaturally strong senses of smell, however, suffer an increased effect; the dice penalty rises to (7 – Composure) dice.

Stinging

Mild toxins in undergrowth, chemicals, dust, or ash in the air, stinging insects, and the touch of some sea creatures can all irritate the skin and eyes of victims, impeding their efforts. The stinging or itching isn't enough to cause injury, but imposes a –1 dice "wound penalty" on all rolls as though the affected character were in the third-to-last box of Health. If a character's eyes are stung, the Trait imposes the Blindness Tilt for a Turn.

Swarms

Clouds of insects, swarms of vermin or a carpet of bugs fills the Lair, worming into open wounds and clogging up equipment. The swarm does no damage by itself (venomous swarms are represented by adding Stinging or Toxic) but double any wound penalties and reduce the dice bonus from complex equipment by 2.

Thin Air

The air in the affected area resembles that of a mountain top rather than sea level, making those inside gasp for breath with any exertion. All Physical rolls made for breathing characters are penalized by (Size – Stamina) dice. This Trait is a level 2 Extreme Environment.

Thunderous

Painfully loud noises in the Lair stun affected characters and leave them deafened. This Trait can represent anything from the roar of monsters, the thunderclap as lightning strikes, the bellowing noise of an industrial site, or any other source of harmful sound, as long as it's loud enough to injure a human (even if only temporarily). The player of a deafened character may only roll a chance die for Perception rolls based on hearing.

Undergrowth

Dense undergrowth provides cover for the Beast and entangles characters moving through it. When taking this Lair Trait, determine the Durability rating of the Undergrowth, which does not have to made of vegetation — many Beasts incorporate thick webs, strands of mucous, or even piled "man-made" items to get in their victim's way. Characters attempting to move through the undergrowth must succeed at a Strength + Athletics roll penalized by the undergrowth's Durability rating.

Unstable

What may seem like solid ground isn't — ice cracks, ship decks list to the side, bridges ripple as supports bend, and even bare earth shakes. Characters in the affected area must succeed at a Dexterity + Athletics roll or suffer a –3 penalty to all Dexterity-based rolls, including Defense. Failure at a penalized roll causes the Knocked Down Tilt, while Dramatic Failure may cause Immobilized.

Major Lair Traits

Burning

The Lair is engulfed in flame, whether in whole or part, burning anything combustible within the Chamber. To serve as a Lair Trait, a fire must be at least bonfire size **(see p. 172 for fire rules)** but a whole Chamber is usually an inferno. When this Trait is bought, the Beast's player specifies the Size and Intensity of the flames, which she must then match in order to use the Trait in Trait Imposition. Her environmental immunity, however, extends to all flames *up to* her Lair rating.

Corrosive

Whether it's a pool of acid, a corrosive atmosphere, or more overtly supernatural environments such as flash-rusting metal or organic matter slowly petrifying or turning to salt, something in the Lair eats away at flesh and degrades matter. The Beast's player defines what the corrosion affects based on the Lair's description. Affected characters suffer one aggravated damage per turn of exposure, and objects lose one Durability per turn.

Crushing

Some Lairs crush the life out of victims, whether by cave-in, constricting cables or vines, or the pressure of an ocean trench. This Trait is a level 4 Extreme Environment. Some forms of Crushing may allow Strength + Athletics rolls to break free.

Darkness

The Lair is pitch-dark beyond the capacity of human night-vision — the darkness of a cave or a sealed room, not simply night. Without a source of illumination, characters within the affected area suffer a –5 penalty to any rolls involving vision and lose all Defense.

Decayed

The material structure of the Lair is decayed and crumbling, posing a hazard to those inside. All items and structures (even the walls) within the affected area have their Durability reduced by 2 to a minimum of 0. Attacks against an item without Durability inflict all successes and weapon ratings against the item's Structure, but weapons themselves are not exempt from the decaying environment. Apply all damage done using a weapon to the weapon itself as well as to the target.

Diseased

Pestilence in the Lair sickens living beings inside. The Beast's player specifies whether the sickness is moderate or grave when choosing this Trait. A moderate sickness, like a bad flu, imposes a –1 penalty to all actions in combat, increasing by another –1 every two turns of exertion, to a maximum of –5. Grave sickness inflicts the dice penalties to actions, but also 1 point of bashing damage per turn of combat.

Disruption

The Lair denies affected characters the use of human tools — some versions of this Trait affect only electrical devices, while others prevent all complex machines from functioning; a rare few (especially in Ugallu Lairs) even snuff out fire. Affected equipment does not function as long as the Trait remains in effect.

Earthquake

The Lair shakes violently, ripping the ground apart and sending debris falling. All Dexterity-based dice pools and Defense suffer a –1 penalty cumulative penalty per turn of the earthquake, to a maximum of –5. Characters at risk of being struck by falling debris must make a reflexive Stamina + Athletics roll per turn. Success means they take two points of bashing damage or avoid harm altogether on an exceptional success. Failure inflicts two points of lethal damage instead.

Engulfing

Quicksand, thick mud, or more overtly supernatural environments such as human-sized carnivorous plants or grasping tendrils threaten to swallow and immobilize characters in the Lair. Affected characters are incapable of moving, cannot apply Defense and may not make combat-related actions, but may attempt to pull free with a Strength + Athletics roll with a dice penalty equal to their own Size.

Electrified

The Lair features electrical hazards — bio-electrical stings, live rails, electrified fences, or simply lightning. When this Trait is bought, the Beast's player defines whether the Trait represents Major, Severe, or Fatal levels of electricity as per the rules on **p. 171**. To use this Trait as the initial Trait in Trait Imposition, she must match the appropriate severity. Her environmental immunity applies to sources of electricity *up to* the Trait's severity.

Exposed

Victims in this Lair find no safety in hiding from the Beast, as his attacks pass through any barrier they try to put between them. No affected character receives the benefits of Cover in combat — assume that the Cover's Durability is 0 as long as the Lair Trait remains in effect.

Heavy

Gravity in the Lair exerts a stronger than usual pull, increasing the weight of characters and their equipment. Physical exertion becomes extremely tiring — players must succeed at a Strength + Stamina roll, penalized by one die per dot of Size above 5, or their characters suffer a –3 penalty to all Physical dice pools. Success prevents the penalty for the character's Stamina in turns, or for the scene in an exceptional success.

Hurricane

Terrible winds rip through the Lair, tearing loose objects up and pummeling anyone exposed. The winds are a level 3 Extreme Environment, representing the injuries caused by small airborne objects, but they also impose a –3 dice penalty to aural Perception rolls and all Physical dice pools. Characters within the affected area may also be at risk from larger pieces of debris. If so, the player must make a reflexive Stamina + Athletics roll per turn without protective shelter. Success means the character suffers two points of bashing damage or avoids harm altogether on an exceptional success. Failure inflicts two points of lethal damage instead.

Mirages

Ranging from heat-shimmer to openly supernatural illusions, visual distortions and hallucinatory images distract and confuse characters within the affected area. Characters affected suffer a –3 dice penalty to visual Perception rolls including the roll to avoid Surprise in combat. Successfully telling illusion from reality and avoiding the effects of the Tilt requires a Wits + Composure roll at a –3 penalty, but removes the visual dice penalty for as many turns as successes, or for the scene on an exceptional success.

Noxious Gasses

The air in the affected area is filled with dangerous gases. Some forms of this Trait combine with the Fog Trait representing visible clouds, while others are invisible. Either may also combine with Stench. Unless characters in the area have breathing equipment or a supernatural nature that means they don't have to breathe (for example, a vampire), they must hold their breath or suffer one lethal wound per turn in which they breathe the gas.

Suffocating

Rather than a harmful atmosphere as in Noxious Gases, a Suffocating Lair simply lacks oxygen altogether. It may represent the impossible heights of a mountain, the depths of a sealed cave, or simply be underwater. No matter how the trait manifests itself, characters staying within the affected area beyond their ability to hold their breath begin suffocating or drowning as per the rules on p. 328.

Razored

Beyond the broken terrain in Jagged Lairs, a Razored Lair turns surfaces into deadly weapons — blades, broken glass, razorwire, barbs, thorns, or other sharp protrusions pose a hazard to characters within the affected area. Pushing through the sharp surfaces or falling against them inflicts 3 points of lethal damage. Players of characters attempting to safely navigate through the barbs must succeed at a Dexterity + Composure roll; failure means the character suffers the damage.

Rotting

Food spoils rapidly in the Lair, with mold blooming and liquid souring. Untreated wounds quickly fester, and the atmosphere seems to sap the energy out of characters. Healing times are tripled while under a Rotting Lair's influence, and the first point of Willpower regained by a character within the affected area is lost.

Toxic

Something in the Lair — food, water, the bites and scratches of wildlife, even a sickly sheen to metallic surfaces — is highly poisonous and threatens characters coming into contact with its method of transmission. When the player chooses this Trait, she defines a Toxicity Rating and Time Interval for the poison. The poison inflicts damage as described on p. 172. In the exertion of combat, the toxin inflicts the Poisoned Tilt (p. 322).

Viscous

Swamp, mud, deep snow, or some kind of adhesive coats the Lair and makes movement extremely difficult. While this Trait is in effect, no character or creature adds her species factor to Speed. The player of a character struggling to move faster may make a reflexive Stamina + Strength roll and add its successes to Speed for a turn (to a maximum of the character's Speed species factor, i.e. 5 for a human.)

Examples of Lair Construction

He served on a Russian submarine before his Devouring, and lay awake at night thinking of the terrible pressure and dark water all around his fragile world. He dreamt of tentacled *things* in the deep, wrapping themselves around the metal shell of his vessel, until he realized that the creature in the depths was him. The Makara's Horror takes the form of a sea monster attacking a submarine, rupturing its hull and feeding from the panic of the dreaming sailors as water flood the ship. His Lair contains the Flooded, Downpour, Thin Air, and Sealed Exits Traits.

She seeks out those who victimize others, catches them with her surprising strength, and renders them unconscious. It's not enough to be stronger than those who use their strength against the weak — this minotaur has a sense of *justice*. Her prey wake to find themselves in pitch-darkness, her mocking voice telling them that if they can find their way out, they can go free. When they put their hands to the walls to guide themselves, stumbling in the dark, they slice their palms on the glass and nails studding the maze. The labyrinth is impossibly large; they die of blood loss long before they see daylight. The minotaur feels their fear, desperation, and final, sad resignation as they die alone in the dark, taking a measure of satisfaction along with sating her hunger. The Anakim's Lair contains the Maze, Razored, and Darkness Traits.

Satiety

Beasts *hunger*. The Horror doesn't just want sustenance. It wants to feast. Beasts hunger for power, or violence, or possession, like the monsters they are. Their Hungers aren't biological urges, but jealous, vicious needs. Beasts strive to teach their victims something, but deep down, they know that this is merely something they do to give context to their feeding. The Horror doesn't care about the lesson. All it cares about is Satiety.

When Satiety is high, the Horror grows complacent. When it's low, the Horror runs rampant and demands more. Satiety fluctuates wildly, and each of the different potential ranges has advantages and drawbacks. The answers to the five questions listed during character creation (p. 80) determine starting Satiety, but this number quickly changes in play. Players expend Satiety to power Nightmares and Atavisms, to activate certain Kinship effects, and to build new Chambers in the Lair. Satiety also depletes over time — the bigger a Beast's Lair, the faster it hungers.

Raising Satiety

Satiety increases when the character fulfills her Hunger. As Satiety falls, the Horror becomes less picky but more demanding. A sated Horror needs less, but its tastes grow refined and temperamental. When the Horror hungers, the Beast becomes obsessed with finding and devouring. When it's fully sated, it can go into hibernation, making the Beast nearly human.

Levels of Satiety

Satiety is measured in dots and has a rating of 0 to 10. It is further divided into five levels.

- **Zero Satiety:** A Beast at zero Satiety has nothing but its Hunger and will not rest until fed. The Beast has the Ravenous Condition.
- **Low Satiety:** Characters with one to three dots of Satiety have the Starving Condition. The Hunger isn't far from the surface, but this keeps the character focused and dangerous. Atavisms are more effective at this level.
- **Medium Satiety:** Characters with four to six dots of Satiety have the Sated Condition. Such a Beast can feed its Hunger, but the Horror isn't hungry enough to be concerned with its survival and can afford to be choosy about its meal. Medium Satiety is a dangerous place for Beasts to be — it makes them soft and distracted, perfect targets for Heroes.
- **High Satiety:** Characters with seven to nine dots of Satiety have the Gorged Condition, and will only consume exactly what the Horror wants at that moment. Feeding is difficult and dangerous, as the Horror is close to slumber. Nightmares are more effective at this level.

- **Maximum Satiety:** Characters with ten dots of Satiety gain the Slumbering Condition. Their Horrors slumber, and they can hardly be considered Beasts. The Beast must take drastic measures to rouse its Horror back to wakefulness.

Feeding

Beasts feed by satisfying their Hungers. Doing so can be as simple as a Tyrant shoving a victim up against a wall and screaming in his face, or as elaborate as a Ravager slowly dismantling a victim's life, piece by piece, until he's either completely ruins or he breaks off contact with the Beast. In either case, the moment of feeding happens when the victim experiences the *shock*.

The shock happens at the moment where a victim realizes what is happening. If he learns a lesson, the shock is the instant in which it crystalizes. Beasts liken the shock to the moment when one awakens, startled, from a nightmare — a moment that every Beast is well familiar with, having experienced it many times before the Devouring. This comparison is not completely apt, however; a victim can also experience the shock at the moment of death.

Shock is not dissimilar to a breaking point for Integrity (see p. 155) insofar as it impacts the victim's soul. A shock *can* be a breaking point, but it doesn't need to be. The important thing is that the victim's unconscious response impacts the Primordial Dream, strengthening the Horror.

The Storyteller determines the Satiety potential of the feeding using the following guidelines. First, determine the base potential depending on how much effort the feeding is. Examples follow, depending on the type of consumption in question. Then, apply modifiers to that amount based on quantity and preference. These are all up to Storyteller discretion; more challenging prey should trend higher; things the character can simply stumble upon should trend lower. If something was disproportionately hard to come across, the Storyteller should add 1 or 2 to the Satiety potential.

Under no circumstances will the Satiety potential increase above ten dice.

Base Potential	Examples
1	A simple, easily found method of fulfilling the Hunger, something the Beast put no time or effort into (low Satiety examples below).
3	A more elaborate or complex example, something requiring at least a scene of preparation or pursuit (moderate Satiety examples below).
5	A highly complex example, something the Beast has tracked or set up over the course of at least one chapter (high Satiety examples below).

Modifier	Circumstances
+4	Victim died
+3	Particularly abundant consumption in the scene
+2	Multiple instances in a scene
+2	The meal fulfills an Aspiration for the Beast
+1	Unique example
+1	Fitting with your Beast's specific preferences
+1	Hunt required an extended chase
+1	Feeding in your Lair
+1	The meal directly relates to an Aspiration
+1	Spent Satiety in the hunt
–1	Meal does not fit with the Beast's specific preferences
–1	Target is a supernatural being and Beast has Family Ties with another being of the same type
–2	Target is a supernatural being with whom the Beast has Family Ties
–2	Someone else procured the meal for you

Note that these are general guidelines. Storyteller discretion is advised; any relevant, relative consumption should be considered for Satiety raises. Sometimes, Merit purchases can constitute Satiety increases. For example, a Tyrant may gain Satiety when purchasing the Status, Allies, or even Contacts Merits under the right circumstances. As Storyteller, favor allowing Satiety increases over denying them.

If the Satiety potential is equal to or higher than the Beast's current Satiety level, the player rolls the Satiety potential as a dice pool.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The meal is oddly unfulfilling; the Horror turns up its nose. The Beast loses one dot of Satiety and must feed by the end of the chapter or lose another.

Failure: The Horror feeds but takes no joy in the meal. The character gains no Satiety.

Success: The Horror revels in its feast. Gain one dot of Satiety for every success gained. Note, however, that the player cannot choose to take *less* Satiety than the successes indicate.

Exceptional Success: The Horror joyously gorges itself. If the successes on the feeding roll take the Beast to Satiety 10, the player can choose to remain at Satiety 9 instead.

This roll always occurs at the end of a scene. The Horror prefers to savor its meal. Also, even if a Beast indulges her Hunger more than once in a scene, the player makes only one roll, based on the highest Satiety value consumed (though the Storyteller should add modifiers for excess, as indicated in the chart). Alternatively, with an instant action and a Willpower

point, a Beast can "force" Satiety to process, to digest early. This allows for a Satiety replenishment roll mid-scene, but halves the total successes rolled, rounding down — the Horror doesn't like being rushed.

The Hungers

Every Beast has its Hunger, and within that Hunger, its own peculiar predilections. A Beast's Horror eats better when the Beast feeds it what it really likes, but a feast is a feast. The descriptions of the Hungers below give examples for what might constitute a high, medium, and low Satiety potential meal. The Storyteller is, of course, the ultimate judge of how where a particular repast falls.

Hoard

A *Collector* hungers for things. He wants one specific type of thing and will hunt it to the ends of the Earth. He may hunger for wealth, art, gold, antiques, lovers, ancient texts, or whatever else he may wish to hide away in his Lair. A Collector likely maintains numerous hoards, spread out and hidden away from prying eyes. Some Collectors catalogue their findings and meticulously organize them. Some simply toss them in a room and lock the door; the hunt is the beginning and end of their care for the item. The moment of shock comes when the person who owned or cared for the item before realizes it is gone.

High Satiety: The Collector must hunt for rare, very specific examples of his desire. He can't settle for any blonde man as a lover; he needs a blonde virgin with a large birthmark on his ass, a soprano voice, a boyish stutter, and who would be outraged by the Beast's seduction.

Moderate Satiety: At moderate Satiety, not any example will do. This level requires some degree of refinement. A rare book collector can't just raid the local library if moderately Sated, but he might be sated by a local author's personal proof copy of her newest novel with editing marks and notes in the margin.

Low Satiety: The Collector can seek out anything that generally fits within the scope of his desire. A Collector who hoards gold can walk into any jewelry shop and steal (but not buy) something, or mug an upper-middle-class person to take the ring she wears, and walk away sated.

Power

A Tyrant fulfills her hunger by establishing hierarchies with her at the top. This power is often, but not always, established through physical force. A Beast has an inherent advantage in that field, so it's a common tool for grasping power. Many of the Begotten join and climb the ranks of social, political, and corporate organizations for the opportunity to one-up rivals and fulfill this Hunger. For Power to apply, the Beast must make a clear show of dominance and receive recognition of that dominance. The moment of shock comes when that dominance is made clear to those weaker than the Beast.

High Satiety: The Tyrant must consume power in a large scale or superlative form. Becoming president of a major company could apply, as could besting a known and feared werewolf in single combat. A Beast might create a position of new power or take power that already exists.

Moderate Satiety: Moderate-level Satiety requires a reasonable but undeniable exertion of influence and shift of power dynamic to sate. Getting a promotion, convincing an intern to work without pay, or starting and winning a bar fight against multiple (human) combatants could all apply. Blackmailing an influential person would count at this level.

Low Satiety: Any show of power applies for a low Satiety meal. Namedropping to convince a police officer to give a warning instead of a traffic ticket might apply, or convincing a small-press publisher to stop hiring a freelance writer due to his inflammatory political views. Shouting or staring someone down, or even just threatening to punch them if they don't shut up would also apply.

Prey

A Predator hunts living things. This can be a literal, "feasting on flesh" level hunt or a symbolic one, such as a bounty hunt, a character assassination, or uncovering something long lost to history. To constitute Prey, the hunt must include some form of investigation, pursuit, harrying, and takedown. With those three elements in place, the Horror can be sated.

Predation in this sense can never be a passive endeavor; it must be highly engaged, with the Beast taking an active role. Note that the Beast does not have to kill her prey, but she does need to harm it in some way — drawing blood, stealing and smashing something of value, or damaging the target's social life are all possibilities. (That said, the Horror is, as always, happier if the Beast *does* kill.) The moment of shock comes when the prey realizes that he has been caught and that the Beast is responsible.

High Satiety: For high Satiety, a Beast must hunt challenging prey that could kill or otherwise best her if she's not careful. It's also prey that has a distinct self-defense instinct, who can evade competently, and who can hide from anything short of a massive effort. Hunting supernatural beings is one way to reach this level of Satiety, as is hunting a very wealthy or famous human target.

Moderate Satiety: The Beast must hunt things that pose some challenge, but aren't necessarily deadly threats outside of fringe circumstances. Most competent humans fall into this scale.

Low Satiety: Almost any target counts for this level of Satiety. If she wants flesh or blood, any human willing to put up a fight or give chase will do. It doesn't matter if the prey poses any significant challenge or risk. Even an animal target can sate the Horror at this level.

Punishment

A Nemesis must punish transgression, but her criteria are typically vague or subjective. The Beast isn't interested in justice necessarily. Her view isn't "an eye for an eye" so much as "an eye for a sidelong glance." The transgression doesn't matter as

far as the feast is concerned. What matters is how elaborate the Nemesis' punishment is. In order to feed the Horror, the target needs to know his crime. If the Nemesis simply kills or harms him, she's not a Nemesis at all. The moment of shock comes when the target understands his crime and the punishment in context. He doesn't have to accept what he did as wrong or feel remorse, however.

High Satiety: For high Satiety, a Beast lingers over the punishment. Death traps, long sessions of torture, systematically hunting down and crippling the target's friends, or socially isolating the victim by turning his friends against him all count. The delicate balance here is making sure the target survives long enough to know *why* he's being punished.

Moderate Satiety: For moderate Satiety, the punishment is a little more direct. The Beast might stab her target, explain his crime, and then watch, impassive, as he tries to call for help. She might frame him for a low-grade felony; maybe he'll beat it and maybe he won't, but his time in the justice system will be punishment enough. It doesn't have to be so severe; the Beast might punish an adulterer by showing her crime to her spouse. The Beast needs to put forth some effort to punish the victim, but doesn't have to cause injury or protracted suffering.

Low Satiety: For low Satiety, the punishment is simple, blunt, and forceful. A severe beating, the destruction of something close to the target, or even a forceful warning (perhaps backed up with use of a Nightmare) is enough to sate the Horror.

Ruin

A Ravager hunts for annihilation. She aims to destroy that which others value, or at least take for granted. The connection to people determines how fulfilling the destruction is. Something one person cherishes is somewhat valuable, but something recognized by a large swath of the population as important is significantly more so. The Horror sates itself on the feeling of breaking the world, and on the tears of those who must watch that world crumble. The moment of shock comes when the target(s) see the destruction the Beast has wrought.

High Satiety: For high Satiety, the destruction must be obvious and extensive, or the target must be widely accepted to be valuable or in use by many people. A Beast could destroy a large swath of property and then feast on the feelings of horror as the pictures go viral. She could kill a beloved celebrity, or smash a religious artifact.

Moderate Satiety: The item destroyed must be extremely important to at least a small group of people. The Beast might burn down a church (doing so with the congregation inside is actually *not* preferable, because then not as many people mourn the loss of the church), kill a local character that the neighborhood knows and loves, or smash all the windows of all the cars in a particular garage.

Low Satiety: For low Satiety, if it bleeds, it works. If someone is hurt significantly in a way they'll remember for at least a week, it's enough. If the destruction is enough to a family cry — burn a car, kill a pet, cut down an old tree — the Horror can feed. The Beast doesn't have to remain anonymous, but doing so keeps the focus on the destruction, rather than the destructor (and, obviously, keeps the authorities off her tail).

Example of Gaining Satiety

Mrs. Winters, Magda's character (detailed starting on p. 83), is running a little low — she's only got two dots of Satiety and she'd rather not risk becoming Ravenous. She Hungers for Punishment, and her particular favorite flavor is punishing those who harm the children in her neighborhood. As it happens, Halloween was last week, and she noted a local frat boy named Brent snatching bags of candy from some of the youngsters.

Magda decides Mrs. Winters doesn't need to be subtle or elaborate about her punishment, not this time. She breaks into Brent's house while he's away and notes that he's got a bunch of candy on his coffee table. She grabs a few soft candies and injects them with a mild poison — nothing fatal, but enough to make the bully very ill. She lurks upstairs for a while and waits until she hears him start to retch. She then creeps up behind him with a thick plastic bag (one of the bags of candy he stole from a child) and holds it over his face until he nearly blacks out. As he lies there panting, she whispers, "Now you behave. We see what you do on All Hallow's Eve, and *we remember*."

Just to drive the point home, she uses the You Deserve This Nightmare on Brent, and Magda is delighted to see that she's rolled an exceptional success! That means that if the house is dark enough to match the Darkness Lair Trait of Mrs. Winters' Lair, Magda can spend a dot of Satiety and turn this place into a new Chamber. She decides to do so; she likes the idea of having an inhabited house as a Chamber, and she doesn't care if her Horror inflicts nightmares on Brent (this might wind up attracting Heroes, of course, and Brent can probably help point them to Mrs. Winters if they ask the right questions...).

At the end of the scene, Magda and Orson, the Storyteller, figure out the Satiety roll. The base potential is 3 (Mrs. Winters had to do some preparation, but it didn't take more than a scene). She adds one because the act fits with Mrs. Winters' particular proclivities, and another because it relates to one of her Aspirations ("protect the children in the neighborhood"). Finally, since she spent Satiety to add a Chamber, she asks Orson if that counts as spending Satiety on the hunt. He agrees that it does, and also has her add one die because incapacitating Brent with a trick-or-treat bag was a really nice touch. Her Satiety potential is now seven dice. Magda rolls and gets three successes, meaning her Satiety is now 4 (she started at 2, spent one during the scene, and then added three). She resolves the Starving Condition (and thus takes a Beat) and replaces it with Sated.

Losing Satiety

Beasts expend energy, just as all living things do. The Children must be careful to feed frequently enough to maintain themselves, but not so frequently that their Horrors fall into slumber.

Characters can lose Satiety in the following ways:

Activating Powers

Individual Nightmares and Atavisms feature options for expending Satiety. Each is unique and has its own costs and effects. You can find these in the Nightmare and Atavism descriptions. As well, if an effect reduces Satiety, it'll be mentioned in its description.

Changing the Lair

Creating a new Chamber or rearranging Burrows within a Lair costs one point of Satiety, as described on p. 94.

Healing

While in her Lair, merged with her Horror, the Beast can expend Satiety to heal. The systems for this are explained in Chapter Four (p. 170).

Time

Beasts lose Satiety over time. The Storyteller can choose to represent this in one of two ways, depending on her needs for the story and what the players enjoy.

The first way is simply to state that a Beast loses a dot of Satiety once per [interval]. If the Beast loses a point of Satiety each week, and the story lasts for three weeks, then once per week of game time the player spends a dot. The player should spend the dot at roughly the same time and day each week, to represent the character's ongoing effort and energy expenditure.

The interval for Satiety expenditure is based on Lair.

Lair Rating	Satiety Interval
1–3	Weekly
4–6	Every three days
7–9	Every 48 hours
10	Every day

This method works well for Storyteller characters and for player-controlled characters that aren't present in every chapter.

The second way of tracking Satiety loss relies more on the character's role in the story and her level of activity. For each dot of Lair that a character possesses, the Storyteller may, once per story, offer the player a Beat to lose a dot of Satiety (meaning that for a character with Lair 3, the Storyteller can make this offer three times per story). This reflects the character feeling hungry, even if the player didn't have to spend Satiety to activate a power or achieve an effect. If the player accepts the offer, the character loses a point of Satiety and the player marks a Beat. If the player refuses, the character doesn't lose the Satiety, but it still counts as one of the offers that the Storyteller can make per story. The Storyteller should use this method to create drama for the characters, to manipulate their Satiety levels to make situations more dangerous, and to give intense or difficult scenes a "cost" in terms of effort and energy, even if the character didn't have to spend Satiety for a game effect.

At the Storyteller's discretion, players can request the Satiety offer if they find a dramatically appropriate moment in the story (or if they just want to pick up a Beat; nothing says the Storyteller has to agree).

If this offer would cause a character to resolve a Satiety Condition (dropping the character from Satiety 4 to Satiety 3, for instance), the player marks two Beats, one for the Condition and one for the offer. The Storyteller cannot make this offer if the character has the Slumbering Condition.

Effects of Satiety

The effects of Satiety come in two forms. First, every Beast has a single Satiety Condition at a given time: Slumbering, Gorged, Sated, Starving, or Ravenous. These Conditions provide a few persistent effects and award Beats for certain behaviors. Second, Satiety levels can play into certain supernatural abilities and dice pools. For example, a power might cause more harm to a hungry Beast than a sated one. These effects are noted individually. Satiety also has an effect on Anathemas.

Note that Satiety Conditions resolve only when Satiety increases or decreases into a level fitting another Condition. These resolutions give Beats like normal Conditions. As Persistent Conditions, though, they also grant a Beat whenever their Beat criteria are fulfilled. A Beast always has one Satiety Condition.

All of the Satiety Conditions are described in the Appendix, beginning on p. 320.

Merits

Merits reflect aspects of your character that are both important to the narrative, and beyond the scope of Attributes, Skills, and Skill Specialties. These are items relating to your character's background, her ties to other people and organizations in the world, and unique knacks she may possess.

A starting **Beast** character has ten dots of Merits (unless she spends them to raise her Lair rating). Additional Merits can be purchased with Experiences at a cost of one Experience per dot.

Some Merits have multiple dot ratings. This reflects greater effects, such as higher dice pool modifiers. In some cases, Merits allow for different actions at each dot rating. These are called Style Merits. You purchase one dot and then the next in order, each costing one Experience. For example, if a Fighting Style Merit has five dots and you've invested three Experiences (or three of your starting dots), you have access to the special options, abilities, and advantages in the first, second, and third dots. Another Experience will unlock the fourth, and a fifth Experience allows access to the whole Merit.

Unless otherwise noted, your character can use multiple abilities in a single Style Merit at the same time. Some Style Merits require your character to sacrifice Defense or another trait; you cannot sacrifice the same trait twice at the same time.

So for example, two Style abilities that require you to each sacrifice your Defense can never be used in the same turn, since you can only sacrifice Defense only once.

Some Merits have prerequisites listed. Your character must possess the relevant trait at an unmodified level in order to purchase it. For example, if a power increases Strength, those dots do not apply toward Merit prerequisites. If the prerequisites list "Beast," it's only available to Beast characters. A Hero could not have that Merit, for example. At Storyteller discretion, other supernatural characters in your game may purchase some of these Merits to reflect their kinship with the Primordial.

If a Merit lists being "Advanced" or "Epic," it's a supernatural extension of a mundane Merit. This requires the mundane version of the Merit to be purchased first. Most such Merits require your character to be a Beast, but that's noted in their prerequisites.

Sanctity of Merits

Merits reflect aspects of your character but are an out-of-game resource. For example, your character may have friends, but you can choose to spend Experiences or Merit dots to purchase the Allies Merit. This gives those friends a direct effect in the game and cements those points as sanctified. If something happens to a character's friends, specifically supporting cast not represented by Merit dots, the story goes on and nothing happens in terms of game mechanics. If something happens to Allies, however, those points are not lost. The Allies dots disappear but you receive Experiences equal to the dots lost. This is called the Sanctity of Merits rule.

If your character loses a Merit, you may repurchase it in the next chapter of your chronicle. You can't just say, "All right, my Allies died. I'm buying new Allies to call." You'd have to wait until the next chapter. Alternatively, you can spend those Experiences on other traits that are relevant to the situation. Maybe losing those Allies inspired a few trips to the firing range to let off steam, so you spend those points on a dot of Firearms.

Allies (• to •••••)

Effect: Allies help your character. They might be friends, employees, associates, or people your character has blackmailed. Each instance of this Merit represents one type of ally. This could be in an organization, a society, a clique, or an individual. You can take this Merit multiple times to represent different Allies. For example, your character may possess Allies (Police) •••, Allies (Organized Crime) ••, and Allies (Church) •.

Dots in this Merit reflect greater relationships and access. Work with the Storyteller to determine just what your character's dots mean, and what she can request from her Allies reasonably.

When requesting help from Allies, the Storyteller assigns a rating between 1 and 5 to the favor. A character can ask for favors that add up to her Allies rating without penalty in one chapter. If she extends her influence beyond that, her player must roll Manipulation + Persuasion + Allies with a penalty equal to the favor's rating. If the roll is successful, the group does as requested. Failed or successful, the character loses a dot of Allies (but Sanctity of Merits applies).

Alternate Identity (•, ••, or •••)

Effect: Your character has established an alternate identity. The level of this Merit determines the amount of scrutiny the identity can withstand. At one dot, the identity is superficial and unofficial: a simple but consistent costume, alias, and accent. It won't hold up to any kind of official scrutiny, but it's also easy to replace. At two dots, she's supported her identity with paperwork and identification. It's not liable to stand up to extensive research or Federal investigation, but it'll turn away private investigators and internet hobbyists. At three dots, the identity can pass thorough inspection. The identity has been deeply entrenched in relevant databases.

The Merit also reflects the time the character has spent honing the persona. At 1 or 2 dots, she adds 1 die to all Subterfuge rolls to defend the identity. At 3 dots, she adds 2.

This Merit can be purchased multiple times, with each time representing an additional identity.

Anonymity (• to •••••)

Prerequisites: Cannot have Fame.

Effect: Your character lives off the grid. This means purchases must be made with cash or falsified credit cards. She eschews identification. She avoids any official authoritative influence in her affairs. Any attempts to find her by paper trail suffer a –1 penalty per dot purchased in this Merit.

Drawback: Your character cannot purchase the Fame Merit. This also may limit Status purchases, if the character cannot provide sufficient identification for the roles she wishes to take.

Area of Expertise (•)

Prerequisite: Resolve •• and one Skill Specialty

Effect: Your character is uncommonly specialized in one area. Choose a Specialty to assign to this Merit. Forgo the normal +1 bonus afforded by a Specialty in exchange for a +2.

Barfly (••)

Prerequisite: Socialize ••

Effect: Your character is a natural in the bar environment and can procure an open invitation wherever she wishes. Whereas most characters would require rolls to blend into social functions where they don't belong, she doesn't; she belongs. Rolls to identify her as an outsider suffer her Socialize as a penalty.

Common Sense (•••)

Effect: Your character has an exceptionally sound and rational mind. With a moment's thought, she can weigh potential courses of action and outcomes.

Once per chapter as an instant action, you may ask the Storyteller one of the following questions about a task at hand or course of action. Roll Wits + Composure. If you succeed, the Storyteller must answer to the best of her ability. If you fail, you get no answer. With an exceptional success, you can ask an additional question.

- What is the worst choice?
- What do I stand to lose here?
- What's the safest choice?
- Am I chasing a worthless lead?

Contacts (•)

Effect: Contacts provide your character with information. This Merit represents a sphere or organization with which the character can garner information. Contacts do not provide services, only information. This may be face-to-face, email, by telephone, or even by séance in some strange instances.

Garnering information via Contacts requires a Manipulation + Social Skill roll, depending on the method the character uses and the relationship between the characters. The Storyteller should give a bonus or penalty depending on how relevant the information is to that particular Contact, whether accessing the information is dangerous, and if the character has maintained good relations or done favors for the Contact. These modifiers should range from –3 to +3 in most cases. If successful, the Contact provides the information.

You may purchase this Merit multiple times to reflect different sources.

Danger Sense (••)

Effect: Your character's reflexes are honed to the point where nothing's shocking. You gain a +2 modifier on reflexive Wits + Composure rolls for your character to detect an impending ambush.

Danger Sense (Advanced, ••)

Prerequisites: Beast, Danger Sense

Effect: Your character's nerves act as premonition. She sees the potential outcome of a threat the moment before it could occur. If she succeeds in detecting an ambush (including the normal +2 bonus for Danger Sense), her initiative immediately becomes that of her ambusher + 1 (or if being ambushed by a group, the highest among them). Additionally, in the first turn of combat, she gains +2 Defense and can use her full Defense against any and all attacks against her, unless an ability she uses sacrifices it.

Defensive Combat (•)

Prerequisite: Brawl • or Weaponry •; choose one when this Merit is selected

Effect: You are trained in avoiding damage in combat. Use your Brawl or Weaponry to calculate Defense rather than

Athletics. You can learn both versions of this Merit, allowing you to use any of the three Skills to calculate Defense. You cannot use Weaponry to calculate Defense, however, unless you actually have a weapon in hand.

Demolisher (• to •••)

Prerequisite: Strength • • • or Intelligence • • •

Effect: Your character has an innate feel for the weak points in objects. When damaging an object, she ignores one point of the object's Durability per dot in this Merit.

Direction Sense (•)

Effect: Your character has an innate sense of direction and is always aware of her location in space. She always knows which direction she faces and never suffers penalties to navigate or find her way.

Direction Sense (Advanced, ••)

Prerequisite: Beast, Direction Sense

Effect: Your character's direction sense goes beyond the mundane. If she has seen, touched, smelled, or otherwise directly sensed a person, place, or thing, she can tell in what direction it lies.

Direction Sense (Epic, ••)

Prerequisite: Direction Sense (Advanced)

Effect: Your Beast's senses tap the Primordial Dream. She may breach the fourth dimension as she hunts. If she's sensed an object, she can hone in on when and where it last existed, if it has been destroyed. Additionally, with a turn of concentration and a point of Willpower, she can extend her current senses backwards in time. This does not change her relative location in space, but she can look backward rapidly. She must know the time she wishes to perceive, or must make a guess. This cannot be relative time; she cannot say, "When Joe was here." She can only say, "An hour ago," and hope it's when Joe was there. Her perceptions pass in real time. So if she extends them back an hour and simply waits, she sees the very moment where she extended her perceptions. Essentially, she can "stake out" a time that's already passed.

Double Jointed (••)

Prerequisite: Dexterity • • •

Effect: Your character might be a contortionist, or spend time practicing yoga, or her Horror might a cartilaginous creature from the deep ocean. She can dislodge joints when need be. She automatically escapes from any mundane bonds without a roll. When grappled, subtract her Dexterity from the opponent's roll as long as she's not taking any aggressive actions.

Double Jointed (Advanced, •)

Prerequisite: Double Jointed, Beast

Effect: Your character's body is far more pliable than even the most nimble contortionist. If she can fit her head into something, she can push her entire body through it with a turn. Opponents in a grapple with your character always suffer her Dexterity as a penalty, even if she's acting against them aggressively or if your character initiated the grapple.

Eidetic Memory (••)

Effect: Your character recalls events and details with pinpoint accuracy. You do not have to make rolls for your character to remember past experiences. When making Intelligence + Composure (or relevant Skill) rolls to recall minute facts from swaths of information, take a +2 bonus.

Eidetic Memory (Advanced, •)

Prerequisites: Eidetic Memory *or* Mimir's Wisdom Atavism, Beast

Effect: A Beast's memory can be downright transcendent. She can recall scenes with perfect clarity. When she makes a roll to remember, she receives an exceptional success on three successes instead of five. Rolls still benefit from the +2 from Eidetic Memory.

Additionally, she can take Mental and Social actions related to those recollections, even if she was not paying attention in the first place. For example, she may use a Wits + Empathy action to determine the moods and motivations of a person she had coffee with eighteen years ago.

Encyclopedic Knowledge (••)

Effect: Choose a Skill. Due to an immersion in academia, pop culture, or hobby obsession, your character has collected limitless factoids about the topic, even if she has no dots in the Skill.

You can make an Intelligence + Wits roll at any time your character is dealing with her area of interest. On a successful roll, the Storyteller must give a relevant fact or detail about the issue at hand. Your character knows this fact, but you must explain within the scope of your character's background why she knows it. For example, for Encyclopedic Knowledge: Medicine: "Do you remember that time on that show, when the doctor said it doesn't manifest before puberty?"

Epic Potential (•)

Prerequisite: Beast

Effect: A Beast with this Merit has a defining Attribute that excels beyond normal human limitations. When taking this Merit, choose an Attribute. You may raise that Attribute 1 dot higher than the normal trait maximum. You still have to buy the Attribute with Experiences, but it's not subject to the normal limitation.

You may only take this Merit once. If you ever wish to change the Attribute, you must shed this Merit per the Sanctity of Merits, and purchase it anew. If you purchased an Attribute at the additional dot level, you would have to shed it as well.

Fame (• to •••)

Effect: Your character is recognized within a certain sphere, for a certain skill, or because of some past action or stroke of luck. This can mean favors and attention; it can also mean negative attention and scrutiny. When choosing the Merit, define what your character is known for. As a rule of thumb, one dot means local recognition, or reputation within a confined subculture. Two dots means regional recognition by a wide swath of people. Three dots means worldwide recognition to anyone that might have been exposed to the source of the fame. Each dot adds a die to any Social rolls among those who are impressed by your character's celebrity.

Drawback: Any rolls to find or identify the character enjoy a +1 bonus per dot of the Merit. If the character has Alternate Identity, she can mitigate this drawback. A character with Fame cannot have the Anonymity Merit.

Fame (Advanced, • to •••)

Prerequisites: Beast, Fame (equal level or higher)

Effect: Your character not only has Fame in her current identity, but her Horror has a legendary notoriety that shakes humanity on a deep, fundamental level. This acts as additional Fame dots when dealing with humanity. Also, determine a reputation for your character. Briefly determine that reputation in the way you'd determine character concept in step one of character creation. Work with the Storyteller to choose or create a Condition that suits the reputation. When acting in accordance with the reputation, your character can create that Condition in humans interacting with her. She can do this once per chapter, per dot in this Merit.

Drawback: Heroes find your character particularly easy to find. The Storyteller adds your character's Advanced Fame dots to any attempt to stalk the Beast (see Chapter Five, p. 207).

Fast Reflexes (• to •••)

Prerequisite: Wits ••• or Dexterity •••

Effect: Your character's reflexes impress and astound; she's always fast to react. Add one to the character's Initiative per dot in this Merit.

Fast Reflexes (Advanced, •)

Prerequisites: Beast, Fast Reflexes •••

Effect: Your character reacts at preternatural rates. When rolling for initiative, roll twice. Each roll benefits from the normal +3 for Fast Reflexes. Take the higher of the two results.

Fast-Talking (• to •••••; Style)

Prerequisites: Manipulation •••, Subterfuge ••

Your character talks circles around listeners. She speaks a mile a minute and often leaves her targets reeling, but nodding in agreement.

Always Be Closing (•): With the right leading phrases, your character can direct a mark to say what she wants, when she wants. This trips the mark into vulnerable positions. When a mark contests or resists your character's Social interactions, apply a –1 to their Resolve or Composure.

Jargon (••): Your character confuses her mark using complex terminology. You may apply one relevant Specialty to any Social roll you make, even if the Specialty isn't tied to the Skill in use.

Devil's Advocacy (•••): Your character often poses arguments she doesn't agree with in order to challenge a mark's position and keep him from advancing discussion. You can reroll one failed Subterfuge roll per scene.

Salting (••••): Your character can position herself so a mark pursues a non-issue or something unimportant to her. When your character opens a Door using conversation (Persuasion, Subterfuge, Empathy, etc.) you may spend a Willpower point to immediately open another Door.

Patron's Privilege (•••••): Your character can take advantage of her mark's greed and zeal. When the mark does particularly well, it's because your character was there to set him up and to subsequently tear him down. If a target regains Willpower from his Vice while your character is present, you may immediately roll Manipulation + Subterfuge to open a Door, regardless of the interval or impression level.

Fist of Nightmares (••)

Prerequisites: Brawl ••, Occult ••

Effect: Your character may "store" the effects of a Nightmare and release it upon touching a victim. Often, this is used in preparation for a fight, where the first strike becomes something greater entirely when coupled with the effects of the Primordial Dream. Despite the name, though, the Beast doesn't have to punch the target; any touch works.

Your character may store the effects of one Nightmare by spending a Willpower point. Make the relevant roll at that point. The first time your character touches another in that same scene, the Nightmare triggers on him. Subtract one success from the Nightmare for every two full dots of the relevant Resistance trait that the target possesses. The Nightmare in question must target only a single character for this Merit to work.

Fleet of Foot (• to •••)

Prerequisite: Athletics ••

Effect: Your character is remarkably quick and runs far faster than her frame suggests. She gains +1 Speed per dot. Anyone pursuing her suffers a –1 per dot to any foot chase rolls.

Giant (•••)

Effect: Your character is massive. She's well over six feet tall, and crowds part when she approaches. Her Size is 6, meaning she starts with one more Health point than most characters.

Drawback: Buying clothing is a nightmare. Fitting in small spaces is difficult at best.

Giant (••, Advanced)

Prerequisite: Beast, Giant • • •

Effect: Characters with the Giant Merit are much larger than the average person. Your character takes that a step further. While not necessarily taller or wider than any other character with Giant, your character is dense beyond reason. She remains Size 6, but she gains significant mass as she becomes sated. Her Satiety applies as a penalty to any attempts to knock her over or lift her. In addition, any object smashing into her at fast speed, such as a car, suffers her Satiety in automatic Structure damage. She may still be injured or knocked down, but whatever hit her will end up just as bad or worse.

Drawback: Your character's mass is clearly inhuman. Weak floors break beneath her feet, and stealth may be impossible in certain situations (though when she's hungry, of course, she's much more light-footed).

Good Time Management (•)

Prerequisite: Academics • • or Science • •

Effect: Your character has vast experience managing complex tasks, keeping schedules, and meeting deadlines. When taking an extended action, halve the time required between rolls.

Guilty Pleasure (•)

Prerequisite: Beast

Effect: Your character has one choice food, vice, or indulgence she utterly adores to the exclusion of other tastes. When taking this Merit, choose that indulgence. It should be something that might embarrass her or put her in a vulnerable spot if revealed. Any time she indulges in this guilty pleasure as part of replenishing Satiety, she gains 1 additional Satiety, a point of Willpower, and the Guilty Condition (see p. 324).

Heavy Weapons (Style, • to •••••)

Prerequisites: Stamina • • •, Strength • • •, Athletics • •, Weaponry • •

Effect: Your character is trained with heavy weapons that require strength, wide range, and follow-through more than direct speed and accuracy. This Style may be used with two-handed weapons such as a claymore, a chainsaw, a pike, or an uprooted street sign.

Sure Strike (•): Your character doesn't always hit the hardest or the most frequently, but you guarantee a deadly strike when you do hit. You can reflexively remove three dice from any attack dice pool (to a minimum of zero) to add one to your character's weapon damage rating for the turn. These dice must be removed after calculating any penalties from the environment or the opponent's Defense.

Threat Range (• •): Your character's weapon is immense and keeps opponents at bay. If you opt not to move or Dodge during your turn, any character moving into your character's proximity suffers 1L damage and a penalty to their Defense equal to your character's weapon damage rating. This penalty only lasts for one turn. This cannot be used in a turn the character is Dodging.

Bring the Pain (• • •): Your character's strikes stun and incapacitate as well as causing massive trauma to the body. Sacrifice your character's Defense to use Bring the Pain. Make a standard attack roll. Any damage you score with Bring the Pain counts as a penalty to all actions the victim takes during their next turn. So, if you cause 4L damage, the opponent is at –4 on their next attack.

Warding Stance (• • • •): Your character holds her weapon in such a way as to make attacks much harder. If her weapon's drawn, spend a point of Willpower reflexively to add her weapon's damage rating as armor for the turn. This will not protect against firearms.

Rending (• • • • •): Your character's cuts leave crippling, permanent wounds. By spending a Willpower point before making an attack roll, her successful attacks cause one point of aggravated damage in addition to her weapon's damage rating. This Willpower point does not add to the attack roll.

Hunger Management (• to •••)

Prerequisite: Beast, Resolve • • •

Effect: Your character can manage and maintain her hunger and Satiety more carefully than other Beasts. For every dot in this Merit, you can add or subtract one die from the Satiety potential dice pool you roll when her Horror consumes something. This can ensure she gains more Satiety when starving, or she's less likely to send her Horror into hibernation when nearly sated.

Indomitable (••)

Prerequisite: Resolve • • •

Your character possesses an iron will. The powers of the supernatural have little bearing on her behavior. She can stand up to a vampire's mind control, a witch's charms, or a ghost's gifts of fright. Any time a supernatural creature uses a power to influence your character's thoughts or emotions, add two dice to the dice pool to contest it. If the roll is resisted, instead subtract two dice from the monster's dice pool. Note that this only affects mental influence and manipulation from a supernatural origin. A vampire with a remarkable Manipulation + Persuasion score is just as likely to convince your character to do something using mundane tricks.

Inspiring (•••)

Prerequisite: Presence • • •

Effect: Your character's passion inspires those around her to greatness. With a few words, she can redouble a group's confidence or move them to action.

Make a Presence + Expression roll. A small clique of listeners levies a –1 penalty, a small crowd a –2, and a large crowd a –3. Listeners gain the Inspired Condition or a point of Willpower (for Storyteller-controlled characters). The character may not use this Merit on herself.

Interdisciplinary Specialty (•)

Prerequisite: Skill at • • • or higher with a Specialty

Effect: Choose a Specialty that your character possesses when you purchase this Merit. You can apply the +1 from that Specialty on any Skill with at least one dot, provided it's justifiable within the scope of the fiction. For example, a doctor with a Medicine Specialty in Anatomy may be able to use it when targeting a specific body part with Weaponry, but could not with a general strike.

Iron Skin (• to ••)

Prerequisites: Brawl • •, Stamina • • •

Through rigorous conditioning or extensive scarring, your character has grown resistant to harm. She can shrug off shots that would topple bigger fighters. She knows how to take a strike and can even move into a hit from a weapon to minimize harm. She gains armor against bashing attacks; one point of armor with the one-dot version, two with the two-dot version. By spending a point of Willpower when hit, she can downgrade lethal damage equal to her dots into bashing damage.

Iron Skin (Advanced, • to ••)

Prerequisites: Beast, Stamina • • • •

Your character's flesh is like fine leather. As with Iron Skin, this Merit grants armor equal to its dot rating. However, the armor granted works against lethal damage as well as bashing damage. With the two-dot version, you may reflexively spend a point of Willpower upon taking aggravated damage to downgrade a point of aggravated damage to lethal damage. These advantages do not apply to Anathemas.

Iron Skin (Epic, ••)

Prerequisites: Beast, Stamina • • • • •

Your character is nigh invincible. Ignore the first point of damage taken from any source except an Anathema.

Iron Will (••)

Prerequisite: Resolve • • • •

Effect: Your character's resolve is unwavering. When spending Willpower to contest or resist in a Social interaction, you may substitute your character's Resolve for the usual Willpower bonus. If the roll is contested, roll with 8-again.

Killer Instinct (• to •••)

Prerequisite: Composure • • •, Medicine •, Wits • • •

Effect: Your character's experience with the darkness inherent in this world has left her cold and calculating, so she can see the fragile threads that hold life together. Activating this Merit requires an instant action to assess a creature, human, animal, monster, or otherwise. When making an attack against that target, you may divide the dots in this Merit among any of the three following effects:

- Ignore 1/1 armor on the target.
- Convert 1 bashing damage caused in that attack to lethal.
- Ignore one point of the target's Defense.

The turn spent assessing a target can be combined with a turn used for aiming (see p. 334).

Killer Instinct (Advanced, • to •••)

Prerequisite: Beast, Killer Instinct • • •

Effect: Your character's killer instincts draw from the primal entropy inherent in the universe. Your character is a devourer — a true destroyer. You do not have to take a turn to activate the mundane Killer Instinct Merit; it's considered always on. However, you may take a full turn to assess a target. When making an Athletics, Brawl, Firearms, or Weaponry attack against that target, divide your Advanced Killer Instinct dots among the following effects:

- Convert 1 lethal damage caused in that attack to aggravated.
- Destroy 1/1 armor on the target, which remains until all damage from the attack heals, or the armor is replaced. This has no effect on armor stemming from supernatural powers.
- Ignore two points of the target's Defense and a single die penalty for making a called shot.

The turn spent assessing a target can be combined with a turn used for aiming (see p. 334).

Language (•)

Effect: Your character is skilled with an additional language beyond her native tongue. Choose a language, each time you buy this Merit. Your character can speak, read, and write in that language.

Library (• to •••)

Effect: Your character has access to a plethora of information about a given topic. When purchasing this Merit, choose a Mental Skill. The Library covers that purview. On any extended roll involving the Skill in question, add the dots in this Merit.

This Merit can be purchased multiple times to reflect different Skills. Its benefits can also be shared by various characters, with permission.

Library (Advanced, • to •••••)

Prerequisites: Library • • •, Safe Place or Lair (special)

Effect: Your character not only possesses a massive, credible library, but she also hoards thorough information about highly secretive supernatural topics. For each dot in this Merit, choose a topic. This could be "vampires," "mages," or any other supernatural force in the World of Darkness. When your character consults her library on one of those topics, take

the Informed Condition relating to the topic. You can do this once per story, per topic.

Advanced Library has a special prerequisite; your character requires a Safe Place equal to its dot rating, or for one Chamber in the Beast's Lair to be dedicated to the library. If that Chamber collapses, the library is lost. As with Library, your characters can share the dot cost.

Mentor (• to •••••)

Effect: This Merit gives your character a teacher that provides advice and guidance. He acts on your character's behalf, often in the background and sometimes without your character's knowledge. While Mentors can be highly competent, they almost always want something in return for their services. The dot rating determines the Mentor's capabilities, and to what extent he'll aid your character.

When establishing a Mentor, determine what the Mentor wants from your character. This should be personally important to him, and it should reflect on the dot rating chosen. A one-dot Mentor might just be an old bookworm interested in the occasional coffee chat about academic topics. A five-dot Mentor would want something astronomical, such as an oath to procure an ancient, cursed artifact that may or may not exist, in order to prevent a prophesized death.

Choose three Skills the Mentor possesses. You can substitute Resources for one of these Skills. Once per session, the character may ask her Mentor for a favor. The favor must involve one of those Skills or be within the scope of his Resources. The Mentor commits to the favor (often asking for a commensurate favor in return); if a roll is required, the Mentor is automatically considered to have successes equal to his dot rating. Alternately, the player may ask the Storyteller to have the Mentor act on her character's behalf, without her character knowing or initiating the request.

Multi-Lingual (•)

Effect: Your character has a strong affinity for language acquisition. Each time you purchase this Merit, choose two languages. Your character can speak conversationally in those languages. With an Intelligence + Academics roll, she can also read enough of the language to understand context.

If you purchase the Language Merit for either of these languages, replace the Multi-Lingual language. For example, if you have Multi-Lingual (French, Italian), and purchase Language: Italian, you may choose to take Multi-Lingual (French, Portuguese).

Parkour (• to •••••, Style)

Prerequisites: Dexterity •••, Athletics ••

Your character is a trained and proficient free-runner. Free-running is the art of moving fluidly through urban environments with complex leaps, bounds, running tricks, and vaulting. This is the type of sport popularized in modern action films, where characters are unhindered by fences, walls, construction equipment, cars, or anything else the city puts in their ways.

Flow (•): Your character reacts instinctively to any obstacles with leaps, jumps, and scaling techniques. When in a foot chase, subtract your Parkour from the successes needed to pursue or evade. You may also ignore environmental penalties to Athletics rolls equal to your Parkour rating.

Cat Leap (••): Your character falls with outstanding grace. When using a Dexterity + Athletics roll to mitigate damage from falling (see p. 172), your character gains one automatic success. Additionally, add your Parkour rating to the threshold of damage that can be removed through this roll. Parkour will not mitigate damage from a terminal velocity fall.

Wall Run (•••): When climbing, your character can run upward for some distance before having to traditionally climb. Without rolling, your character scales 10 feet + five feet per dot of Athletics as an instant action, rather than the normal 10 feet.

Expert Traceur (••••): Parkour has become second nature for your character. By spending a Willpower point, you may designate one Athletics roll to run, jump, or climb as a rote action (reroll all failed dice once). On any turn you use this ability, you may not apply your character's Defense to oncoming attacks.

Freeflow (•••••): Your character's Parkour is now muscle memory. She can move without thinking, in a zen-like state. The character must successfully meditate (see p. 150) in order to establish Freeflow. Once established, your character is capable of taking Athletics actions reflexively once per turn. By spending a point of Willpower on an Athletics roll in a foot chase, gain three successes instead of three dice.

Patient (•)

Effect: Your character knows how to pace herself and take the time to do the job right the first time. When taking an extended action (p. XX), you may make two additional rolls above what your Attribute + Skill would allow.

Quick Draw (•)

Prerequisites: Wits •••, a Specialty in the weapon or fighting style chosen

Effect: Choose a Specialty in Weaponry or Firearms when you purchase this Merit. Your character has trained in that weapon or style enough that pulling the weapon is her first reflex. Drawing or holstering that weapon is considered a reflexive action, and can be done any time her Defense applies.

Relentless Assault (Style, • to •••••)

Prerequisites: Strength •••, Stamina •••, Brawl ••

Effect: Your character fights with complete abandon. She throws herself at her opponents without thought or hesitation, turning herself into a ruthless killing machine. She's the first into the fight, and the last out of it. She may use this with Brawl or Weaponry attacks.

Drop of a Hat (•): Your character goes from zero to ballistic at the start of a fight. She always moves to strike first. In the first

turn of a fight, your character adds 3 to her Initiative score, so long as she intends to make an all-out attack (see p. 334). After the first turn, this bonus fades.

Eye of the Tiger (••): Your character can hone in on a single target, to the exclusion of all others. This tunnel vision makes her fearsome against her primary target, but vulnerable to others. Choose a target. When making an all-out attack against that target, your character retains her Defense against him. She still loses it against other characters. She's still considered to have sacrificed her Defense for the purpose of using other Style maneuvers.

Dig Deep (•••): Your character doesn't strike for her enemy's skin; she strikes for a spot a few feet behind it. To her, overkill is the only acceptable kill. You can choose to remove one die from your dice pool before rolling an attack. If you do, add a point of weapon damage to your character's attack.

Grin and Bear It (••••): Your character can simply cease caring about her own safety in order to take down her opponents. This single-minded lethality helps her to shrug off blows that might cripple others less ferocious. Any time she takes an all-out attack, she gains 1/1 armor against all attacks for the turn. This combines with any other armor she may be benefiting from.

The Warpath (•••••): Your character kills, but does not stop her assault. Any time she fills a character's last health box with lethal or aggravated damage, she may immediately make an additional attack against one other character within her reach. Doing so costs a point of Willpower, which does not add dice to the attack roll.

Resources (• to •••••)

Effect: This Merit reflects your character's disposable income. She might live in an upscale condo, but if her income is tied up in the mortgage and in child support payments, she might have little money to throw around. Characters are assumed to have basic necessities without Resources.

The dot rating determines the relative amount of disposable funding the character has available, depending on your particular chronicle's setting. The same amount of money means completely different things in a game set in Silicon Valley, compared to one set in the Detroit slums. One dot is a little spending money here and there. Two is a comfortable, middle-class wage. Three is a nicer, upper-middle-class life. Four is moderately wealthy. Five is filthy rich.

Every item has an Availability rating. Once per chapter, your character can procure an item at her Resources level or lower, without issue. Obtaining an item one Availability above her Resources reduces her effective Resources by one dot for a full month, since she has to rapidly liquidate funds. She can procure items two Availability below her Resources without limit (within reason). For example, a character with Resources •••• can procure as many Availability •• disposable cellphones as she needs.

Retainer (• to •••••)

Effect: Your character has an assistant, sycophant, servant, or follower on whom she can rely. Establish who this companion is and how he was acquired. It may be as simple as a paycheck. He might owe your character his life. However it happened, your character has a hold on him.

A Retainer is more reliable than a Mentor and more loyal than an Ally. On the other hand, a Retainer is a lone person, less capable and influential than the broader Merits.

The Merit's dot rating determines the relative competency of the Retainer. A one-dot Retainer is mildly useful, mostly for reliably taking to menial tasks; sometimes you don't need to be wowed, you just need to get a thing from point A to point B. A three-dot Retainer is a professional in their field, someone capable in his line of work. A five-dot is one of the best in her class. If a Retainer needs to make a roll, if it's within her field, double the dot rating and use it as a dice pool. For anything else, use the dot rating as a dice pool.

This Merit can be purchased multiple times to represent multiple Retainers.

Safe Place (• to •••••)

Effect: Your character has somewhere she can go where she can feel secure. While she may have enemies that could attack her there, she's prepared and has the upper hand. The dot rating reflects the security of the place. The actual location, the luxury, and the size are represented by equipment (see p. 172.) A one-dot Safe Place might be equipped with basic security systems or a booby trap at the windows and door. A five-dot could have a security crew, infrared scanners at every entrance, or trained dogs. Each place could be an apartment, a mansion or a hidey-hole.

Unlike most Merits, multiple characters can contribute dots to a single Safe Place, combining their points into something greater. A Safe Place gives an Initiative bonus equal to the Merit dots. This only applies to a character with dots invested in the Safe Place.

Any efforts to breach the Safe Place suffer a penalty equal to the Merit dots invested. If the character desires, the Safe Place can include traps that cause intruders lethal damage equal to a maximum of the Merit rating (player's choice as to how much damage a given trap inflicts). This requires that the character have at least a dot in Crafts. The traps may be avoided with a Dexterity + Larceny roll, penalized by the Safe Place dots.

Sleight of Hand (••)

Prerequisite: Larceny • • •

Effect: Your character can pick locks and pockets without even thinking about it. She can take one Larceny-based instant action reflexively in a given turn. As well, her Larceny actions go unnoticed unless someone is trying specifically to catch her.

Small-Framed (••)

Effect: Your character is diminutive. She's not even five feet tall, and it's easy to walk into her without noticing. She's Size 4 and thus has one fewer Health box. She gains +2 to any rolls to hide or go unnoticed, and this bonus might apply any time being smaller would be an advantage, such as crawling through smaller spaces. *Available only at character creation.*

Drawback: In addition to the lower Health, your character might be overlooked or not taken seriously by some people.

Small Unit Tactics (••)

Prerequisites: Presence • • •

Effect: Your character is a proficient leader on the field. She can organize efforts and bark orders to remarkable effect. Once per scene, when making a coordinated action that was planned in advance, spend a point of Willpower and an instant action. A number of characters equal to your character's Presence can benefit from the +3 bonus from the Willpower expenditure.

Spoor (• to •••••)

Prerequisite: Cannot have Fame

Effect: Your Beast has developed a habit for dropping false clues as to her whereabouts. When she's pursued by a Hero (see p. 207), Spoor kicks in to keep the Hero off the trail. False evidence appears in her wake. She briefly appears to be somewhere she's not. Every dot in Spoor offers one of the following advantages per story:

- If in direct pursuit, a dot of Spoor negates one turn of the Hero's pursuit rolls.
- If the Hero investigates her as part of an extended action, a dot of Spoor removes one potential roll from the action.
- When a Hero uses Heroic Tracking (p. 206), a dot of Spoor acts as a –1 modifier to the roll.

Multiple points can be spent at one time. For example, if a Hero has six extended action intervals to investigate your character with Spoor • • • • •, you may choose to spend all five to reduce his action to a single dice pool.

Status (• to •••••)

Effect: Your character has standing, membership, authority, control over, or respect from a group or organization. This may reflect official standing, or informal respect. No matter the source, your character enjoys certain privileges within that structure.

Each instance of this Merit reflects standing in a different group or organization. Each affords its own unique benefits. As you increase your dot ratings, your character rises in prominence in the relevant group.

Status only allows advantages within the confines of the group reflected in the Merit. Status (Organized Crime) won't help if your character wants an official concealed carry firearms permit, for example.

Status provides two major advantages: First, your character can apply her Status to any Social roll involving those over whom she has authority or sway. Second, she has access to group

facilities, resources, and funding. Dependent on the group, this could be limited by red tape and requisitioning processes. It's also dependent on the resources the particular group has available.

Drawback: Status requires upkeep, and often regular duties are required. If these duties are not upheld, the Status may be lost. The dots will not be accessible until the character re-establishes her standing. In our Organized Crime example, your character may be expected to pay protection money, offer tribute to a higher authority, or undertake felonious activities.

Striking Looks (• or ••)

Effect: Your character is stunning, alarming, commanding, repulsive, threatening, charming, or otherwise worthy of attention. Determine how your character looks and how people react to that. For one dot, your character gets a +1 bonus on any Social rolls that would be influenced by her looks. For two dots, the benefit increases to +2. Depending on the particulars, this might influence Expression, Intimidation, Persuasion, Subterfuge, or other rolls.

Drawback: Attention is a double-edged sword. Any rolls to spot, notice, or remember your character gain the same dice bonus. Sometimes, your character will draw unwanted attention in social situations. This could cause further complications.

Striking Looks (Advanced, ••)

Prerequisite: Beast, Striking Looks • •

Effect: Your character's appearance is a composite of iconic imagery throughout the ages. If your character is beautiful, he's the example of beauty throughout the minds of millions. If she's frightening, she's utterly terrifying on a primordial level. When her chosen looks apply, gain the rote quality to the action in addition to the normal +2 for Striking Looks.

Sympathetic (••)

Effect: Your character is very good at letting others get close. This gives him an edge in getting what he wants. At the beginning of a Social maneuvering attempt, you may choose to accept a Condition such as Leveraged, Swooning, or Vulnerable in order to immediately eliminate two of the subject's Doors.

Taste (•)

Prerequisite: Crafts 2, a Specialty in Crafts or Expression

Effect: Your character has refined tastes and can identify minor details in fashion, food, architecture, and other forms of artistry and craftsmanship. Not only does this give an eye for detail, it makes her a center of attention in critical circles. She can appraise items within her area of expertise. With a Wits + Skill roll, depending on the creation in question (Expression for poetry, Crafts for architecture, for example), your character can pick out obscure details about the item that other, less discerning minds would not. For each success, ask one of the following questions or take a +1 bonus to any Social rolls pertaining to groups interested in the art assessed for the remainder of the scene.

- What is the hidden meaning in this?
- What was the creator feeling during its creation?
- What's its weakest point?
- What other witness is most moved by this piece?
- How should one best appreciate this piece?

Trained Observer (•, or •••)

Prerequisite: Wits • • • or Composure • • •

Effect: Your character has spent years in the field, catching tiny details and digging for secrets. She might not have a better chance of finding things, but she has a better chance of finding *important* things. Any time you make a Perception roll (usually Wits + Composure), you benefit from the 9-again quality. With the three-dot version, you get 8-again.

True Friend (•••)

Effect: Your character has a true friend. While that friend may have specific functions covered by other Merits (Allies, Contacts, Retainer, Mentor, etc.), True Friend represents a deeper, truly trusting relationship that cannot be breached. Unless your character does something egregious to cause it, her True Friend will not betray her. As well, the Storyteller cannot kill her True Friend as part of a plot without your express permission. Any rolls to influence a True Friend against your character suffer a five-die penalty. As well, once per story, your character can regain 1 spent Willpower by having a meaningful interaction with her True Friend.

Unseen Sense (••)

Prerequisite: Human (no supernatural ability)

Effect: Your character has a "sixth sense" for a specific type of supernatural creature, chosen when you buy the Merit. For example, you may choose Unseen Sense: Vampires, or Unseen Sense: Beasts. The sense manifests differently for everyone. A character's hair stands on end, she becomes physically ill, or perhaps she has a cold chill. Regardless, she knows that *something isn't right* when she is in the immediate proximity of the appropriate supernatural being. Once per chapter, the player can accept the Spooked Condition (p. 325) in exchange for which the character can pinpoint where the feeling is coming from. If the target is using a power that specifically cloaks its supernatural nature, however, this does not work (though the Condition remains until resolved as usual). Beasts and other supernaturally empowered characters, including Heroes, may not take this Merit.

Atavisms

A Beast's true self is a mythic monster armed with natural weapons and fearsome abilities, some of which bleed over into his human form as Atavisms. Atavisms are intrinsic. They are the Giant's strength or the Raptor's talons. Using them is as natural as breathing. Manifesting aspects of his Lair is just as

instinctive. They are part of him, too, from the oppressive cold of a Makara's underwater abode, to the darkness of a Namtaru's subterranean refuge. Unleashing them feels *good*. The Beast breaches the illusion of normalcy and exposes his true self to the world.

A Beast can pass for human because his Atavisms are typically subtle. They manifest in surreal ways reflecting the nightmarish nature of the Primordial Dream. The Beast can dig deep in times of need and force more of his Horror into the world, abnegating natural law with nightmarish consequences. The Raptor's hands still *look* normal, for example, but he can dismember victims as if he were the legendary monster in the flesh.

Beings with supernatural senses, however, catch a glimpse of the Horror when the Beast activates an Atavism. This includes any supernatural creature (vampire, werewolf, changeling, Sin-Eater, etc.), normal human beings with the Unseen Sense Merit (no matter what it usually detects), Heroes, ephemeral beings (see p. 182) and anyone else with sensitivity to otherworldly phenomena at the Storyteller's discretion.

Glimpsing the Horror in this way doesn't grant the witness any real understanding of what he is seeing. The witness sees the Eshmaki take a deep breath and then exhale a gout of blue fire, but if he is at all supernaturally aware, he always sees the mighty dragon superimposed over the Beast's mortal form, unleashing its hellish breath. The Makara activates Monster From the Deep and everyone in the room feels the pressure of the tentacles around their necks, but only the Beast's Promethean companion actually sees the kraken lurking below.

Systems

Atavisms are not magic spells. They are inherent abilities and require little to no conscious effort on the part of the Beast who possesses them. Their effects are straightforward, physical, and typically confined to the Beast herself. A dragon can breathe fire, for example, but has no control whatsoever over existing flames.

A handful of Atavisms, such as Shadowed Soul or Storm-Lashed, draw down aspects of the Beast's Lair and project them onto her environment. They create a temporary convergence between the mundane and the nightmarish landscape of the Primordial Dream, similar to imposing the Environmental Tilts of her Lair Traits, but with augmented or unusual effects and greater control over how those forces play out.

The one thing Atavisms *cannot* do is directly control someone's mind. A Beast can leverage heart-stopping beauty (Alien Allure) or prey upon victims' natural curiosity (Siren's Treacherous Song), but she cannot control what they think. Hence, resistance rolls — including supernatural resistance — rarely apply. Direct emotional and mental influence is the realm of Nightmares, not Atavisms.

Many Atavisms resemble Merits in that they have persistent effects that need not be activated, such as modifying other actions or dice pools, or they confer abilities that are available at no cost, such as a special attack form. Dice rolls are rarely required. When they are, they are usually reflexive and folded into another action such an attack. An Atavism's dice pool always consists of an Attribute plus a Skill.

Atavisms have three levels of effect, depending on the Beast's Satiety:

- **Normal Effect:** This is the Atavism's default effect and is available whenever the Beast's Satiety is 4 dots or higher. Normal effects never cost Willpower or other resources to use. Such an effect may be overtly supernatural, like superhuman speed or blasts of wind, but the Beast still looks human while doing so.
- **Low Satiety Effect:** The Atavism has a modified effect when the Beast's Satiety drops to 3 dots or less. This is often an enhanced version of the normal effect, such as extra damage or an increased bonus, and gives the Beast an edge when her back is up against the wall. However, it may come with risks as Hunger increasingly sways her behavior.
- **Satiety Expenditure:** The Beast unleashes a powerful effect by *spending* a dot of Satiety. Doing so is a reflexive action unless otherwise specified. These effects are often dramatic and obviously supernatural as the Primordial Dream overrides the material world, threatening panic.

Different levels of effect are cumulative as long as the Beast meets the requirements for each. The Beast could combine the normal and Satiety expenditure effects, for example, or the low Satiety and Satiety expenditure effects if spending the dot of Satiety would reduce his current rating to 3 or less. This is particularly true when the Satiety expenditure effect is an enhanced version of the normal effect and not a separate ability. Each Atavism's description states whether effects can be combined this way.

Lair Resonance

Atavisms are easier to use in locations that *resonate* in some way with the Beast's Lair. For example, a dragon whose Lair is a fiery volcano, with the Extreme Heat Trait, finds her Atavisms come more naturally inside a burning building or in the middle of a desert wasteland. Canny Beasts use this to their advantage whenever possible, fighting on their own turf or in environments manipulated either by mundane means, other Atavisms, or directly imposing Trait Tilts on the area (see p. 101).

When an area resonates with a Beast's Lair (including when the Beast has merged with her Horror), the Beast's Atavisms are more dangerous. She can use the Satiety expenditure aspect of her Atavisms by spending a point of Willpower, rather than Satiety. She can do this once per scene per dot of Lair.

The Monster's Arsenal

When choosing Atavisms, it helps to think of them as natural extensions of the Beast. Starting Atavisms should reflect her Hunger and her type of mythical monster. For example, a griffin might begin play with Needs Must or Wings of the Raptor

for heightened senses and incredible speed. Each Family's entry in Chapter One includes a list of suitable Atavisms, and the listings in this section note the relevant Family.

Also, what Traits are in the Beast's Lair? Not only are they important for resonance, but they can suggest Atavisms for a given character. Shadowed Soul is common to Gorgons, for example, but works for any Beast whose Lair includes the Darkness Trait, such as a Giant who spends her time brooding in a dank subterranean cavern.

Atavisms differ from other supernatural abilities in that they require no special training or effort. Their use is instinctual. Gaining a new Atavism requires changes to the Beast's Horror, though. The player can justify this in any number of ways, but the most common is contact with other Beasts. As a brood mingles its Lairs, the Horrors wander into landscapes and dreams they never envisioned. The dragon learns to swim and dives into the deeps with the kraken. The griffin learns to hunt in the forest and strikes from the dappled shadows. The giant embraces the scent of death and the tickle of the carrion insects and learns to take their form. Dreams are malleable, and therefore so are Horrors.

Alien Allure [Makara]

Not all Beasts are monstrous in appearance. Mermaids and sirens are renowned for their terrible beauty, enchanting sailors and leading them to drown or smash their ships on the rocks. Likewise, Native American legends are replete with cannibalistic monsters with two faces, one beautiful and one hideous, who hypnotize victims with their looks. While this Atavism does not go that far, it does prey upon the instinctual urge to please those we find attractive.

Action: Reflexive

Normal Effect: The Beast is aglow with false charm that is often at odds with her actual behavior. She may exude stimulating pheromones, speak in honeyed and dulcet tones, or adopt mannerisms calculated to appeal to a specific someone, unconsciously gauging their reaction and adjusting to fit. She adds her Lair dots as a bonus on all Social rolls in which looks or attractiveness could give her an edge, such as first impressions, seducing someone, talking her way into a VIP area, or luring someone away from the safety of a crowd. This bonus is cumulative with the Striking Looks Merit.

Furthermore, the Beast always starts with a good first impression using the Social maneuvering system (see p. 161). If the Beast has previous caused harm to the target, she must avoid him for at least a day to gain this benefit. When she sees him again, all is forgiven. Heroes are immune to this effect.

Low Satiety: Beauty takes on a sinister edge as Hunger dominates the Beast's interactions. Sometimes urgency pays off. Any Social roll involving appearance counts as an exceptional success with three successes or more. Furthermore, so long as she avoids Hard Leverage, opening all Doors imposes the Charmed Condition on the target of her Social maneuvering. However, she sometimes repulses people instead as she slips into the uncanny valley. A dramatic failure changes her impression level to "hostile" with that person for the rest of the chapter, and imposes a penalty to Social rolls against that target equal to the Beast's Lair.

Satiety Expenditure: Drawing the Horror into her flesh, the Beast radiates supernatural allure for the remainder of the scene. People treat her as if she has the Fame or Status Merit, as appropriate to the situation, equal to (10 – her Satiety dots, maximum 5). People fawn over her and are receptive to her wishes. They are under no compulsion to obey, however, but do feel their job, position, or social standing is at stake if they refuse.

Furthermore, the Beast ignores penalties up to her Lair dots when forcing Doors with the Social maneuvering rules, and failure to force Doors does not preclude further Social maneuvering (since the Beast can just leave for a day and come back, all smiles).

Basilisk's Touch [Namtaru]

Neither fire nor ferocity brought Beowulf to his knees. It was poison that sealed the king's fate, presaging an era of warfare, darkness, and death for his kingdom, guaranteeing the dragon would have the last laugh even in death.

Many Beasts have venom in their arsenal, from the wyvern's sting to the hydra's poisonous breath, but none more so than the Gorgons. Plague and poison literally run through their veins, much like the dreaded basilisk, whose mere touch was deadly and whose seeping poison scorched the earth in its wake.

Applying the poison requires a touch attack (p. 165), but activating the Atavism itself is reflexive.

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive

Normal Effect: The Beast's touch applies either the Drugged Tilt or the grave version of the Poisoned Tilt to the victim. The player chooses which effect when this ability is used. Outside of combat, the poison lasts for a number of turns equal to the Beast's Stamina and has a Toxicity rating equal to (10 – Satiety). The victim's veins burn as the venom courses through his veins, eating away at him like acid, all while his vision swims and his head sickly throbs.

Low Satiety: The Beast's venom is particularly insidious and long-lasting. In combat, increase the damage caused by the Poisoned Tilt or the Defense and Speed penalties from the Drugged Tilt by the Beast's Lair rating, in addition to the normal effect. Out of combat, add the Beast's Lair dots to the poison's duration.

Satiety Expenditure: Venom drips from the Beast's fingertips and greenish-black streaks course through the veins of his arm as he reaches out with a concentrated dose of poison. In addition to the other effects, the Beast's touch applies the player's choice of the Insensate or Stunned Tilts. Strength drains out of the victim, who struggles just to remain upright and functioning, leaving him vulnerable to whatever the Beast

has in store for him. Vicious Gorgons prefer to render their victims helpless so they can watch and better appreciate their slow death from the normal poison.

Cyclopean Strength [Anakim]

Cyclopean structures are made of huge, irregular stone blocks. Ancient peoples believed only Giants could move such massive stones, some taller than a man and weighing tons apiece. Certainly, a Beast with this Atavism can lift many times his own weight, no matter how spindly or frail his outward appearance.

Action: Reflexive

Normal Effect: The Beast has a surfeit of adrenaline and vast reserves of strength. Weights that would faze an ordinary man are contemptuously swept aside. He can dead lift, shove, or slowly pull any object whose Size does not exceed his own Size x (Lair dots + 1). Furthermore, he adds his Lair dots as automatic successes on Strength + Stamina rolls made to perform a feat of strength, such as lifting a massive object or breaking free of handcuffs.

Low Satiety: Anything the Beast can lift, he can also throw or use as an improvised melee weapon, regardless of whether it is a boulder or a person. Improvised weapons have a weapon bonus equal to the lower of their Size or Durability (Size or Stamina for a living creature). Also, an object's Size is not subtracted from the Beast's Strength + Dexterity + Athletics for determining the range he can throw it. This is in addition to the normal effect.

Satiety Expenditure: By spending a dot of Satiety, the Beast becomes a juggernaut capable of hurling cars and smashing obstacles in his path, and the urge for violence is writ large on his features. His mouth is set in a terrible thin line and his muscles look ropy, grotesquely bulging, and eager to unleash their power.

The Beast gains automatic successes equal to his Lair dots on all Strength related rolls for the remainder of the scene, not just feats of strength. This is in addition to the normal effect.

Dragonfire [Eshmaki]

Dragons are implacable foes and harbingers of destruction. Possessed of terrible grandeur, their very presence quails the heart, and their ire brings the certainty of doom as they lay waste to everything in their path. Most people are cowed — if not driven in terror — by a Beast unleashing hellfire and striding confidently through the flames. Unfortunately, those consumed by the Hunger for Ruin hardly know when to stop.

Action: Reflexive

Normal Effect: Dragons delight in fear and destruction, both of which are always near at hand. The Beast need only open her jaws and unleash the hellfire building within her, and a curl of smoke or a dreadful gleam in her eyes is often her victim's only warning.

The Beast can blast individual targets in range (5/10/15) with gouts of fire. This counts as a ranged attack with a thrown weapon and requires a roll of Dexterity + Athletics – the opponent's Defense. Damage is lethal and adds the Beast's Lair dots as a weapon modifier. Flammable materials ignite on contact, turning the area into a raging inferno if it is not contained quickly. Then again, that may be the point.

Furthermore, fire causes no damage to the Beast, and she never suffers environmental penalties or damage caused by heat and smoke, which are like clear air to her. This is in addition to any environmental immunity from Lair Traits (see p. 101).

Low Satiety: A hungry dragon feels fire welling up uncontrollably from within. The Beast's Dragonfire is capable of autofire as well as single blasts, including short, medium, and long bursts. This represents sustained torrents of fire, similar to a flamethrower, that can immolate multiple enemies or set large areas alight.

Satiety Expenditure: Flames dance in the Beast's eyes as she spends a dot of Satiety and invokes a holocaust. Her next attack with Dragonfire has double its normal range and inflicts aggravated damage. Even incombustible materials can be reduced to ash by the onslaught, as Dragonfire ignores Durability equal to the Beast's Lair dots. This is in addition to the normal and low Satiety effects.

Eye of Heaven [Ugallu]

Humanity fears the sky, for it is there that their destiny is written. Remote and pitiless, the stars cannot be moved by the hand of man or woman, but shine mockingly in the dark, warning of a fate you are powerless to change. Better not to look up at all.

Gazing down from the heights, a Beast with this Atavism sees the secret dooms the stars have written in the fates of her prey. She knows his fears and frailties, she knows the appointed manner and hour of his doom — and she knows precisely when to swoop down upon him.

Action: Instant

Normal: For each turn the Beast spends studying her prey, the Beast learns one of the following about the target:

- His Virtue and Vice, or equivalent
- His Aspirations
- Any negative Conditions or Tilts he's currently suffering from
- Any supernatural weaknesses he might possess
- His current wound penalties, if any
- Any supernatural fate or destiny he possesses

Low Satiety: The Beast's Hunger drives her instincts, showing her how best to strike at her prey's most vulnerable point. If she has already used the Normal effect of this Atavism on at least once during the current scene against a target, her first attack against the target is treated as a surprise attack (p. 164). If the victim has some supernatural ability to avoid surprise, it triggers a Clash of Wills.

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast's power makes manifest the decree of fate. By expending Satiety and naming the victim's foretold doom, she may turn a single attack against the victim into a rote action (p. 161).

From the Shadows [Eshmaki]

The Eshmaki are the Nightmares of Destruction, and destruction comes from the dark unknown. Such Beasts are experts at hiding, remaining unseen and yet present, until the moment they strike. Death can come at any time, and has no respect for age or virtue. The Beast with this Atavism is the same.

Dice Pool: N/A

Action: Instant

Normal Effect: The Beast has a natural sense of how to walk and where to stand to remain unseen; with a conscious effort, he fades into the scenery and becomes effectively invisible. Perception rolls to notice him automatically fail as long as he either remains still or is part of a crowd of at least 10 people. Furthermore, he can hide in plain sight, even while being observed, so long as he meets these conditions. The Beast is similarly undetectable on video footage and photographs taken of the scene. However, this ability does not shield him from magical forms of detection (but see below.)

Low Satiety: Eager to hunt, the Beast rolls back conscious thought in favor of predatory instinct. He gains the rote quality on Stealth and other rolls related to stalking his prey, and he automatically wins initiative in the first turn of combat. If his victim also has an ability that lets him go first, both the victim and the Beast figure their initiative normally and the higher of the two results acts first.

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast completely fades from sight. The player spends a dot of Satiety, and the character remains camouflaged for the rest of the scene. He is invisible even while moving or taking other actions thanks to a combination of heightened camouflage and instinctual movement, although attacking someone exposes him until his next turn. Magical senses are likewise clouded, unlike the normal effect. A character using a supernatural means of detection to find the Beast enters a Clash of Wills (p. 222).

The Beast still makes noise but gains a +3 bonus on Stealth rolls to avoid inadvertently revealing himself this way, in addition to the Low Satiety benefit, if available. However, he can still set off pressure plates, trip wires, and sensors that do not rely on vision.

Heart of the Ocean [Makara]

The ocean is vast and inhospitable. Sunlight stops around 700 feet below the surface, around the same time scuba divers start to risk decompression sickness, nitrogen narcosis, and oxygen toxicity. Below that are freezing depths and pressures that crush modern nuclear submarines. Abyssal plains cover 50% of the Earth's surface but have scarcely been explored; they might as well be the surface of the moon as far as humans are concerned. That is where the Leviathans dwell, darkly dreaming, as lords of the deep.

Dice Pool: N/A

Action: Reflexive or instant (Satiety expenditure)

Normal Effect: The Beast is amphibious. She can swim at double her normal Speed, see in the dark and through the murkiest waters, and adds her Lair dots as a bonus on all physical actions while underwater. Beasts with this Atavism gain the ability to breathe underwater, but they must take an instant action to give their lungs time to adjust when switching atmospheres. This Atavism also grants immunity to the cold and pressure incurred at great depths.

Low Satiety: Water whispers to the hungry Beast and leads her to her next meal, like a shark following the scent of blood... and water is everywhere. Every living creature is mostly water, and even the driest air has a little moisture. She can sense the general distance and direction to every nearby person, creature, or object that falls within the scope of her Hunger.

This sense is nonspecific. For example, a Predator knows where living prey can be found but not if they are human or animal. Since she is already hungry, though, she cannot afford to be picky. Furthermore, this Atavism only reveals that which could increase the Beast's Satiety, regardless of its current level.

Furthermore, this awareness supersedes the Beast's normal senses. She can perceive creatures and objects that are invisible to the naked eye. Any attempt to hide a viable target from the Beast with a supernatural power initiates a Clash of Wills.

Satiety Expenditure: It is water, not time, that wears away all things. Stronger than stone and even more unyielding, it carves canyons, erases mountains, and obliterates the works of Man. With the expenditure of a dot of Satiety, the Beast can call upon her kinship with water and unleash this relentless force on her surroundings. The blight is subtle at first. The area darkens slightly and the scent of saltwater fills the air. Metal rusts and corrodes, stone crumbles, and machinery of all kinds falters and breaks down.

Once the Beast invokes this ability, it persists whether she is present or not and devastates an area the size of a large building. Large structures such as vehicles and parts of the building take 1 Structure damage every 30 minutes. Small items like phones or weapons degrade even faster, taking 1 Structure damage per minute. This damage ignores Durability in both cases. Creatures are wholly unaffected but animals instinctively flee the area. The Beast can end the effect at any time if she wishes, but left unchecked, it lasts a number of hours equal to twice the Beast's Lair.

Infestation [Namtaru]

No Beast is ever truly alone, not even in his own head. The Horror constantly pushes him to fulfill its Hunger, and a Beast with this Atavism has it worse than most. Instead of one Horror, he has many, perhaps hundreds of insect voices. He

hears them buzzing and chewing and crawling over each other at all hours of the day. He can — and must — surrender to them on occasion, dissolving his body into a cloud of angry red wasps or a carpet of writhing maggots. He is them and only them and their only united thought is to *feed.*

Dice Pool: N/A

Action: Reflexive

Normal Effect: The Beast need not surrender completely. He can squeeze through narrow gaps just by loosening himself a little, turning his body into a gestalt assemblage of insects that still — barely — looks human. His skin ripples and bulges as they move underneath, and individual insects occasionally crawl from his mouth and other openings. They are quickly swallowed or burrow under his skin again, but the effect is... unpleasant to say the least.

The Beast can safely squirm through any opening at least one foot in diameter, including many air conditioning ducts and major water pipes. He can hold his breath indefinitely while doing so, effectively being many insects instead of a single bony mammal. However, his Speed is halved and he is unable to apply his Defense against attackers in a confined space, not that anyone is *likely* to attack him while he is in a pipe.

Low Satiety: The Beast's appearance as a unified whole is just an illusion, and a fragile one at that. Being less constrained by his bulky human form, though, he can go faster while squirming, moving up this normal Speed.

Push the Beast too hard, though, and he nearly falls apart. Pieces of him get dislodged and turn into a mass of chewing insects before reforming seconds later. The Beast takes bashing, not lethal, damage from firearms and piercing weapons. Since he can activate this Atavism reflexively, the Beast can use it to avoid damage from an attack in combat, assuming he isn't surprised (see p. 164). Ordinary fists and bludgeoning weapons do full normal damage, however, crushing multiple insects at a time. The Beast can brace himself for an attack, however, and turn the tables in horrible fashion. By giving up his Defense for a turn, the Beast can automatically inflict lethal damage equal to his Lair rating on any opponent foolish enough to strike him. The Beast's skin ruptures and thousands of tiny bugs or creatures sting the attacker.

Satiety Expenditure: By spending a dot of Satiety, the Beast surrenders to the hive within, and his entire body disintegrates into a mass of insects or spiders, leaving his clothing and worldly possessions behind. In so doing, he becomes a swarm with a radius of two yards per dot of Lair. The area is reduced proportionate to the amount of damage inflicted on him. In other words, the swarm is reduced to half size once half of his Health boxes are filled with damage. The Beast can also condense to attack a single target, inflicting lethal damage each turn equal to his Lair dots.

In swarm form, the Beast can move at double his normal Speed. That includes through any opening, no matter how

small, and in three dimensions, since the swarm can crawl or fly over virtually any surface. Furthermore, he can use other Atavisms, Nightmares, or supernatural abilities that do not require human faculties such as speech. Witnessing the swarm in action may be a breaking point for someone with a phobia of insects.

Limb From Limb [Eshmaki]

Some Eshmaki are stealthy hunters, like larger-than-life versions of great cats. Others rely on explosive bursts of speed and strength to run down prey. At the end of every hunt, though, is a glorious frenzy of teeth and claws, blood and screams, the Hunger for which tugs incessantly at the Beast's mind. He may look like everyone else, but mercy is not in his nature and he knows nothing of weakness.

Dice Pool: N/A

Action: Reflexive

Normal Effect: The Beast leaves his prey a bloody mess, causing gruesome wounds even with bare hands. The Beast can apply the Arm Wrack or Leg Wrack Tilt to his opponent after any single attack inflicts more damage than the target's Stamina. Likewise, victims are gored or decapitated if an attack kills them outright.

Low Satiety: No one walks away from the hungry Beast, not in one piece anyway. The Beast rends flesh by touch alone. His unarmed attacks inflict lethal damage with a weapon modifier equal to his Lair dots. The resulting injuries correspond to his monstrous nature. A roc's talons tear flesh, a giant's punches land with bone-shattering force, and a kraken's suckered tentacles leave behind angry, oozing sores. The victim is left gaping in shock and horror at wounds caused by nothing more than a brush of the Beast's ordinary-looking hand.

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast forces a partial physical merger with his Horror. By spending 1 Satiety, the player makes the Beast's next attack inflict aggravated damage. The Beast can thus tear ordinary men apart with his bare hands, which become smeared with blood and gore, and those facing him in close combat glimpse the Horror looming over him. This is in addition to the normal and low Satiety effects.

Looming Presence [Anakim]

Giants are not the only ones renowned for their size. Dragons, rocs, and kraken are all orders of magnitude larger and stronger than any human being, the cube-square law be damned. Beasts with this Atavism need not be especially tall, though most are significantly above average, but they are *always* intimidating, inspiring dread disproportionate to their height. People take notice of them and immediately stand aside.

Dice Pool: N/A

Action: Reflexive

Normal Effect: The Beast's actual height and weight are unchanged, but his *effective* Size is raised by (his Lair dots). Greater Size produces a commensurate increase in Health.

People instinctively react to the Beast's *effective* Size instead of actual Size. A Beast with 2 dots of Lair registers as being Size 7, the same as a grizzly bear, so people immediately notice and cower he walks into a room. Demonstrating his real height only compounds the strangeness of the experience. Disquiet settles over those in the Beast's shadow, granting him the rote quality on Intimidation rolls. Furthermore, the successful application of Hard Leverage opens one more Door than usual when using the Social maneuvering system, as people rightly fear his wrath.

Low Satiety: A hungry giant is a monster terrible to behold. He inspires fear in those around him, to the point that they quake at the thought of attacking him. Any opponent whose Size is less than the Beast' effective Size (as indicated by the normal effect of this Atavism) suffers a penalty to all attacks against the character equal to half the Beast's Lair, rounded up. This is in addition to the Beast's Defense and any armor he might have.

Also, after any successful attack, the Beast's player can choose to make a reflexive Presence + Intimidation roll (with the rote quality), contested by the target's Resolve + Composure. If the Beast wins, the target gets the Beaten Down Tilt (p. 327).

Satiety Expenditure: Onlookers suffer vertigo as the Beast's presence is dramatically amplified. When he stretches and stands up straight, he seems to tower over everyone even though his actual height remains unchanged. The Size bonus from the normal effect is *doubled*, meaning the player adds (Lair x 2) to the Beast's effective Size.

Additionally, his greater height accommodates a longer stride, making the species factor for the Beast 15 rather than 5 (meaning Speed = Strength + Dexterity +15). Many dead Heroes made the mistake of assuming Giants are as slow as in stories, and thus assumed they could outrun an angry giant.

Mimir's Wisdom [Anakim]

Giants have an unfair reputation for being ponderous and stupid. It was the Greek Cyclopes whose weapons helped the gods seize power, the titan Prometheus who gave the secret of fire to mankind, and the giant Mimir to whom the Norse god Odin sacrificed his eye for knowledge. Anakim were the first pantheon of the primeval cosmos, both brutal and cunning, and they preserve secrets from the beginning of time.

Dice Pool: N/A

Action: Reflexive

Normal Effect: The Beast's Horror sits at the Heart of his Lair like a spider in its web. It has an unblinking eye and faultless memory, and it pieces together patterns from his experience and knowledge ripped from those who suffer its nightmares. Occasionally, the Horror shares flashes of insight — so long as the Beast keeps it well fed. Its guidance yields several benefits:

- The Beast has the Eidetic Memory Merit for free.
- Any mundane attempt to deceive the Beast automatically fails. The truth is not necessarily revealed, but he knows when someone is lying to him or withholding informa-

tion or when a crime scene has been tampered with to conceal evidence. Likewise, he knows when supernatural powers have been used to affect his thoughts or perceptions (though he can't necessarily counter them).

- Once per chapter, the Beast's player can request information from the Storyteller that sheds light on the problem at hand. This information is impersonal in that it never identifies a specific person. However, it can answer questions like, "Where is the murder weapon hidden?" or "What leverage works best on this person?"

Low Satiety: Hunger in no way dims the Beast's awareness. It sharpens his mind to a deadly focus. He gains the rote quality on Mental Skill rolls aimed at sating his Hunger, such as Academics to research a valuable item (for a Collector) or Computer to ruin a rival by hacking his bank account (for a Tyrant). The penalty for using Mental Skills untrained is also reduced to -1, as the Beast falls back on the Horror's knowledge when his is inadequate.

In addition, the Beast knows one damning fact about anyone with whom he comes into physical contact. The Storyteller can provide the player with this information or simply give the target the Leveraged Condition, depending on the needs of the story. The fact in question tends to be one that the Beast can use to feed. A Ravager might learn what the target values most (so the Beast can then smash it), while a Nemesis learns whether the target has transgressed recently.

The Beast still benefits from the normal effect while at low Satiety. However, the starving Horror is not forthright with its knowledge, and the Storyteller can opt to provide misleading (but factually correct) information if the player requests it.

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast digs deep into the Horror's store of knowledge. Some consider it a drink from Mimir's well. Others describe visions of lives other than their own. Either way, the Beast claims a treasure trove of information. He gains his Intelligence + Lair dots in temporary Mental Skill or Library (p. 117) dots for the next 24 hours.

These dots are allocated as the player sees fit, including raising existing Skills. However, no Skill can be increased above the limit dictated by the Beast's Lair rating. This is in addition to the normal and low Satiety effects.

Monster from the Deep [Makara]

Kraken were said to be mammoth octopi in the Greenland Sea. Norse sailors reported that they lurked in the briny dark throughout the year, rarely surfacing, and then only to feed. Other cultures told legends of great sea-dragons leaping from the water to smash ships, or tremendous whales with gullets cavernous enough that a man might live in them for years. The Makara cannot aspire to such immensity — not outside of her Lair, in any case — but she can call upon her ancestry as a Leviathan to devastating effect.

Dice Pool: N/A

Action: Reflexive

Normal Effect: The Beast attacks with huge, sweeping gestures, more reminiscent of an immense monster attacking a ship than a human combatant attacking something of similar size. Opponents' Defense against the Beast's attacks is reduced by half her Lair (rounded up). Also, the player can sacrifice the Beast's Defense for the turn, and she inflicts the Stunned or Knocked Down Tilts on enemies.

Low Satiety: A hungry Beast with this Atavism is a shark with blood in the water, or a kraken choosing its prey from the floating survivors. The Beast's unarmed attack inflicts 2L damage. In addition, if the Beast makes an all-out attack (p. 334), the attack drives the opponent back (or up, or down, depending on the angle of the Beast's strike) a number of yards equal to the Beast's Lair. This inflicts the Knocked Down Tilt and may inflict falling damage or impact damage, depending on the circumstances.

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast hearkens back to the kraken with its many tentacles or the great sea-beast capable of smashing ships to pieces. With the expenditure of 1 Satiety, the Beast can attack everyone within a number of yards equal to twice her Lair dots, with one Brawl attack. Defense does not apply to this attack, though armor does. A character who can glimpse the Beast's Horror when she uses an Atavism (p. 122) can attempt to Dodge this attack (see Dodging, p. 164).

The Beast can use this Atavism to grapple her targets, but if she wishes to maintain this grapple over multiple turns, the player must spend Satiety every turn to do so. This attack adds the Beast's Lair as a weapon bonus and inflicts lethal damage. The attack works in a radius from the character's body; the Beast can exclude allies from the attack, provided she can see them. Savvy Beasts clear the area when their Leviathan broodmate prepares to breach.

Needs Must [Ugallu]

Most creatures have a far wider experience of the world than humans do, helping them avoid danger and making them more efficient hunters. A Beast with this Atavism shares some of their heightened senses, but she also has an esoteric "sixth sense" for finding and pursuing the object of her Hunger, whether it is priceless treasure or living prey.

Dice Pool: N/A

Action: Reflexive

Normal Effect: The Beast's senses are superior to any human's. She adds her Lair dots as a bonus on Perception rolls, including reacting to surprise. Furthermore, she ignores distance related penalties to Perception equal to her Lair dots. With a moment of concentration, she can read a sign from miles away or hear breathing in a closet at the end of the hall.

The Beast instinctively senses whenever a potential meal is nearby — that is, something that would increase her Satiety if consumed. This is particularly useful at high Satiety when the Beast's needs are exacting. A Nemesis *knows* someone has committed an unpardonable sin just by looking at them, a

Tyrant senses an opportunity for advancement, and a Collector realizes a priceless jewel is hidden amongst the dross.

This "sixth sense" does not penetrate any magical disguise or obfuscation, nor does it reveal any information other than the presence of a potential meal.

Low Satiety: The Beast fixates on the object of her obsession. She mentally marks a target, which must be visible and capable of raising her Satiety. She can then track it anywhere, regardless of distance, and automatically succeeds on uncontested rolls to do so. Furthermore, the Beast gains the rote quality on contested rolls to locate the mark, should he actively try to hide or evade her.

Unlike the normal effect, this ability allows a Clash of Wills against any supernatural form of disguise or deception, so long as the target is marked first.

If the Beast relies on theft or violence to obtain her meals, this ability can be a godsend. As long as her patience holds out, she can wait until the mark is alone or unguarded. This lets her control the circumstances of the encounter and maintain a veneer of social respectability.

The relationship between the mark and the Hunger can be indirect, such as a potential blackmail target or an executive willing and able to promote a Tyrant directly, so long as they are still capable of increasing Satiety in some way. The Beast can only have one mark at a time, but he can maintain it indefinitely, pursuing it to the ends of the earth if need be.

If the Beast's Satiety rises to 4 or more, she loses the mark. If she again drops to Satiety 3 or less, she can recover the trail if the player makes a successful Wits + Survival roll.

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast can mark anyone or anything and track it to the ends of the Earth, regardless of whether or not it could potentially raise his Satiety. Objects or targets thus marked do not count against the usual limit of having one marked target. In addition, if the Beast marks a living thing, she can see borrow its senses (seeing through its eyes, hearing what it hears, etc.) for a number of minutes equal to her Lair rating, once per day.

Relentless Hunter [Eshmaki]

Not all Eshmaki strike from the shadows. Some are simply unstoppable, refusing to die or even bleed until they have utterly destroyed their prey. A Hero might think he has the ability to harm such a creature, using special weapons or poisons. Many such Heroes die wondering what went wrong.

Dice Pool: N/A

Action: Reflexive

Normal Effect: The Beast has incredible stamina and pushes on through injuries without complaint, knowing it is only a matter of time before he is at full strength again. Flesh knits together, burns pinken and smooth, and bruises shrink to nothing in seconds. Lost Health returns at the following rate:

- One point of bashing damage per turn.
- One point of lethal damage every half hour.
- One point of aggravated damage every three days.

The Beast also adds his Lair dots on Stamina + Resolve rolls made to resist poisons and toxins, and he can remain wide awake and active for a number of days equal to (10 – his Satiety dots) before succumbing to fatigue.

Low Satiety: The Beast downgrades damage equal to twice his Lair dots at the end of any scene in which he is hurt. Aggravated becomes lethal, lethal becomes bashing, and bashing damage is fully healed. Furthermore, he relentlessly pursues his Hunger. He need not eat, drink, or rest as long as he is *actively* pursuing a Satiety increase, such as a Nemesis working through the night to set up an elaborate trap to punish the guilty.

Satiety Expenditure: As a last resort, the Beast draws his Horror into his broken flesh, filling in the gaps and borrowing the strength to fight. All bashing and lethal damage, *or* aggravated damage equal to the character's Lair, is immediately healed. Furthermore, the Beast cannot be stunned or incapacitated for the remainder of the scene, and suffers no penalties for injury. If the character's rightmost box is marked with bashing or lethal damage, the Beast keeps fighting normally, though he still dies from aggravated damage in his rightmost Health box.

Shadowed Soul [Namtaru]

Medusa dwelled in darkness. Not by choice, no, but to hide from her own hideousness. No mirror was allowed within her Lair, and no friendly soul came to visit her. Even the darkness betrayed her in time. It permeated her flesh and filled her eyes, opening itself to her, until there was no more refuge in the dark. Gnashing her teeth, she shut her eyes and lay in wait, listening to the silence of her Lair. She belonged to the darkness and it to her.

Dice Pool: N/A

Action: Reflexive

Normal Effect: Darkness is not only the Beast's natural state, it is her ally and does not impede her in any way. She can "see" in total darkness, including that created by supernatural powers, as if it were broad daylight. Furthermore, she is immune to the Blinded Tilt regardless of its cause. Even if her eyes are torn out, she can perceive shapes and movement in her environment using alien senses, though color is naturally lost on her. This is in addition to any environmental immunity granted by her Lair Traits.

Furthermore, the Beast can merge with any shadow large enough to contain her, temporarily dissolving her body into shadow substance. She is invisible, intangible, and impervious to physical harm in this state, but she can still speak and use her senses normally. She cannot move, however, except to leave the shadow, whereupon she regains physical form. Exposure to bright light or taking damage (such as from a magical attack) will also eject her. Otherwise, the Beast can remain in this state indefinitely. Natural means of seeing in the dark (such as night goggles) do not detect her, and supernatural means of detection provoke a Clash of Wills.

Low Satiety: The Beast can extend her senses through any area of contiguous darkness while in shadow form. That means she can look around corners, read papers from across the room, or listen in on conversations down the hall as long as even tenuous shadows connect her location and theirs. She has unfettered awareness in a completely dark environment. The Beast can only focus on one location at a time, but changing focus is a reflexive action. This ability is in addition to the normal effect.

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast deepens her communion with the darkness, which can transport her wherever it touches. For the rest of the scene, she can step into a shadow and "teleport" to another shadow anywhere in sight, assuming it is large enough to hold her. She can use this ability either while physical or in shadow form. Depending on the circumstances, the Beast can cross huge distances in a matter of minutes, all without being seen. This ability is in addition to the normal and low Satiety effects.

Siren's Treacherous Song [Makara]

Makara encompass all manner of creatures, each strange and wondrous in its own right. Some are cold-blooded behemoths floating in murk and staring with huge, lidless eyes. Some are saw-toothed horrors, forever swimming, their senses enlivened with the promise of blood in the water. A few are beautiful, even enchanting, by human standards — and that is just another lure.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Persuasion vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance (Low Satiety); Presence + Expression – Stamina (Satiety Expenditure)

Action: Reflexive or instant (Satiety expenditure)

Normal Effect: Deceit is the siren's greatest weapon. At its simplest, she can alter her pitch, timbre, and other vocal qualities to resemble any sound she can imagine, from another person's voice to a weeping child to haunting and ethereal music. Her voices carries unnaturally well, too, especially over the water or through fog.

The Beast can slip this ability into everyday speech and performances by subtly modulating her voice, adding her Lair dots as a bonus on all Social rolls involving speech or song (including rolls involving Animal Ken, as lesser creatures are just as swayed by the Beast's voice). Furthermore, she speaks to the darkness within each person and always counts as tempting their Vice when using the Social maneuvering rules.

Low Satiety: The hungry Beast cannot keep need from her voice, but others are fascinated instead of repulsed by her dissonant song, as long as it is not overtly threatening. The player rolls Manipulation + Persuasion and speaks or sings.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The victim hears the song, but recognizes it as a source of danger and avoids it.

Failure: Targets hear the song, but do not feel any compulsion to follow it.

Success: Listeners feel compelled to follow or investigate the source of the sound unless they successfully resist. Anyone who resists is immune to this aspect of the Beast's song for the rest of the chapter.

Once fascinated, the Beast's victim suffers her Lair dots as a penalty on Perception rolls made to detect and avoid danger, including being surprised. Traditionally, sirens used this ability to lure in sailors and make them run aground. They would then drag the sailors ashore and devour them, regardless of whether they were dead or alive. However, this ability is also useful as a distraction or as a precursor to certain Nightmares.

Satiety Expenditure: The unwary discount sirens as a threat because of their beauty, but the Beast's voice is a greater weapon than they realize. She can switch from an alluring song to a cutting shriek at a moment's notice. With the expenditure of a dot of Satiety, the Beast can unleash destructive blasts of sound for the rest of the scene. Each scream requires an instant action.

The player rolls Presence + Expression – Stamina as an attack against everyone in earshot except the Beast and her broodmates (resist with the highest Stamina rating among the targets). This attack ignores armor and any form of supernatural protection that does not shield the victim's senses. A successful attack inflicts 1 lethal damage per success, with the Beast's Lair dots as a weapon modifier. Anyone who takes damage from the siren's scream suffers the Deafened Condition in both ears until the wounds are healed. The shriek also shatters any glass in the immediate area.

Storm-Lashed [Ugallu]

As sky hunters, Raptors have a natural affinity for wind and weather, and tempests are often a prominent part of their legends. For example, the Nuu-chah-nulth tell stories of how Thunderbird spread storms as it flew, gathering clouds beneath its wings and carrying lightning in its talons. It was mighty and wrathful and people knew to stay the hell out of its way. Of course, Ugallu are not the only ones who call storms; any Beast whose Lair is lashed by wind and rain might make use of this Atavism.

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Athletics – Defense (Normal Effect); Wits + Occult (Low Satiety)

Action: Instant

Normal Effect: Weather no longer concerns the Beast. He suffers no adverse effects from wind and weather of any kind, including Environmental Tilts, although flooding still impedes his movement on the ground. He can comfortably walk through a blizzard, stare into a sandstorm without blinking, and hear over the din of a hurricane. Similarly, he is unharmed by natural or magically created bolts of lightning.

Furthermore, the Beast can create a powerful blast of wind by beating his Horror's wings or unleashing a portion of the storm roiling within his Lair. The wind gust has an effective

range of 5 yards per dot of Lair and has several potential applications, including the following:

- *Disperse*: The Beast can disperse smoke, tear gas, and other noxious fumes, creating a temporary area of safety or a clear path out of the cloud. Similarly, he can direct smoke or gas in any direction, though enveloping a particular target with it requires a successful roll of Dexterity + Athletics – the target's Defense.
- *Knock Back*: The Beast can knock someone off their feet with a powerful gust of wind. Doing so requires a roll of Dexterity + Athletics – the target's Defense. If successful, the target suffers the Knocked Down Tilt and is pushed to the wind's maximum range for the duration — or off the side of a building, as the case may be.
- *Sand in the Eyes*: The wind gust kicks up any sand, dust, or fine debris around the Beast and hurls it in his enemy's faces. He rolls Dexterity + Athletics – Defense against every target in front of him. This ability causes no damage, but a successful attack applies the Blinded Tilt to that target for one turn per dot of the Beast's Lair. Anyone wearing eye and face protection is immune to this attack.
- *Whirlwind*: The Beast creates a short-lived wall of wind that completely blocks thrown weapons, arrows, and other lightweight projectiles until the end of his next turn. This can be used to shelter allies as well as himself. However, it is useless against bullets and heavy objects such as hurled boulders.

Low Satiety: Dark skies threaten and the wind seethes with barely restrained malevolence in the hungry Beast's presence. Storms are likely if he stays in one place for very long. Furthermore, given a natural or magically created storm, he can call down bolts of lightning and direct them to strike any target he can see. This requires an attack roll of Wits + Occult – the target's Defense. Those struck by lightning suffer lethal damage equal to successes, adding his Lair dots as a weapon modifier. This is in addition to the normal effect.

Satiety Expenditure: Drawing down his Lair, the Beast unleashes a supernaturally violent storm upon an unsuspecting world. It could be a wind or sandstorm, tornadic thunderstorm, snowstorm, or anything else the player imagines, notwithstanding any Lair Traits he may have. The storm overrides natural weather patterns for one hour per dot of his Lair.

The storm counts as an Extreme Environment of a level up to (10 – his Satiety dots, maximum 4), causing property damage and injuries in an area several miles across. The player decides on the storm's severity when it is summoned, but can adjust it up or down as desired. The Beast is always at the heart of the storm when it first forms. After that, he can direct it to move (slowly) in any direction he wishes. Otherwise it follows his movements.

Titanic Blow [Anakim]

Walking thunder is the sound of a Giant's approach. Like jungle drums, like a heartbeat, like an oncoming freight train, it grows steadily louder until the ground shakes, the walls rattle, and dust sifts from the rafters. It is outside. It has your scent. The door shudders from its pounding fist and plaster cracks around the doorframe. Getting in is only a matter of time.

Dice Pool: N/A

Action: Instant

Normal Effect: The Beast lands a pulverizing blow that shatters wood and deforms steel. A Strength + Brawl roll is required to hit a vehicle or other object in motion, and her attack ignores an amount of object Durability equal to her Stamina + Lair dots, making quick work of doors and barricades.

Low Satiety: The Beast is eager for destruction and infused with supernatural strength. She ignores *all* object Durability when using this Atavism's normal effect, smashing through walls and heavy doors as if they were tissue paper.

Furthermore, causing any damage negates whatever momentum a moving vehicle or object may have, so long as its Size does not exceed twice her own. She can stop a speeding car dead in its tracks just by slamming it with her first. Of course, just because the car stops does not mean its driver and passengers do, too. They retain *their* momentum — potentially going straight through the windshield.

Satiety Expenditure: Rearing back, the Beast smashes the ground with her fist, causing a thunderclap that roils the earth, shatters glass, and blows people off of their feet. Standing structures within 10 yards per dot of the Beast's Lair suffer her Strength + Lair in damage directly to their Structure. Low quality or poorly maintained buildings may be irreparably damaged or even collapse outright, but the earth shock explodes windows, blasts open doors, and damages supports even in buildings designed to withstand earthquakes.

Anyone within the area of effect who does not succeed on a reflexive Dexterity + Athletics – Lair roll suffers the Knocked Down Tilt. The Storyteller may penalize this roll further if people are standing on ledges or precarious structures when the Beast strikes. Anyone in the air is obviously unaffected, but feels the shockwave pass over them. Those who are knocked down suffer one point of bashing damage in addition to any damage that may result from flying glass or falling debris.

Unbreakable [Namtaru]

Many monsters are surpassingly difficult to kill. They have thick, scaly hides, chitinous carapaces, or stone-like skin in addition to their great size, speed, and strength. Special weapons or circumstances are often required to harm to them at all. A Beast with this Atavism stands apart from normal humans, especially under close investigation. He has walked away from car crashes without a scratch and has never broken a bone in his life.

Armor from this Atavism is cumulative with mundane sources of armor and the Iron Skin Merit.

Dice Pool: N/A

Action: Persistent or reflexive (Satiety expenditure)

Normal Effect: The Beast has a 3/2 general armor rating at all times. The effect is not obvious; he looks normal, but knives skitter off of his skin and punches never faze him the way they would an ordinary man. As part of him, this armor provides full body protection.

Furthermore, the Beast's bones cannot be broken, rendering him immune to the Arm and Leg Wrack Tilts. His ability to lift and hold onto things is not affected, but his limbs can withstand incredible punishment without being dislocated or severed. He could effectively bar a door with his own arm, for example.

Low Satiety: It is a subtle change, but the Beast's skin seems more leathery or weathered than usual, often with scaly patches, discolorations, or the white ghosts of old scars in ugly crisscrossing patterns. His armor rating increases to 4/3. Furthermore, he does not suffer bashing damage if his armor reduces a lethal attack to zero damage (see Armor, p. 169). The Beast simply shakes it off and keeps moving.

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast's skin dramatically toughens as he draws the Horror into his flesh, steeling himself against petty human weaponry. Attacks from firearms and melee weapons inflict bashing damage to him for the rest of the scene. Unarmed attacks and other sources of bashing damage are negated entirely. His armor (still 4/3) applies to aggravated damage attacks.

Wings of the Raptor [Ugallu]

For centuries, people looked to the birds and envied their power of flight. But in nightmares, gazing at the sky wasn't an expression of longing, but fear. The dragons, the rocs, the great predators of the sky that could come swooping down to prey on the unwary, they all live on in the Begotten with this Atavism.

Dice Pool: Stamina + Athletics (Satiety Expenditure)

Action: Persistent (Normal Effect); instant (Low Satiety); reflexive (Satiety Expenditure)

Normal Effect: The Beast can't quite take flight yet, but she can glide and soar through the air and dive at her enemies with devastating effect. The character triples her vertical and horizontal jumping distances. As long as the character has a way to gain some altitude, she can glide up to a quarter mile per dot of Lair. She moves at twice her normal Speed rating while gliding, and can change direction at will. With a successful Dexterity + Athletics roll, she can swoop upwards, effectively climbing without using handholds (see Climbing, p. 152). She can dive-bomb a target, as well. This requires a roll of Strength + Brawl – Defense (provided the target can see her coming), with a weapon bonus equal to 1 per ten feet of distance that the character dives. If the Beast has a method of inflicting lethal damage (a knife, the Limb from Limb Atavism), the damage is lethal instead.

Low Satiety: When the Beast hungers, her Horror helps loosen gravity's hold on her. Now she can climb any surface, no matter how slick, for one turn of movement. She covers distance as if she were sprinting (see Speed, p. 156). Once she has covered this distance, she can jump and glide, as per the normal effect, or keep going the next turn. A hungry Beast can scale skyscrapers in this manner, and leap off into the wind at any time.

Satiety Expenditure: By exerting herself, the Beast can achieve true flight for a short time. The player spends a dot of Satiety and rolls Stamina + Athletics. The Beast can fly for a number of turns equal to her Lair plus the successes rolled. She moves at Speed x (Lair +1), and can climb in altitude, dip, swoop, or land as she sees fit. When the duration expires, the player can spend another dot of Satiety to reactivate the Atavism, or the character can simply glide to the ground.

Nightmares

All human endeavor is predicated on lies. "We are more than animals." "Monsters aren't real." "The dark is nothing to be afraid of." "You can do anything you put your mind to." Through their connection to the Primordial Dream, Beasts peel away those layers of platitude and deception, reminding their victims of the cold, ineluctable truth: that they are nothing but prey, huddled naked and afraid against the dark.

Nightmares draw from the same deep well of the Primordial Dream as the Families do. Unlike Atavisms, which are instinctual manifestations of a Beast's Horror, Nightmares must be learned, whether at the knee of some other monster or by ferreting them out from the deep places of the Primordial Dream. Certain Families are drawn instinctively toward specific Nightmares, but the fears called up by these powers are deep and fundamental enough that any Beast can manifest any Nightmare with equal facility. Familial differences are more apparent in the hallucinations and sense-images the victims suffer: The victim of an Anakim's "You Cannot Run" might see the Giant's vast tread easily keeping pace with his most desperate flight, while the victim of a Namtaru's is rooted to the spot by sheer, revulsive horror.

Moreover, as a Beast builds Kinship with the other monsters of the World of Darkness, she can draw upon their reflections of the Dark Mother to create *new* Nightmares based on the fears they embody. These "Kinship Nightmares" can vary dramatically depending upon the Beast and the monster in question. By claiming Kinship with a Nosferatu vampire, for example, a Beast can call forth the fears embodied by vampires in general, or by *Nosferatu* vampires in particular, or by *Saul* the Nosferatu vampire in very great particular.

Nightmares are expressions of deep-buried fears that go deeper even than the subconscious mind, straight to the collective soul of humanity. They can be debilitating — but in their own way, they can also be exhilarating. Someone in the depths of terror can run faster, fight harder, and react more quickly as his body's survival instincts kick into overdrive. Canny beasts use this to set their enemies upon each other, or even

TEN MILLION TERRORS

The Nightmares presented here, though they come with some suggested descriptive text, are meant to be customized in accordance with your Beast's Horror, Hunger, and Family. Every Beast is unique, and the terrible visions they inflict should reflect that.

Take, for example, the Bugs Everywhere! Nightmare. While its name and default description is perfectly suited to an insectoid Namtaru, it could just as easily be described as visions of a world made of rotting meat and putrescent organs brought on by a ravening Eshmaki, or one in which birds swoop endlessly from the sky to peck and scratch if the Nightmare's owner is an Ugallu. For an extreme example, a Makara might rename the Nightmare "You Are Drowning" and describe its effects as a vision of slowly sinking into the depths. The progressively increasing penalty of the Sick Tilt now becomes the crushing pressure making movement and concentration difficult, with the ongoing damage of the Poisoned Tilt representing the victim hallucinating his own death by drowning. The Makara's player might even rename the Tilts "Under Pressure" and "Drowning," respectively. Victims slain by this Nightmare might be found with seawater in their lungs, even hundreds of miles from the ocean.

Feel free to customize your character's Nightmares to reflect your vision of her Horror.

to give their servants and allies an edge as often as they break their victims' minds with horror.

While Nightmares are "all in your head" in the sense that only the victim experiences the effects and sees the hallucinations, that's not the same thing as Nightmares being "illusionary" or somehow "not real." The effects of Nightmares are very real and are quite capable of inflicting somatic injury or even death. Just because no one else can see the bugs crawling all over you doesn't mean they aren't there.

Nightmares function on supernatural creatures just as they do on normal human beings. Even creatures that don't dream or feel fear can tremble before the power of the Dark Mother. Such beings are, however, better able to resist than human beings.

Systems

Calling forth a Nightmare is a simple endeavor: the Beast simply touches her victim or meets her gaze and speaks a few words to trigger the ancient, buried fear that lurks in his soul. The victim doesn't have to understand, or even hear the words, and in fact the words are largely irrelevant. Some Beasts say something indicative of the Nightmare they invoke (e.g. "You're going to die up there," or "You're eating maggots, Michael.") Others speak a word of command, perhaps in an ancient language that resonates with the Horror. As long as the words are somehow tied to the Nightmare being invoked, they can even be worked into an otherwise innocuous-seeming conversation.

Nightmares are a product of the Beast's Satiety and connection to the physical world; a well-fed Beast is closer to the human world, and thus better able to tap into the more cerebral side of the Primordial Dream. Every Nightmare therefore has three potential effects:

Normal: This effect occurs if the Beast's Satiety is 6 or less when the Nightmare is invoked.

High Satiety: If the Beast's Satiety is 7 or higher when the Nightmare is invoked, this effect happens.

Satiety Expenditure: Regardless of the Beast's Satiety rating, the player may spend 1 Satiety to invoke this effect. For purposes of the availability of the High Satiety effect and the determination of dice pools, spending Satiety happens after the roll is made.

Example: *Lilit invokes You Are Not Alone against a security guard and elects to expend Satiety. She has Satiety 7 and Manipulation 3, contested by the guard's Composure. Even though Satiety Expenditure reduces her Satiety to 6, she can still invoke the High Satiety effect, and her dice pool is 8 (7 + 3 = 10, versus the guard's dice pool of 2).*

Unless otherwise noted, all effects are cumulative if the Beast wants them to be: a Beast with a Satiety of 9 who invokes a Nightmare and elects to spend Satiety gets the benefits of all three effects. A Beast can choose which eligible effects she applies with her Nightmares.

Nightmare effects normally last one scene.

EYE CONTACT

Nightmares require a Beast to make eye contact with her victims in order to invoke their effects. That contact is one-way — the victim needs to see the Beast's eyes, but not vice versa. This contact is possible through simple barriers like sunglasses (even mirrored) or tinted windows, but does not work when looking at a video feed rather than the Beast herself. Nightmares work on touch, as well.

Invoking Nightmares

Dice Pool: Varies, see individual Nightmare descriptions.

Action: Instant and contested, unless otherwise specified.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Nightmare fails to take effect *and* the Beast loses a dot of Satiety. If the resistance roll is a dramatic failure, the target loses a point of Willpower in addition to any other effects of the Nightmare.

Failure: The Nightmare fails to take effect.

Success: The Nightmare takes effect either immediately *or* when the victim next sleeps, as the Beast desires. If the victim is subject to multiple "dormant" Nightmares, he suffers one Nightmare each time he sleeps, in order of when the Nightmares were applied.

An individual can only be subject to one active Nightmare at a time. If the Beast invokes a second Nightmare on the same target, the new Nightmare supersedes the old one. If a different Beast does so, the attempt triggers a Clash of Wills (see p. 222).

Exceptional Success: The Nightmare takes effect; the Beast may either regain a Willpower point *or* invoke the exceptional success clause of the specific Nightmare she invoked. Note, too, that an exceptional success on a Nightmare may allow the Beast to create a new Chamber for her Lair (see p. 94). If the resistance roll is an exceptional success, the target is immune to the character's Nightmares for the rest of the scene.

Common Nightmares

These Nightmares are available to all the Children, and draw upon the primal archetypes of the Dark Mother.

All Your Teeth Are Falling Out

Your body is a ruin of wasted flesh and ragged skin. Age, disease, or infirmity have robbed you of your vitality, left you helpless and weak as the predators close in.

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Satiety vs. Stamina + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim suffers a –2 penalty to all Physical traits and temporarily loses access to Striking Looks or any similar Trait dependent on physical beauty. This penalty also applies to derived Traits (e.g. Health, Speed, Defense, etc.).

High Satiety: On Physical actions where the number of successes matter (such as in combat or during an extended action), any normal success generates only a single success, no matter how many were rolled. An exceptional success yields two.

Satiety Expenditure: 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 Physical action.

Exceptional Success: The victim also applies a –2 penalty to his Defense.

Nightmares and Social Maneuvering

Just about any Nightmare can serve as Hard Leverage in a Social maneuvering action. Even if the victim has no idea the Beast is the source of the Nightmare's effects (for example, if the Nightmare was set to trigger when the victim next slept), subliminal cues within the Nightmarish hallucinations push the victim toward the Beast's desires.

A Normal effect removes a single Door, while a High Satiety effect removes two. Satiety Expenditure removes one additional Door.

Behold, My True Form!

Oh God, how can that be its face? *Just looking at it hurts, like you're gouging out your eyes with shards of broken mirror. The memory of it crushes your heart, liquefies your brain. You'll do anything to not see that again.*

Unlike most Nightmares, Behold, My True Form! is a single attack action and does not have a scene-long effect.

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety – Stamina

Normal: The attack inflicts one point of lethal damage per success. Victims slain by the attack often show signs of supernatural cause of death: their hair might turn stark white, or their entire body might be turned to stone, salt, or some other material.

High Satiety: The attack roll gains the 8-again rule.

Satiety Expenditure: For every point of Satiety spent, a successful attack inflicts +2 weapon damage.

Exceptional Success: Apply one of the following Tilts in addition to the damage: Arm Wrack, Blinded, Deafened, Insane, Leg Wrack, or Stunned.

Bugs Everywhere!

Oh, God, they're everywhere. They're on the walls, on the ceiling, in your food, *on your* skin. *You never used to be afraid of bugs, but the sheer, squirming mass of them shoots straight past your rational mind and renders you catatonic with fear.*

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety vs. Stamina + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: Overcome with revulsion, the victim gains the Sick Tilt.

High Satiety: The bugs don't just crawl and writhe across the victim's skin, they bite and sting. On top of the Sick Tilt, the victim suffers the Poisoned Tilt with a moderate poison. While the damage inflicted is very real, medical examinations reveal no trace of venom in the character's system; the only cure is to let the duration of the Nightmare expire.

Satiety Expenditure: The victim is so distracted by the horror of his visions that they fill the entirety of his mind. Apply the victim's current penalty from the Sick Tilt as a *bonus* to resist or contest any other form of mental influence, control, or mind-reading (e.g. if the victim is currently sitting at –2 from the Sick Tilt, he gains a +2 bonus to resistance Traits when resisting mental influence, and adds two dice to any contested rolls against psychic powers). This is useful if a Beast wants to prevent a vampire from reading or altering someone's memories, for example.

Exceptional Success: The penalty from the Sick Tilt starts at –2 instead of –1. Alternately, if the High Satiety effect occurs, the poison inflicted by the Poisoned Tilt is grave.

Everything You Do Is Worthless

You're an imposter, and everyone can tell. You aren't prepared for this. The only reason you're even here is because of blind luck and happenstance. It's only a matter of time before something comes along and you can't fake it.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The Beast chooses a type of action. This can be a trait category (Mental, Physical, Social), a particular field (combat, infiltration, research, etc.), or any other reasonably broad category. Within that category of action, the victim's threshold for exceptional success is raised from five successes to seven.

High Satiety: The results of all of the victim's actions in the chosen category are listless, barely adequate, and uninspired. When the number of successes on a roll matters (for example, in combat or in an extended action), any successful roll is treated as though it scored only a single success. A rolled exceptional success counts as two successes. The victim may reflexively spend 1 Willpower to negate this effect for a single action.

Satiety Expenditure: As long as the Nightmare is active, the Beast may spend 1 Satiety to reduce the victim to a chance die on a single roll.

Exceptional Success: In addition, the victim's threshold for exceptional success on all other actions increases to six.

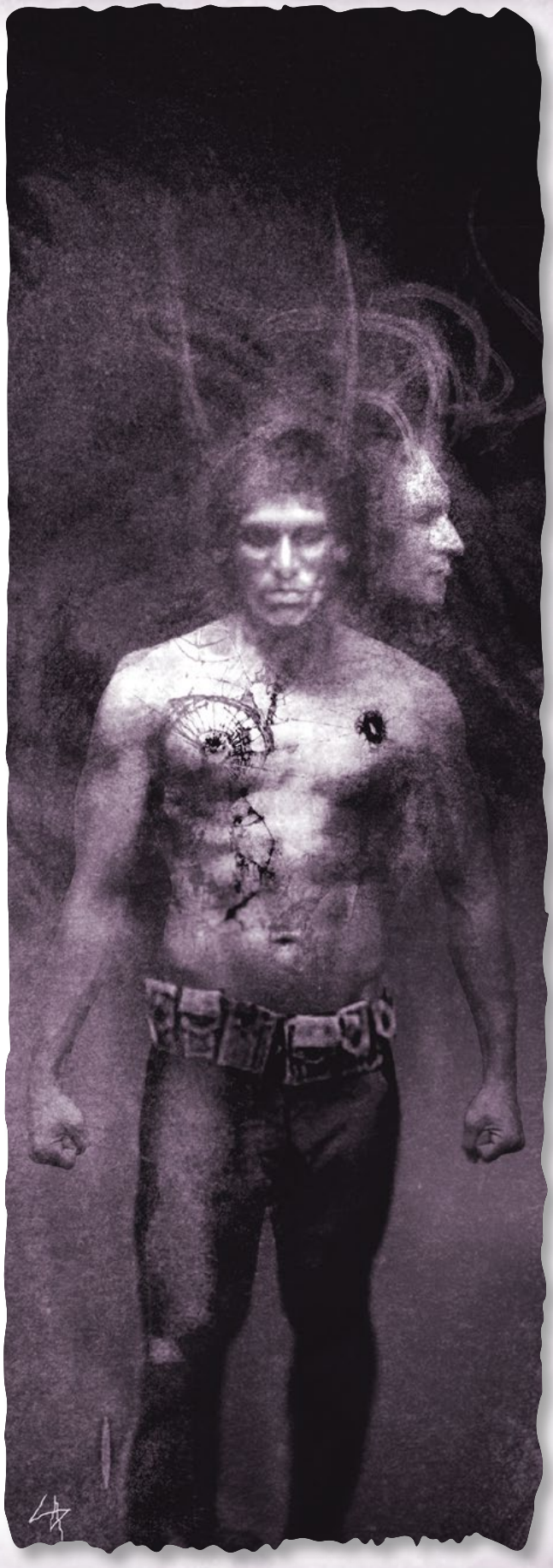
Fear Is Contagious

You see him panic, and it sets your teeth on edge. What could make someone react like that? Oh God, it must be really bad. Your heart starts to race, the world narrows to adrenaline-bright pinpricks. You recognize that look of fear. It's on your face, too.

Dice Pool: None, see below

Action: Reflexive

Normal: The Beast takes a –2 penalty on her roll to invoke another Nightmare. In return, she can affect two victims. Both victims must be valid targets as described at the beginning of this section. The Beast's activation roll is penalized by the *highest* relevant Resistance Attribute among both targets.



High Satiety: As Normal, but the Beast may affect a number of targets equal to her Satiety.

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast may expend more than 1 Satiety on this effect. Whenever a victim of the affected Nightmare has a meaningful interaction with another person, that character's player rolls Resolve + Composure – (Satiety spent). If the roll fails, that character becomes a victim of the Nightmare as well. "Meaningful interaction" here means anything more than seeing the victim: trying to speak with, restrain, or attacking the victim, for example, or being attacked or grabbed.

Exceptional Success: All victims are subject to the exceptional success result of the affected Nightmare.

Flying and Falling

Elation. Freedom. Pure, unrestrained joy. Suddenly, darkness. Loss. You're not flying, you're plummeting, racing headlong toward the broken ground below.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Satiety vs. Composure + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: Every time the victim rolls an exceptional success, he loses 1 Willpower. If he has no more Willpower remaining, the roll counts as only a normal success.

High Satiety: When the victim loses Willpower due to this Nightmare, the Beast gains 1 Willpower.

Satiety Expenditure: While the Nightmare is active, the victim's threshold for an exceptional success is reduced to three successes.

Exceptional Success: The victim loses 1 Willpower immediately.

Run Away

How could you ever think you could face it? You're like an ant trying to stand up to a tiger. It could snuff your life out as easily as breathing, lay open your soul with a glance and show you the things you thought were buried. There's only one sane thing to do: run.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Satiety vs. Composure + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim makes a heedless, headlong dash to get *away*. If the Beast invoked this Nightmare immediately, he tries to get away from her specifically; if the Beast set the Nightmare to trigger when the victim next slept, he just runs as though the Devil itself were after him, but with no particular direction or goal in mind. Either way, he keeps running until exhaustion forces him to stop.

If the victim was in the middle of a fight, his intent immediately changes to "get the hell away." Likewise, if anyone tries to stop him, he fights to escape and keep running.

High Satiety: The Beast can implant a subconscious hint for *where* the victim should try to flee, or specify another target rather than herself the victim must escape. Reaching that place of safety then becomes the victim's intent. If the implanted location is obviously hazardous (e.g. "Jump out the 50th-story window," "Go run into the interstate") the victim gains a +2 bonus to his Composure for purposes of resisting.

Alternately, the Beast can implant the suggestion that a particular individual is the sole source of safety for the victim; in that case, the victim's intent becomes "get to that person and stay with them." Any action on that person's part that even suggests an attempt to leave the victim behind will prompt the victim to do anything in his power to keep their source of safety from leaving.

Satiety Expenditure: The victim's panic is so complete that he doesn't pause or hesitate, even in the face of hazardous terrain. Any time the victim fails an Athletics action (for example, in a foot chase), he suffers one point of lethal damage due to nasty falls, cutting himself on fences, etc. On a dramatic failure, he instead suffers 4 lethal damage *and* a Tilt or Condition of the Storyteller's choice. This represents running into traffic, falling off a roof, etc.

Despite the danger, the victim adds 3 to his Speed as blind terror supercharges his flight response.

Exceptional Success: The victim never suffers the Beaten Down Tilt against people trying to restrain or stop him; in effect, he treats attempts to stop him as though their intent was to kill him.

They Are All Around You

They could be anyone. Anywhere. Everyone you know could have been replaced or suborned and you'd never be able to tell. Not until it was far too late, anyway.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Satiety vs. Composure + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim gains the Paranoid Condition (p. 324), which cannot be resolved until the end of the scene. The Beast chooses the signifier of the supposed conspiracy.

High Satiety: As long as the victim has the Paranoid Condition, he must succeed at a reflexive Resolve + Composure roll to avoid flying into a violent rage upon seeing the sign of the "conspiracy."

Satiety Expenditure: As long as the victim has the Paranoid Condition, he suffers a –2 penalty on breaking point rolls related to the "conspiracy." However, his threshold for exceptional success when acting against his perceived persecutors is reduced to three successes.

Exceptional Success: The victim also gains the Obsessed Condition with regards to unearthing the conspiracy against him.

You Are Alone

In a sea of humanity, you are an uncharted island. No one even notices that you're there, and no one will notice when you're gone. You are doomed, not to die, but never to matter at all.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: Any attempt the victim makes to interact with other people costs 1 Willpower. Even then, dice pools for any action meant to connect with others suffer a –2 penalty. Prolonged use of this Nightmare (roughly once a day per dot of the target's Composure) may provoke breaking points or adverse Conditions like Shaken or Spooked.

High Satiety: As long as the Nightmare lasts, basic human interaction (even as simple as meeting the victim's gaze and asking how he's doing) counts as soft leverage in Social Maneuvering actions.

Satiety Expenditure: The victim cannot benefit from or participate in teamwork actions. However, being accustomed to relying on himself alone, the victim does not reduce his Defense after being attacked until the third time he's attacked in a turn.

Exceptional Success: Any failed Social roll on the part of the victim is treated as a dramatic failure.

You Are Not Alone

Shh! Did you hear that? There's something out there. It's watching our every move, listening to every word we say. Don't look! It doesn't want to be seen.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim fixates on the idea that someone — or something — is watching him, and that a terrible fate will befall him if he sees it in return. He might squeeze his eyes shut, steadfastly refuse to look in a certain direction, or the like. The victim suffers a –2 penalty on all Perception rolls.

High Satiety: The Beast gives specific form to the victim's inchoate fears, naming someone or something as the thing the victim is compelled to ignore. Even if the thing stands directly in front of him unobscured, he will look away, refusing to acknowledge its presence, and won't remember anything about the encounter once the scene ends.

Satiety Expenditure: In order to avoid seeing what should not be seen, the victim gains monomaniacal focus on a task before him. The victim treats all Perception actions as Instant, rather than Reflexive; he must consciously steel himself to maintain any kind of situational awareness. (If the victim chooses not to use his action on a Perception check, he automatically fails.) However, he also lowers the exceptional success threshold for a single extended action (chosen by the Beast) to three.

Exceptional Success: All of the victim's failed perception rolls are treated as dramatic failures.

You Can't Wake Up

It's over. It was just a dream. You're safe now. Wait — what's that noise?

Dice Pool: None, see below

Action: Reflexive

Normal: The Beast takes a –2 penalty on her roll to invoke another Nightmare. In return, she can trigger that Nightmare again on the same victim, any time within 24 hours after the Nightmare's duration expires. The victim does *not* have to meet the Beast's gaze, or even be anywhere in the same vicinity as the Beast, when the Nightmare recurs.

High Satiety: The Beast takes a –2 penalty on her roll to invoke another Nightmare, and in return the victim is trapped in an unending cycle of nightmares. The Nightmare's duration increases from one scene to one full day.

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: None; an exceptional success triggers the exceptional success result of the affected Nightmare.

You Cannot Run

Don't move. Whatever you do, don't move. Don't breathe, don't even blink. It *will see you if you do. Just stay still, stay very, very still, and maybe it will go away.*

Dice Pool: Wits + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim's Speed is halved; he suffers a –2 penalty on any action not related to hiding or avoiding notice.

High Satiety: The victim freezes up completely: eyes wide, jaw clenched, muscles locked, not daring to move an inch. Any action the victim takes that isn't related to hiding, avoiding notice, or otherwise not drawing attention to himself requires a reflexive Resolve + Composure roll. If this roll fails, the victim can't do anything but remain as still as possible. In combat, the victim loses his Defense for the turn in which he fails the roll.

Satiety Expenditure: The victim gains the Fugue Condition (p. 323) with the triggering event of "being acknowledged by another person."

Exceptional Success: If questioned later, the victim is unable to remember anything about the time he spent under the effects of this Nightmare, beyond the all-consuming need to stay hidden.

You Deserve This

Look around you. Everyone knows what you did. Did you really think you could get away with it? Everything that's happening right now is karma, payback for your many, many sins. You brought this on yourself, and nothing you can do will make it right. All you can do is suffer.

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety vs. Composure + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim gains the Guilty Condition (p. 324), and cannot resolve it during the scene, no matter how much he confesses or tries to make restitution. After the scene ends, the Condition may be resolved normally.

High Satiety: As long as the victim has the Guilty Condition, he begins every fight with the Beaten Down Tilt. Even creatures that normally do not suffer the Beaten Down Tilt are affected.

Satiety Expenditure: As long as the victim has the Guilty Condition, he does not apply his Defense to incoming attacks. He may spend 1 Willpower reflexively on his turn to apply his Defense normally until the start of his next turn. However, his wound penalties become wound *bonuses* (i.e. with an injury marked in his third-to-last Health box, the victim has a +1 bonus to all actions instead of a –1 penalty), and he doesn't fall unconscious when his last Health box is filled with bashing damage.

Exceptional Success: The penalty inflicted by the Guilty Condition is –4 instead of –2.

You Must Obey

You're not in the driver's seat any more. You're looking out of your own eyes while something you can't begin to fathom steers you around like a puppet. Even thinking about resisting makes you feel sick inside.

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: For the duration of the scene, the victim is compelled to obey the Beast. Any attempt to ignore or countermand the Beast's instructions provokes a breaking point. Orders that would obviously harm the victim receive a +2 bonus to the breaking point roll. Orders must be simple, single instructions, and cannot be "queued." The Beast could order her victim to shoot his friend standing next to him, but if the Beast wanted his victim to drive across town, break into his friend's house, and then shoot him, the Beast would have to accompany the victim and give each order as the previous task was completed.

High Satiety: The Beast can issue complex commands, or multiple commands in sequence. She can give a number of orders equal to her Satiety rating at the time the Nightmare was invoked.

Satiety Expenditure: When acting to fulfill the Beast's commands, the victim either lowers the threshold for exceptional success to three successes *or* regains a point of Willpower. The victim chooses which before rolling.

You Will Never Rest

Moments stretch into hours. Days. You can't remember the last time you slept. Fatigue weighs at you, dragging you down, urging you to close your eyes and rest.

Dice Pool: Wits + Satiety vs. Stamina + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim gains the Fatigued Condition (p. 323) as though he'd been awake for 24 hours. If the victim has already been awake for 24 hours or more, add the time he's been awake to the results of this Nightmare.

High Satiety: Every success on the activation roll counts as 24 hours without sleep. Moreover, if the victim falls asleep as a result of this Nightmare, it's less a restful sleep and more a tormented coma: any attempt to wake the victim is reduced to a chance die, and the victim regains no Willpower from the sleep.

Satiety Expenditure: Rather than fall asleep, the victim passes into a highly suggestible state in which the Beast can mold his deepest fears. The victim gains the Frightened Condition (p. 323). The Beast may then define a number of additional circumstances equal to her Wits that will trigger the Frightened Condition in the victim as long as the Nightmare lasts.

Exceptional Success: The victim suffers a –2 penalty on all Stamina + Resolve rolls to remain conscious.

Kinship Nightmares

By claiming Kinship with the other monstrous denizens of the World of Darkness, the Children may spin new nightmares with which to terrorize their prey. In order to learn these Nightmares, a Beast must have given the Family Ties Condition to a monster of an appropriate type. The Kinship Nightmares presented here include suggestions of what monsters' Family Ties might grant them, but if you feel like, say, Your Rage Consumes You relates to your Kinship with a berserker Gangrel vampire rather than a werewolf, feel free to ignore our suggestions.

The following Nightmares are broad examples of the sorts of fear Kinship Nightmares might play upon.

You Are Infected (Vampire)

The poison is in the blood. You can feel it burning in your veins, calling out to you across empty miles. Run as far as you like, you can't escape the blood.

Dice Pool: None, see below

Action: Reflexive

Normal Effect: The Beast takes a –2 penalty on her roll to invoke another Nightmare, and in return she can target anyone who has tasted her blood within the last 24 hours, no matter where in the world they are. Even a tiny drop of blood is enough to trigger this Nightmare.

High Satiety: The Beast takes a –4 penalty on her roll to invoke another Nightmare, but does not subtract any Resistance Attribute from the roll. In return she can infuse a quantity of her blood with that Nightmare. Anyone who comes in contact with it (touching or tasting it) is immediately the victim of the infused Nightmare.

(Note: This Nightmare's High Satiety effect has a higher-than-normal penalty to compensate for the lack of a specified target's Resistance Attribute.)

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.

We Know All Your Secrets (Mekhet Vampire)

Our eyes are everywhere. We know every dirty, cruel, shameful thing you've ever done. You are as no more mysterious to us than an open book – and not a very complicated one at that.

Dice Pool: Wits + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim becomes convinced that some important secret (the address where his family lives, the bribes he took as a police officer, etc.; whatever the character deems significant and wants to keep hidden) has been exposed. The victim gains the Obsessed Condition (p. 324) related to making sure his secret is protected. (Naturally, if the Beast tails him long enough, she's likely to figure out what it is he's trying to hide.)

High Satiety: The victim's hallucinations implant the subtle but insidious suggestion that only the Beast can help the victim keep his secrets. As the victim lowers his guard and confides in the Beast, he suffers a –2 penalty on all Social rolls against her. If the Beast engages in Social maneuvering with the victim, she must open one fewer Door.

Satiety Expenditure: The victim suffers from a complete inability to keep secrets for the duration of the Nightmare. If anyone else is present, he compulsively blurts out anything that crosses his mind, no matter how much he might wish to keep it private.

Exceptional Success: Learning the secret the victim sought to conceal counts as fulfilling the Beast's Hunger (based Satiety potential of 3). See p.107, for more information on fulfilling Hunger.

Your Rage Consumes You (Werewolf)

Blood roars in your ears. Your vision narrows to red-tinged points as the bile rises in your throat. How dare they? What gives them the right? You'll make them regret pushing you.

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety vs. Composure + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim lashes out physically at whoever happens to be closest to him (if there's no one nearby he can perceive, he instead directs his rage at objects in the environment around him). He doesn't necessarily try to kill the focus of his rage, but he does attack until the target is at least unconscious or successfully escapes the area. Once the initial focus of the rage is down or gone, the victim "snaps out of it." Likewise, if the victim acquires the Beaten Down Tilt or the scene comes to an end, the Nightmare's effects end.

High Satiety: Once the victim takes down the first target of his rage, the Nightmare doesn't expire. Instead, the victim redirects his rage to the next closest target. The Nightmare ends only when the victim acquires the Beaten Down Tilt, the scene ends, or there's no one left to attack.

Satiety Expenditure: For the duration of the Nightmare, the victim never suffers from the Beaten Down Tilt and gains a +2 bonus on all combat actions.

Exceptional Success: Instead of attacking the closest individual, the victim goes after a target dictated by the Beast.

Your Tools Betray You (Iron Master Werewolf)

Every day you abuse the tools that make your life possible. You shake your phone when it drops a call, throw the controller when you lose a game, scream at your car when it won't quite start. Did you think there would be no consequence?

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety vs. Composure + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim suffers from delusions that his equipment is both aware and malevolent. On any action that requires the use of tools or equipment (for example, hacking a computer or fixing a car), he suffers a –2 penalty.

High Satiety: In addition to the penalty, the victim does not receive an equipment bonus from any item he employs. This includes the damage bonus from weapons, but Armor derived from equipment is not negated. Other benefits of equipment, such as the 8- or 9-again rule, are similarly unaffected by this nightmare.

Satiety Expenditure: On a dramatic failure on any action that involves the use of tools or equipment, the victim suffers 2 lethal damage.

Exceptional Success: The victim suffers a –3 penalty instead.

You Are Better Than Them (Mage)

They're insects. Beneath you. They can barely even see the world for what it is. If the one-eyed man is king of the land of the blind, you are its God-Emperor. Who can dare gainsay you?

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The effects of the victim's Virtue and Vice are swapped for the duration of the Nightmare: He may regain one Willpower point per scene by fulfilling his Virtue without having to risk himself, and regains full Willpower once per chapter by fulfilling his Vice in a way that poses a threat to himself.

High Satiety: For the duration of the Nightmare, the victim does not (and cannot) suffer from breaking points due to his own actions. Things that would normally prompt breaking points (such as murder, theft, or assault, or even nonviolent acts that are nevertheless fundamentally opposed to the character's self-image) seem as reasonable and as appropriate as having a polite discussion. In addition to making the victim potentially act wildly out of character, this Nightmare negates any penalties to Social maneuvers or similar actions that might arise due to breaking points. It's as easy to convince the victim to murder his boss as it is to convince him to loan you his car.

Once the Nightmare's duration ends, the victim must immediately roll for any and all actions undertaken during the Nightmare that would call for breaking points.

Satiety Expenditure: The victim sees his own desires as paramount, and anyone who would gainsay him as an enemy who must be crushed. As long as his actions are directed toward the fulfillment of his Aspirations, the victim earns an exceptional success on any roll that yields three or more successes. If, however, anyone stands between him and his Aspiration (whether deliberately or not), the victim gains "Destroy that person" as an Aspiration as long as the Nightmare lasts. "Destroy" doesn't have to mean "kill:" depending on the victim's Virtue, Vice, and Integrity he might try to ruin the character socially or financially, get her fired, or the like.

Exceptional Success: Each time the victim suffers (or would suffer, for the High Satiety effect) a breaking point in the Beast's presence, it counts as fulfilling the Beast's Hunger (base Satiety potential of 3; see p. 107).

The Void Is Waiting (Low-Wisdom Mage)

A book that is a universe. A set of mathematical formulae that graph nonexistence. A million chittering, hungry things desperate to be. *They're all out there. And they're all waiting for you.*

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim's mind is plunged into a vision of the Abyss, the toxic anti-reality that lurks between the World of Darkness as Beasts know it and the pure realm of abstract symbolism from which mages draw their power. This vision calls to the tiny sliver of the Abyss that lurks in every human soul, drawing that realm's attention.

The Abyss seeks to draw magic into itself in order to fuel its own existence; any time a supernatural power is used in the victim's vicinity (including by the victim himself if he has such abilities) provokes a Clash of Wills. The victim rolls Resolve + Composure if human, or Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance if not. Success for the victim means the power targets the victim rather than its intended target.

High Satiety: When the victim succeeds on a Clash of Wills triggered by this Nightmare, the user of the supernatural power takes lethal damage equal to the number of successes rolled.

Satiety Expenditure: The player may spend multiple Satiety on this effect. For every Satiety spent, the Beast may cause one attempt at activating a supernatural power in the victim's presence to automatically fail.

Exceptional Success: Each time the victim absorbs a supernatural effect in the Beast's presence, it counts as fulfilling the Beast's Hunger. See Satiety, p.107, for more information on fulfilling Hunger.

Everyone Hates You (Promethean)

You've suspected it all along. Behind their smiles, they're sneering at you, mocking you, laughing at your many inadequacies. It's only a matter of time before they turn on you completely.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Satiety vs. Composure + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim is so thoroughly convinced that everyone around him despises him that he grows defensive and snappish. He suffers a –2 penalty on all Social rolls.

High Satiety: The victim becomes edgy around other people, certain that they're only moments away from attacking him. He gains the Agoraphobic Condition (p. 321).

Satiety Expenditure: The victim is so certain that his friends and allies despise him that he refuses to rely on them. The Beast may spend multiple Satiety on this effect. For every Satiety spent, the victim loses access to a Social Merit that relies on his relationship to other people, including Status, Allies, Contacts, or Staff.

Exceptional Success: The victim treats any failed Social action as a dramatic failure.

You Cannot Kill It (Tammuz Promethean)

How can it still be standing? That shot should have dropped an elephant, but that thing just keeps coming. What chance do you stand against... that?

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Satiety vs. Composure + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: No matter how hard the victim strikes or struggles, he just cannot seem to wound the Beast. Even if he does land a solid blow, he cannot see the effects of his attacks. Not only does this rob him of any ability to gauge how injured the Beast might be, the sense of futility robs his blows of strength. All attacks the victim makes against the Beast inflict only bashing damage, regardless of the damage type they normally inflict. Attacks that make use of one of the Beast's Anathema (p. 208) are not affected.

High Satiety: The victim's attacks against the Beast reduce their weapon damage rating by two. (Negative damage ratings subtract damage from the number of successes rolled.) If a negative damage modifier reduces damage on a successful attack to zero or less, the Beast takes one bashing damage instead.

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast may spend multiple Satiety on this effect. For every Satiety spent, the Beast reduces damage from one attack by the victim to one bashing damage.

Exceptional Success: Any time the victim fails an attack roll against the Beast, the victim loses a point of Willpower.

You Are Lost (Changeling)

It was just here. Wasn't it? Were you supposed to turn left back there? None of this looks familiar, and night is closing in fast.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim gains the Lost Condition (p. 324). A successful navigation roll does not resolve the Condition until the Nightmare's duration expires; instead, a successful

navigation roll lets the victim make a single roll in an extended action to reach his goal.

High Satiety: Every time the victim fails a navigation roll while he has the Lost Condition, he suffers a dramatic failure.

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast may spend 1 Satiety when the victim fails a navigation roll. The victim's hallucinations guide him into one of the many alternate realities that abut the World of Darkness: the Shadow, the Underworld, or the Hedge, for example. The Beast has no control over exactly where the victim winds up.

Exceptional Success: The Beast can apply the Lost Condition relative to some abstract goal rather than literally "finding your way." She might, for example, render the victim hopelessly lost on how to proceed in writing a book or closing a business deal. Adapt the skill used for navigation rolls as necessary (in the examples of writing a book or making a deal, navigation rolls might be Wits + Academics or Manipulation + Persuasion, respectively).

You Are an Impostor (Mannikin Changeling)

You thought your life was your own. You thought you were a real live boy. You thought you had earned your triumphs and owned your tragedies. You were wrong.

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety vs. Composure + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim becomes convinced that he is a simulacrum, a hollow, soulless replica of the Beast. Seeking his own identity, for the duration of the Nightmare he is compelled to adopt a contrarian stance: denying the Beast's statements, deliberately acting against the Beast's advice, etc.

High Satiety: For the duration of the Nightmare, if the victim sees the Beast take damage or suffer an adverse Condition, he suffers the same damage or Condition.

Satiety Expenditure: The unreal cannot feel pain, nor sorrow, nor joy. The victim suffers no wound penalties and doesn't fall unconscious when his Health track is filled with bashing damage, but he cannot regain Willpower from fulfilling his Virtue or Vice, and all his failures on Social actions are treated as dramatic failures.

Exceptional Success: The certainty that he is a barely real fragment of nothingness robs him of a certain spark of inspiration; the victim loses the 10-again effect on all actions.

Death Is a Prison (Sin-Eater)

The blackness is waiting for you at the end of the road. Your every step takes you closer, your heartbeat drumming out a steady march to the grave. After this world, no heaven waits to reward you. No hell waits to punish you. At the end there is only silence and darkness.

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim feels death stalking close behind, numbing his limbs and sapping his strength. Every hurt he suffers seems to drag him closer to the Great Below, and to the endless gray waiting in that realm. Rather than taking wound penalties when his last three Health boxes are filled with damage, the victim suffers a cumulative –1 penalty for every Health box filled with damage. This penalty cannot exceed –5.

High Satiety: The victim's incipient death drives him to excess as he seeks to eke what little pleasure he can out of his remaining life. The victim gains the Wanton Condition (p. 326).

Satiety Expenditure: The victim becomes convinced that he is, in fact, a ghost. He must succeed on a Resolve + Composure roll to leave the vicinity of his "anchors," and any events that remind him of his "death" trigger a fugue state as per the Fugue Condition.

Exceptional Success: Like a ghost, the victim reverses the effects of his Virtue and Vice. He may regain one Willpower point per scene by fulfilling his Virtue without having to risk himself, and regains full Willpower once per chapter by fulfilling his Vice in a way that poses a threat to himself.

You Can't Take It With You (Bonepicker Sin-Eater)

All your pretty treasures are just a fetter, a trap set to hold you down. Your wealth, your status, even your loved ones: at best they'll come to naught but a line on your headstone.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Satiety – Resolve

Normal: The victim loses access to a number of Social Merit dots equal to the Beast's activation successes. The Beast's player may allocate these lost dots as she sees fit, but she cannot partially shut down a Merit with a flat cost. For example, if the victim has the three dot Merit "Inspiring," it cannot be reduced to a single dot. A scaled Merit like Resources, however, can be partially reduced. The "lost" Merits don't actually go away, rather, the victim can't seem to muster the energy to use them. It all just seems pointless.

High Satiety: Even as he recognizes the fleeting futility of all his possessions, the victim becomes obsessed with one single object or relationship in his life (chosen by the Beast) as emblematic of his legacy. He won't willingly leave the object or the subject of the relationship without a successful Resolve + Composure action. If he is separated from it, he gains the Deprived Condition (see p.323). However, as long as he's in the presence of his legacy, he gains the Inspired Condition.

Satiety Expenditure: The victim realizes with absolute clarity that his Social Merits are chains that he will never be free of — not unless he gets rid of them. The Beast may spend multiple Satiety on this effect, up to the number of successes on the activation roll. For each Satiety spent, the victim *permanently* loses one Social Merit dot the Beast blocked. He might give away his money and possessions, burn his bridges with friends and contacts, or forswear the vanity of physical beauty, for example. As with the temporary suppression of Merits described above, Merits with a flat cost cannot be partially destroyed. Finally, if this Nightmare is used on another player's character, the Sanctity of Merits rule (p.112) applies.

Exceptional Success: No effect beyond blocking a very large number of Merit dots

Tabula Rasa (Mummy)

Where are you? How did you get here? Who brought you here? For that matter, who are you?

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety vs. Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim gains the Amnesia Condition (p. 322) for the duration of the Nightmare. The Beast chooses a contiguous piece of the victim's life to erase — this can be as broad as "your early childhood" or as narrow as "from 6:15 to 6:25 pm last Thursday." The erased time must occupy a single block: the Beast cannot, for example, erase "every time we've ever met," nor can she erase a period longer than a quarter of the victim's life.

The victim's memory returns when the Nightmare's duration expires.

High Satiety: The Beast can erase the victim's entire memory, if she so desires. Moreover, she can selectively return any erased memory by touching the victim.

Satiety Expenditure: The Amnesia Condition remains even after the duration expires. The victim can regain it only through long-term therapy or supernatural effects. The Beast can remove the Condition with a touch as well.

Exceptional Success: As long as the erased memories are thematically contiguous, the Beast can take memories from any time across the victim's life, or she may erase facts or images from the victim's mind. She might, for instance, erase "every time you've visited New York" or "your mother's face."

Cursed Object (Maa-Kep Mummy)

All your troubles can be traced back to that thing. As soon as it came into your house, things started to go wrong. It's not your fault, of course, it's the curse–but how do you get rid of it?

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Satiety vs. Resolve+ Supernatural Tolerance

Normal: The victim becomes convinced that an object in his possession (of the Beast's choosing) is in fact cursed and will bring him nothing but misfortune. As long as the object remains in his possession ("possession" here can mean "ownership;" if the victim is convinced he owns a cursed car, the "curse" still affects him if it's parked in his driveway), he gains the Cursed Condition (p. 322). In addition, actively refusing an opportunity to be rid of the object requires a successful Resolve + Composure roll.

High Satiety: The victim's delusions also point him toward the Beast as the sole person capable of helping him get rid of the curse. "Disposing of the cursed item" counts as soft leverage for any Social maneuvering against the victim.

Satiety Expenditure: If the victim passes the "cursed" object to another individual, that character becomes the victim of this Nightmare.

Exceptional Success: Acquiring the "cursed" object counts as fulfilling the Beast's hunger. See Satiety, p. 107, for more information on fulfilling Hunger.

Creating Kinship Nightmares

By claiming Kinship with the other monstrous denizens of the World of Darkness, the Children may spin new nightmares with which to terrorize their prey. While a full accounting of the possibilities of Kinship Nightmares is beyond the scope of this book, this section provides guidelines for how to create your own Nightmares, as well as a few examples to get you started.

Step One: The Nature of Fear

Kinship Nightmares aren't an excuse for the Children to simply mimic the powers of their little sisters and brothers. No Kinship bond allows a Beast to learn a vampire's Protean Discipline or a changeling's Contracts of Darkness. Rather, by establishing Family Ties with another monster, the Beast may reach deep into the Primordial Dream to draw forth a nugget of the fear that monster represents and make it manifest in the mind of her victim. Exactly what that means depends as much on the themes of the chronicle as on the nature of the subject, and there's no one "right" answer. Likewise, the Beast creating the Nightmare can focus as widely or as narrowly on her Kin as she desires.

Take for example Bram Stoker's *Dracula:* In the novel, vampirism in general represents the fear of infectious disease: invisible, insidious, and seemingly impervious to modern science. Dracula's get, particularly in the form of Lucy and the Brides of Dracula, represent the terribly Victorian fear of the corruptive power of female sexuality. The Count himself represents the xenophobic fear of the mysterious and powerful foreigner who comes to corrupt right-thinking folk and take over the countryside. A Beast claiming Kinship with Dracula might create Kinship Nightmares based on any of those fears.

Before you start thinking about mechanics and effects, take a moment to think about what fear you're trying to elucidate. Here's where literary analysis can be your friend: all the good monster stories have the monsters representing something about the human condition, and it's that universality that Beasts tap into. Werewolves, for instance, often represent the fear that any of us could lose control of ourselves and do something horrifying, but they can also tap into fears about our bodies changing without our understanding or consent. In the World of Darkness, werewolves might also represent the fear that something alien and unknowable might decide that you need to suffer for reasons you cannot possibly understand.

"It's Scary Because It Can Kill Me"

While the fear of bodily harm or death *is* one that just about any monster can invoke, it's also a very surface-level fear that doesn't lend itself well to Kinship Nightmare themes. If you want people to be terrified of you because you can rip them limb from limb, consider the Common Nightmares You Deserve This, or You Must Obey.

Step Two: Effects

Just like Common Nightmares, Kinship Nightmares have three levels of effect: Normal, High Satiety, and Satiety Expenditure, plus an optional Exceptional Success effect. The simplest Nightmares have all three levels providing the same basic effect, just with increasing power: a progressively larger penalty to the victim's actions or more potent damage inflicted, for example. Others work off of a common theme, but provide increasingly broad or useful effects. Many Nightmares include a benefit to the target, usually at the Satiety Expenditure level, that can give the Beast's allies an edge born of mortal terror or sow chaos among her enemies.

Nightmares are internal, mental attacks against the victim. They can allow the Beast to put things *into* the victim's head, but can't take things out. As the name implies, all Nightmares build off of the emotions of fear, terror, dread, and horror. A Nightmare can't, for example, make the Beast invisible to the victim, but it can make the victim so afraid of seeing the Beast that he refuses to look.

Remember that even if the Nightmare's effects grant different benefits, you're still designing a single Nightmare built around the common theme you settled on in the previous step, not a grab-bag of wholly disparate powers. Work with your Storyteller to ensure that all the effects come together into a coherent whole.

Use the effects described in the Common Nightmares, along with the following lists, as a starting point for developing your own Kinship Nightmares. Feel free to come up with your own unique effects; these are just benchmarks to keep you on the right track.

Normal Effects

- -2 penalty on a certain type of action
- Inflict a Condition
- Require 1 Willpower to undertake a certain type of action
- Require a reflexive roll to undertake (or avoid) a particular course of action

- Modify the threshold for an exceptional success (raising it to seven successes for the victim or reducing it to three successes for those acting against him)
- Inflict lethal damage
- Alter the basic properties of another Nightmare (e.g. duration, targets, means of invoking, etc.) at the cost of a –2 penalty to that Nightmare's activation roll.

High Satiety Effects

- Grant 8-again on rolls against the victim.
- Inflict a second Condition
- Drain resources (Willpower certainly, but potentially more esoteric resources like Vitae or Mana)
- Influence Social maneuvering rules (adding or removing Doors, changing reaction levels, or bringing leverage into play)
- Increase the potency of the Normal effect (increasing penalties to –4, allowing more complex or powerful phenomena, etc.)
- Treat a successful roll as though it only earned a single success, or an exceptional success as though it only earned two.

Satiety Expenditure

- Dramatically expand the breadth of the Normal effect (Note: Satiety Expenditure shouldn't affect the High Satiety effect, since that would limit when Satiety Expenditure can be used. It's okay to give an option that increases the High Satiety effect, though.)
- Create a powerful, permanent effect
- Spend multiple Satiety to reduce a broad category of actions to a chance die (or cause a specific category of action to fail outright) on a one for one basis
- Compel a certain type of behavior
- Possibly grant the victim a bonus related to a supercharged fight-or-flight response

Step Three: Dice Pool

A Nightmare's dice pool always consists of the Beast's Satiety plus an Attribute, resisted by one of the victim's Attributes. Since Nightmares are mental effects, most of the time they rely on the Beast's Mental or Social Attributes.

- **Presence**-based Nightmares are all about overwhelming the victim with primal, animal fear. They might make the target flee screaming or curl into a ball and whimper, but either way they're essentially psychic sledgehammers.
- **Manipulation**-based Nightmares inflict a subtle, insidious fear: more nagging dread than horror. They're more likely to make the victim do something foolish, like run into traffic, turn on his friends, or go check out those weird sounds in the basement.
- **Intelligence** inflicts cerebral Nightmares, the kind of things that keep philosophers up into the small hours of the morning. They tend to distract the victim, getting him lost inside his own head as he contemplates his insignificance in the grand scheme of things.
- **Wits**-based Nightmares expose the victim's own weaknesses, laying bare his deeply buried demons or crippling him with self-doubt. These Nightmares often trick the victim into leaving himself vulnerable to the Beast in some way — walking into an ambush or ignoring an obvious threat, for example.

When choosing a Resistance Attribute for the victim, consider the nature of the fear being invoked.

- Contest with **Composure** if the Nightmare seems like the kind of thing that would provoke a hasty reaction. Composure resists effects that make the victim run screaming or lash out blindly, or effects that would incapacitate the target socially.
- Contest with **Resolve** when the Nightmare erodes self-confidence or long-term goals. Resolve protects against Nightmares that make the victim feel powerless or make him question his worth.
- Although Nightmares are constructs of mind and soul, those that target fears of the body, like health, attractiveness, or injury, are contested with **Stamina**. Any Nightmare involving psychic pain is a good candidate for Stamina as a Resistance Attribute.

Don't forget that supernatural creatures add their Supernatural Tolerance trait to their dice pool to contest. Also, a Nightmare for which the number of successes matters (each success inflicts a point of damage, for instance) is resisted, not contested (subtract a Resistance Attribute from the Beast's dice pool).

Step Four: Comparison Check

This step is more art than science, but the final step to creating a Kinship Nightmare is to compare it to other published Nightmares (and, if this isn't the first Kinship Nightmare your group has created, to other custom Nightmares as well). Look for any places where your Nightmare's effects are straight up better or more versatile than other Nightmares, and conversely places where maybe you've been a little conservative in your design, and tweak accordingly.

Example: *Say you've designed a Nightmare based on your Kinship with a space-warping wizard, a Nightmare that throws the victim into a twisted perceptual maze. Your first thought is that Satiety Expenditure could allow the Beast to make the target*

automatically fail any action on a one-for-one basis, but that's more powerful than the Satiety Expenditure effect of Nightmares like All Your Teeth Are Falling Out, which limits the same effect to Physical actions. You might consider changing the Nightmare to work on any action that relies on knowing where something is.

Finally, don't forget that your own custom Nightmares aren't set in stone. If, after a Nightmare has seen a few chapters of play, you decide that it's too strong (or not quite strong enough) or just isn't quite doing what you hoped it would, it's okay to work with your Storyteller to change it.

KRUSHED

Vampire. I'm hanging out with a vampire. Ben shook his head, still not quite able to believe it. The Halloween street fair moved around the two of them on the bright paths around the lake, a sea of fake monsters surrounding the real ones, a terrible live band thumping out a tune somewhere on the far shore.

Someone waved and it took Ben a moment to realize it was the kid he'd saved from Kyle a few weeks back. Ryan, he'd said his name was Ryan. Ben waved back but was glad when Ryan kept walking. His heart was racing, just a little bit faster because he knew Noelle could hear it. He caught her eye and they grinned at each other, teeth very bright in the dark.

"You really want to do this?" Noelle nodded her head toward the alley. If everything was going right, her "date" would be waiting already. It was so much easier when she hunted in her femme presentation, she'd told him. As Noel it took more effort and sometimes required a supernatural nudge to draw in prey, but as Noelle all it took was a carefully worded Craigslist ad. "It's OK if you don't want to."

"I do," Ben said, squeezing her hand. She was cold, but she would be warmer soon. His own Hunger was insistent, especially after tangling with those hunters of hers just days ago. Noelle stood on tiptoes to kiss his cheek and headed into the alley, the fringe of her flapper outfit swaying seductively as she went. It was dark, but darkness didn't bother him like it used to. He could make out the shape out the man at the end of the alley clear as day. Alone, too, which was good. It made everything easier.

"Hello, lover," Noelle crooned. The guy was so intent on Noelle that he didn't even notice Ben at first, just went to embrace her with a smile on his face. When he saw Ben coming up behind her, though, his face fell.

"Who's this?" he asked, irritation plain in his tone. Noelle's time wasn't cheap. "If this is some kind of shakedown-"

"Change of plans, love," Noelle purred, sliding into his arms and twining herself around him. Ben could practically see the lust warring with the annoyance on the man's face. "We're doing dinner instead."

"Private reservation," Ben agreed. He locked eyes with the man and found the fear he needed. "Just us, alone in the dark."

The man looked like he was about to speak when Noelle sank her fangs into his throat. For a few minutes the world was slow and red as she drank her fill and Ben's Horror fed on the thrill of the hunt itself, until they were both near drunk on it.

When it was over and Noelle had told her date his bedtime story and put him to sleep, she took Ben's hand with her warm one and drew him close for a kiss. "That was nice," she said, licking the last of the blood from her teeth.

"We make a good team," Ben agreed, dismissing the wall of shadows with a wave of his hand. Together they walked out of the alley and back into the Halloween fair, just two more monsters holding hands in the night.

TALES OF THE DARK MOTHER

MIA

Mia sat in the middle of the room and watched it fill with water.

The room was a basement storage room belonging to a corporation that did terrible things. Most corporations did terrible things, yes, but this one took pieces out of her family and stuffed them into people. They took the fangs from her undead brothers, the flesh from her shape-changing sisters, and even the strange, silvery liquid from her not-quite-human cousin. They were butchers and killers and they had no place in the world. They were not Family.

So Mia sat in the middle of the room and called up the ocean. She and her Horror had fed deeply the night before, and she was prepared to drown the whole place out, bring it crashing down upon itself.

Are they not family?

The voice was a beautiful song, played backwards and atonally. It was a clash of metal on teeth. Mia's Horror heard it, lurking in the dark corners of the world, and cringed.

Are they not family?

The voice was insistent now. Mia stood. The water was shin deep around her. They weren't family. They killed family. They were butchers and hunters.

And what are you? What are we?

We are the Begotten. The Children. We—

We kill. We cause pain. It is no shame to do as we do.

Are they family, then? Should they be spared?

Here is the secret, my beautiful daughter.

Mia steeled herself. She reached out and staunched the water's flow. If she had to flee, she would, but she needed to hear what her Mother had to say.

They are family, yes. Being family carries my love, my respect, and my power.

Mia smiled, and understood. "But not Your mercy."

No.

Mia flung her arms wide, fingers splayed out, and laughed joyously. Water rushed in, and she heard the building's supports groan. Maybe soon she could meet her new family. She hoped they would understand.

Chapter Four
Rules of the Feast

This section contains the basic rules for playing **Beast: The Primordial**. More information, system variants, and examples can be found in the **World of Darkness Rulebook, 2nd Edition** and the **God-Machine Chronicle**.

Traits

In addition to the supernatural traits of the Children, World of Darkness characters have mundane traits common to mortals and monsters alike. Attributes are raw potential, Skills are trained abilities, and Skill Specialties are specific areas of training in which a character excels. Willpower is the extra effort a character can bring to bear in a stressful or dangerous situation, when success is crucial or hangs by a thread. Willpower is also used for some supernatural powers.

Finally, most human characters possesses a personal Virtue and Vice from which he can draw strength and refill his Willpower, much the same way a Beast derives Willpower from her Legend and Life.

Attributes

Attributes represent essential traits that every character possesses by default. These serve as the foundation for most rolls in **Beast: The Primordial**. The nine Attributes are split into three categories: Mental, Physical, and Social. If a game rule refers to a "Social roll," or a "Mental action," that means an action that uses the appropriate Attribute category.

All Attributes receive one free dot. This reflects a below-average capacity. Two dots are about human average. Three and four reflect a high level of competency, while five reflects the height of human potential in that field. When creating your character, prioritize each category. The primary category receives five dots, the secondary four, and the tertiary three.

"Strong animals know when your hearts are weak, and that makes 'em hungry. And they start comin'."

—Hushpuppy, *Beasts of the Southern Wild*

Mental Attributes

Mental Attributes reflect your character's acuity, intellect, and strength of mind.

Intelligence

Intelligence is your character's raw knowledge, memory, and capacity for solving difficult problems. This may be book smarts, or a wealth of trivia.

Attribute Tasks: Memorization (Intelligence + Composure, instant action)

Wits

Wits represents your character's ability to think quickly and improvise solutions. It reflects your character's perception, and ability to pick up on details.

Attribute Tasks: Perception (Wits + Composure, reflexive action)

Resolve

Resolve is your character's determination, patience, and sense of commitment. It allows your character to concentrate in the face of distraction and danger, or continue doing something in spite of insurmountable odds.

Attribute Tasks: Resisting coercion (Resolve + Composure, reflexive action)

Physical Attributes

Physical Attributes reflect your character's bodily fitness and acumen.

Strength

Strength is your character's muscular definition and capacity to deliver force. It affects many physical tasks, including most actions in a fight.

Attribute Tasks: Breaking a barrier (Strength + Stamina, instant action), lifting objects (Strength + Stamina, instant action)

Dexterity

Dexterity is your character's speed, agility, and coordination. It provides balance, reactions, and aim.

Attribute Tasks: Keeping balance (Dexterity + Composure, reflexive action)

Stamina

Stamina is your character's general health and sturdiness. It determines how much punishment your character's body can handle before it gives up.

Attribute Tasks: Staying awake (Stamina + Resolve, instant action)

Social Attributes

Social Attributes reflect your character's ability to deal with others.

Presence

Presence is your character's assertiveness, gravitas, and raw appeal. It gives your character a strong bearing that changes moods and minds.

Attribute Tasks: Good first impressions (Presence + Composure, instant action)

Manipulation

Manipulation is your character's ability to make others cooperate. It's how smoothly she speaks, and how much people can read into her intentions.

Attribute Tasks: Poker face (Manipulation + Composure)

Composure

Composure is your character's poise and grace under fire. It's his dignity and ability to remain unfazed when harrowed.

Attribute Tasks: Meditation (Resolve + Composure, extended action)

Skills

Whereas Attributes represent innate ability, Skills reflect behaviors learned and honed over a lifetime. These are things that could be practiced or learned from a book. Similarly to Attributes, Skills are divided into Mental, Physical, and Social categories.

Skills do not receive free dots at character creation. Skills without dots are deficient or barely capable. Skills with a single dot reflect a cursory training. Two dots are sufficient for professional use. Three represents a high level of competency. Four is outstanding, and five is absolute mastery of the discipline.

When creating your character, prioritize categories. The primary category receives eleven dots, the secondary receives seven, and the tertiary four.

We've listed sample actions for each Skill; these lists are just common actions and should not be taken as comprehensive guides to where Skills can apply. We also suggest dice pools, but it's important to look at the context of the scene and apply the best Attribute + Skill combination for the events at hand. Also remember that equipment and environmental modifiers can shift a dice pool. We've listed some sample equipment and factors that could enhance Skill usage. You can find deeper rules for equipment in the **God-Machine Chronicle**.

Using a Skill with no dots incurs a penalty. For Physical and Social Skills, it levies a –1 die penalty to the roll. For a Mental Skill, it's a –3 die penalty.

Mental Skills

Mental Skills are largely learned as opposed to practiced. They reflect knowledge and procedure, lore and understanding.

Academics

Academics is a broad Skill representing your character's higher education and knowledge of the arts and humanities. It covers language, history, law, economics, and related fields.

Sample actions: Recall trivia (Intelligence + Academics, instant action), Research (Intelligence + Academics, extended action), Translation (Intelligence + Academics, extended action)

Suggested equipment: Internet access (+1), Library (+1 to +3), Professional consultant (+2)

Specialties: Anthropology, Art History, English, History, Law, Literature, Religion, Research, Translation

Computer

Computer is your character's advanced ability with computing. While most characters in the World of Darkness are expected to know the basics, the Computer Skill allows your character to program computers, to crack into systems, to diagnose major problems, and to investigate data. This Skill reflects advanced techniques and tricks; almost everyone in the modern nights can operate a computer for email and basic Internet searches.

Sample actions: Hacking a system (Intelligence + Computer, extended action, contested if against a security administrator or other hacker), Internet search (Wits + Computer, instant action), Programming (Intelligence + Computer, extended action)

Suggested equipment: Computer system (+0 to +3, by performance), Custom software (+2), Passwords (+2)

Specialties: Data Retrieval, Graphics, Hacking, Internet, Programming, Security, Social Media

Crafts

Crafts reflects your character's knack with creating and repairing things. From creating works of art to fixing an automobile, Crafts is the Skill to use. Beasts use Crafts to determine what's worth stealing (for Collectors) or wrecking (for Ravagers).

Sample actions: Appraisal (Wits + Crafts, instant action), Counterfeit item (Intelligence + Crafts, extended action), Create art (Intelligence + Crafts, extended action), Repair item (Wits + Crafts, extended action)

Suggested equipment: Point of reference (+1), Quality materials (+2), Tools (+1 to +3, depending on utility and specialty), Well-equipped workplace (+2)

Specialties: Automotive, Cosmetics, Fashion, Forging, Graffiti, Jury-Rigging, Painting, Perfumery, Repair, Sculpting

Investigation

Investigation is your character's skill with solving mysteries and putting together puzzles. It reflects the ability to draw conclusions, to find meaning out of confusion, and using lateral thinking to find information where others could not. Beasts often use Investigation to find Heroes...and vice versa.

Sample actions: Examining a crime scene (Wits + Investigation, extended action), Solving riddles (Intelligence + Investigation, instant or extended action)

Suggested equipment: Forensic kit (+1), Unrestricted access (+2), Reference library (+2)

Specialties: Artifacts, Autopsy, Body Language, Crime Scenes, Cryptography, Dreams, Lab Work, Riddles

Medicine

Medicine reflects your character's knowledge of the human body, and of how to bring it to and keep it in working order. Characters with Medicine can make efforts to stem life-threatening wounds and illnesses.

Sample actions: Diagnosis (Wits + Medicine, instant action), Treating wounds (Intelligence + Medicine, extended action)

Suggested equipment: Medical tools (+1 to +3), Trained assistance (+1), Well-stocked facilities (+2)

Specialties: First Aid, Pathology, Pharmaceuticals, Physical Therapy, Surgery

Occult

The Occult Skill is your character's knowledge of things hidden in the dark, legends, and lore. While the supernatural is unpredictable and often unique, the Occult Skill allows your

character to pick out facts from rumor. This is a common Skill for Beasts interested in their roots and their very natures.

Sample actions: Identify the sliver of truth (Wits + Occult, instant action), Relate two similar myths (Intelligence + Occult, instant or extended action)

Suggested equipment: Well-Stocked Library (+2)

Specialties: Beasts, Casting Lots, Ghosts, Dark Mother, Phrenology, Sorcery, Supernatural Being (specify), Superstition, Witchcraft

Politics

Politics reflects a general knowledge of political structures and methodologies, but more practically shows your character's ability to navigate those systems and make them work the way she intends. With Politics, she knows the right person to ask to get something done.

Sample actions: Cut red tape (Manipulation + Politics, extended action), Identify authority (Wits + Politics, instant action), Sully reputations (Manipulation + Politics, extended action)

Suggested equipment: Official position (+1 to +5, by Status)

Specialties: Bureaucracy, Church, Democratic, Invictus, Local, Organized Crime, Scandals

Science

Science is your character's knowledge and understanding of the physical and natural sciences, such as biology, chemistry, geology, meteorology, and physics.

Sample actions: Assess variables (Intelligence + Science, instant or extended action), Formulate solution (Intelligence + Science, extended action)

Suggested equipment: Reference library (+1 to +3), Well-stocked laboratory (+2)

Specialties: Physics, Neuroscience, Virology, Alchemy, Genetics, Hematology

Physical Skills

Physical Skills are those practiced, trained, and learned through action.

Athletics

Athletics reflects a broad category of physical training and ability. It covers sports and basic physical tasks such as running, jumping, dodging threats, and climbing. It also determines a character's ability with thrown weapons. Over time, most Beasts will develop at least the rudiments of Athletics; when hunts go wrong, sometimes chases are the only answer.

Sample actions: Acrobatics (Dexterity + Athletics, instant action), Climbing (Strength + Athletics, extended action), Foot chase (Stamina + Athletics, contested action), Jumping (Strength + Athletics, instant action, one foot vertically per success)

Suggested equipment: Athletic Shoes (+1), Rope (+1)

Specialties: Acrobatics, Archery, Climbing, Jumping, Parkour, Swimming, Throwing

Brawl

Brawl reflects your character's ability to tussle and fight without weapons. This includes old-fashioned bar brawls as well as complex martial arts (Chapter Three of this book and **The God-Machine Chronicle** offer numerous Merits to complement unarmed fighters). Most of the Begotten have at least a basic ability to defend themselves — sooner or later, it becomes necessary.

Sample actions: Breaking boards (Strength + Brawl, instant action), Hand-to-hand combat **(covered in the combat section, p. 163)**

Suggested equipment: Brass Knuckles (+1)

Specialties: Biting, Boxing, Claws, Dirty Fighting, Grappling, Martial Arts, Threats, Throws

Drive

Drive is the skill to control and maneuver automobiles, motorcycles, boats, and even airplanes. A character can drive a car without Drive dots; the Skill relates to moments of high stress, such as a high-speed chase or trying to elude a tail. It's assumed that most modern characters have a basic ability to drive. As well, Drive can reflect your character's skill with horseback riding, if appropriate to her background.

Sample actions: Impressive maneuvering (Dexterity + Drive, instant action), Pursuit (Dexterity + Drive, contested action), Tailing (Wits + Drive, contested action)

Suggested equipment: Performance vehicle (+1 to +3)

Specialties: Defensive Driving, Evasion, Off-Road Driving, Motorcycles, Pursuit, Stunts

Firearms

Firearms reflects your character's ability to identify, maintain, and otherwise use guns. This Skill covers everything from small pistols, to shotguns, to assault rifles, and anything else related. (You can find numerous Merits and further rules for firearms combat in **The God-Machine Chronicle**.) Beasts usually prefer more hands-on methods of inflict damage, but sometimes it's hard to beat the efficiency of a gun.

Sample actions: Firearms combat **(see p. 165 for more on how firearms combat works)**

Suggested equipment: See **p. 167** for a full list of firearms

Specialties: Handguns, Rifles, Shotguns, Trick Shots

Larceny

Larceny covers intrusion, lockpicking, theft, pickpocketing, and other (generally considered) criminal activities. This Skill is typically learned on the streets, outside of formal methods. However, stage magicians and other entertainers learn these skills as part of their repertoire. Collectors in particular are fond of Larceny.

Sample actions: Bypass security systems (Dexterity + Larceny, extended action), Lockpicking (Dexterity + Larceny, extended action), Pickpocketing (Dexterity + Larceny, contested action)

Suggested equipment: Crowbar (+1), Crowded area (+2), Lockpicks (+2), Partner in crime (+1)

Specialties: Breaking and Entering, Concealment, Lockpicking, Pickpocketing, Safecracking, Security Systems, Sleight of Hand

Stealth

Stealth reflects your character's ability to move unnoticed and unheard or blend into a crowd. Every character approaches Stealth differently; some use distraction, some disguise, some are just hard to keep an eye on. Many Beasts find it useful to be concealed until they are ready to make their horrific presences known.

Sample actions: Losing a tail (Wits + Stealth, contested action), Shadowing (Dexterity + Stealth, contested action)

Suggested equipment: Binoculars (+1), Dark Clothing (+1), Smokescreen (+2), Spotters (+1)

Specialties: Camouflage, Crowds, In Plain Sight, Rural, Shadowing, Stakeout, Staying Motionless

Survival

Survival represents your character's ability to "live off the land." This means finding shelter, finding food, and otherwise procuring the necessities for existence. This could be in a rural or urban environment. This skill also covers the ability to hunt for animals or, under the right circumstances, people.

Sample actions: Foraging (Wits + Survival, extended action), Hunting (for animals, Wits + Survival, extended action)

Suggested equipment: Survival Guide (+1), Survival Knife (+1)

Specialties: Foraging, Hunting, Navigation, Shelter, Weather

Weaponry

Weaponry is the ability to fight with hand-to-hand weapons: from swords, to knives, to baseball bats, to chainsaws. If the intent is to strike another and harm him, Weaponry is the Skill. (You can find numerous Merits for Weaponry-based fighting in **The God-Machine Chronicle**.)

Sample actions: Attacking another **(see p. 167 for more on Weaponry combat)**

Suggested equipment: See **p. 168** for a full list of weapons

Specialties: Chains, Clubs, Improvised Weapons, Spears, Swords

Social Skills

Animal Ken

Animal Ken reflects your character's ability to train and understand animals. With Animal Ken, your character can cow beasts or rile them to violence under the right circumstances.

Sample actions: Animal training (Manipulation + Animal Ken, extended action), Cowing an animal (Presence + Animal Ken, contested action)

Suggested equipment: Treats (+1), Whip (+1)

Specialties: Animalism, Canines, Felines, Reptiles, Threatening, Training

Empathy

Empathy represents your character's ability to read and understand others' feelings and motivations. This helps discern moods or read deceptive behavior in discussion. It is not inherently sympathetic; one can understand another's positions without agreeing with them. Many social Beasts develop Empathy as a hunting tool; there's nothing better for the hunt than saying exactly what the mark wants to hear.

Sample actions: Finding someone's pain (Wits + Empathy, contested action), Sense deception (Wits + Empathy, contested action), Soothing nerves (Manipulation + Empathy, instant action)

Suggested equipment: Muted clothing (+1), Relaxing environment (+2)

Specialties: Calming, Emotion, Lies, Motives, Personalities

Expression

The Expression Skill reflects your character's ability to communicate. This Skill covers written and spoken forms of communication, journalism, acting, music, and dance. Many Beasts find that a shared appreciation for the arts opens many doors with their extended family.

Sample actions: Composing (Intelligence + Expression, extended action), Performance (Presence + Expression, instant action)

Suggested equipment: Quality instrument (+1 to +3)

Specialties: Dance, Drama, Journalism, Musical Instrument, Performance Art, Singing, Speeches

Intimidation

Intimidation reflects your character's ability to influence others' behavior through threats and fear. It could mean direct physical threats, interrogation, or veiled implications of things to come. Most Beasts have some affinity for being frightening, given their ancestry. Tyrants, especially, find the Skill useful.

Sample actions: Interrogation (Wits + Intimidation, contested action), Staredown (Presence + Intimidation, contested action)

Suggested equipment: Fearsome tools (+2), Gang colors (+2), Isolated room (+1)

Specialties: Direct Threats, Interrogation, Stare Down, Torture, Veiled Threats

Persuasion

Persuasion is your character's ability to change minds and influence behaviors through logic, fast-talking, or appealing to

desire. It relies on the force of your character's personality to sway the listener. Collectors that don't want to take what they want by force cultivate this Skill.

Sample actions: Fast Talk (Manipulation + Persuasion, extended action), Firebranding (Presence + Persuasion, instant action), Seduction (Manipulation + Persuasion, extended action)

Suggested equipment: Designer Clothing (+1 to +3), Reputation (+2)

Specialties: Confidence Scam, Fast Talking, Inspiring, Sales Pitch, Seduction, Sermon

Socialize

Socialize reflects your character's ability to present herself well and interact with groups of people (alive or dead). It reflects proper (and setting-appropriate) etiquette, customs, sensitivity, and warmth. A character with a high Socialize is the life of the party. Socialize is a survival tool among other supernatural beings, where one *faux pas* could spell death and the Beast doesn't tend to know all the little nuances.

Sample actions: Carousing (Manipulation + Socialize, instant action), Fitting in (Wits + Socialize, instant action), Getting attention (Presence + Socialize, instant action)

Suggested equipment: Drugs (+1), Knowing People (+1), Money (+1 to +5)

Specialties: Bar Hopping, Church Lock-in, Dress Balls, Formal Events, Frat Parties, Political Fundraisers, the Club

Streetwise

The Streetwise Skill is your character's knowledge of life on the streets. It tells her how to navigate the city, how to get information from unlikely sources, and where she'll be (relatively) safe. If she wants to get something on the black market, Streetwise is how she'll know what to do. Beasts who specialize in Streetwise typically do so in order to operate beneath the law, and beneath media scrutiny. When wealthy people disappear, it draws attention. When the poor vanish, it's just a statistic.

Sample actions: Finding a shortcut (Wits + Streetwise, instant action), Working the black market (Manipulation + Streetwise, instant action)

Suggested equipment: Burner phone (+1), Known nickname (+2), Valuable Contraband (+1 to +3)

Specialties: Black Market, Gangs, Navigation, Rumors, Undercover

Subterfuge

Subterfuge is the ability to deceive. With Subterfuge, your character can lie convincingly, project hidden messages in what she says, hide motivations, and notice deception in others. Being able to lie is integral to life as a Beast, as it enables the Begotten to hide their business from mortal authorities, prying Heroes, and nosy family.

Sample actions: Disguise (Wits + Subterfuge, instant action), Lying (Manipulation + Subterfuge, contested action)

Suggested equipment: Costume Supplies (+2), Fake ID (+1)

Specialties: Detecting Lies, Doublespeak, Hiding Emotion, Little White Lies, Misdirection

Skill Specialties

In addition to Skills, your character possesses Skill Specialties. These are refinements of the broader Skills. These should be narrower than the main Skill, and help to define your character's particular expertise. For example, your character might have three dots in Firearms, but a Specialty in Rifles. He's capable with all guns, but particularly good with rifles. If you look to the Skill descriptions, you'll see example Specialties. The Storyteller is the ultimate arbiter of what constitutes a Specialty and what doesn't; Specialties that are too broad or too narrow can hurt the story or never come into play.

If a Specialty applies to your roll, add a die. Multiple Specialties may apply to a single roll, within reason. If you find yourself going to great lengths to justify a Specialty, it probably shouldn't apply.

Skill Specialties let you flesh out your character and offer a mechanical benefit. When creating your character, let Specialty choice guide his development. For example, there's a huge difference between a character with Brawl 4 (Bar Fights) and Brawl 4 (Aikido).

Virtues and Vices

Virtue and Vice are traits human characters possess instead of Legend and Life (Heroes, however, use Legend and Life, though their application is slightly different than for Beasts; see Chapter Five). Virtue is a point of strength and integrity in the character's life, while Vice is a place of weakness. This is just a brief touch on the topic; for more, look to **The God-Machine Chronicle**.

When choosing Virtues and Vices, use the following guidelines:

- Both should be adjectives that describe dominant personality traits. Don't use physical descriptions.
- Traits that describe existing Advantages, Attributes, or Skills similarly do not apply. For example, "Strong," and "Composed," would not work as Virtues.
- Virtue should be a point of self-confidence and self-actualization, but something easy and tempting to ignore. It's a higher calling if she chooses to walk the talk.
- Vice should contrast Virtue as a short-term, quick source of distraction from the world. It should be a hiding place when you're weak.

- Virtue and Vice must be different. The same adjective could work as both a Virtue and Vice in some cases, but a character must have two different ones.

Whenever a character acts in accordance with her Vice, she regains one spent Willpower. When she takes meaningful actions in accordance to her Virtue, she regains all spent Willpower. She can only recover Willpower from her Vice once per scene, and her Virtue once per chapter.

Integrity

Human characters do not track Satiety, but they still need to be mindful of their souls and psyches. While a Beast feeds her Horror in a horrifyingly literal sense, a human being needs to be careful that her soul doesn't fragment under pressure. The measure of a person's self-image, her psyche, and her soul's health is called *Integrity*.

Breaking Points

A character stands to lose Integrity when she experiences a *breaking point*. If the action would cause a character psychological stress, it's worth considering whether the action constitutes a breaking point. Note, too, that the character may experience breaking points that do not stem from his own actions. Witnessing the gruesome realities of the World of Darkness, supernatural or otherwise, can do it. As such, Beasts and other creatures can inflict breaking points by using supernatural powers in front of normal mortals.

When a character performs certain actions or endures certain experiences, he might reach a breaking point. A breaking point simply means that what a character has done or seen has outstripped his ability to rationalize or handle it.

A breaking point can fall into one of the following categories:

- The character performs an action that either violates his personal moral code *or* that is considered unacceptable in society.
- The character witnesses something traumatic, terrifying, or that rattles his understanding of the world.
- The character is the victim of a supernatural attack, whether physical, emotional, or mental.

Breaking points are somewhat subjective, obviously. A homicide detective with 30 years of experience in seeing dead bodies and hearing confessions of killers has a somewhat higher tolerance for human depravity than a sheltered 20-something in a middle-class liberal arts college. During character creation, it is advisable for the Storyteller to come up with several hypothetical situations so that the player can determine if, in her judgment, those situations would be breaking points.

Note that a breaking point is not necessarily something that the character considers wrong. A character might kill someone in a clear-cut, unambiguous case of self-defense, but the experience is probably still a breaking point, even if the player (and the character!) feels the act was entirely justified. Actions take a toll on the psyche, regardless of whether the actions were righteous.

The Nature of Souls

In the World of Darkness, the soul is not the seat of consciousness or conscience. A person suffering the Soulless Condition **(p. 325)** is still entirely herself, though her behavior may be distorted by her Virtue and Vice being inverted. She will eventually run out of Integrity and Willpower, but otherwise remain human.

Vampire illustrates the conscience point. Vampires have souls, and are in no danger of losing them through detachment from Humanity. A vampire can be a hideously awful person, but her soul? She's still got that.

This is also true of other supernatural creatures who have altered or damaged souls (Sin-Eaters, changelings); they're still the people they were before whatever changed their souls, to at least some degree. Beasts have ways of affecting souls, but nothing they can do makes a person into a fundamentally different individual purely by doing so.

Determining a Breaking Point

The Storyteller should determine whether a given action or occurrence counts as a breaking point for a character. If the character is player-controlled, then obviously the player should have some input into this process (**The God-Machine Chronicle** explains how to personalize Integrity in detail).

System

When a character experiences a breaking point, the player or Storyteller rolls Resolve + Composure with a modifier based on the character's Integrity rating:

Integrity	Modifier
8–10	+2
7–6	+1
5–4	0
3–2	–1
1	–2

The Storyteller can also impose modifiers based on how heinous the breaking point is, relative to the character's experience. The chart below gives some suggestions, but again, the Storyteller and the player are encouraged to develop the character's moral framework and life experience to the point that modifiers can be customized. Modifiers are cumulative, but the total modifier from circumstances should not exceed +/–5 dice.

Breaking Point	Modifier
Character is protecting himself	+1
Character is acting in accordance with his Virtue	+1
Character is protecting a loved one	+2
Character is acting in accordance with his Vice	–1
Witnessing the supernatural (non-violent)	–1
Witnessing the supernatural (violent)	–2
Witnessing an accidental death	–2
Witnessing a murder	–3
Committing premeditated murder	–5
Killing in self-defense	–4
Killing by accident (car wreck, e.g.)	–4
Causing visible serious injury to a person	–2
Torture	–3
Enduring physical torture	–2
Enduring mental/emotional supernatural attack	–2
Enduring physical supernatural attack	–2
Witnessing a supernatural occurrence	–1 to –5, depending on severity

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character's worldview has been damaged, perhaps beyond repair. The character suffers from traumatic stress. Lose a dot of Integrity and choose from the following Conditions (or create a new one with Storyteller approval): Broken, Fugue, or Madness. Also, take a Beat.

Failure: The character's worldview has been shaken and he probably questions his sense of self, his ability to relate to people, his own moral worth, or his sanity. Lose a dot of Integrity and choose one of the following Conditions (or create a new one with Storyteller approval): Guilty, Shaken, or Spooked.

Success: The character has come through the breaking point intact. He might feel guilty or upset about what happened, but he can cope. Choose one of the following Conditions (or create a new one with Storyteller approval): Guilty, Shaken, or Spooked.

Storyteller Characters and Integrity

The main reason to be concerned with the Integrity of a mortal character in a **Beast** game is that if such a character loses Integrity during a scene, the Beast might have the opportunity to make the surrounding area a Chamber in her Lair. The system for doing so is described on **p. 94**. If the Storyteller wishes, she can simply determine the result of the roll — if the Beast is deliberately *trying* to provoke a breaking point, for instance, the Storyteller might consider allowing the player to roll Presence + Intimidation or something similar to represent the Beast's actions, and making the breaking point a contested action.

We present the system here in its original, "player facing" incarnation, in case you wish to add a mortal character to your **Beast** chronicle.

Exceptional Success: The character somehow manages to not only survive the breaking point but to also find meaning in it, to reaffirm his own self-worth, or to pass through fire and become tempered by it. The character takes a Beat and regains a point of Willpower.

Speed

Your character's Speed is the number of yards or meters she can travel in a single turn. This trait is a combination of her Strength, Dexterity, and a species factor that reflects her age, physical configuration, Size and other considerations.

Other species, such as horses and cheetahs, have physical configurations that lend themselves to high travel rates.

Factor	Species
1	Turtle
3	Human toddler
5	Human adult
8	Wolf
10	Caribou
12	Horse
15	Cheetah

Rolling Dice

When your character is trying to accomplish something and the outcome is in doubt, you roll a pool of ten-sided dice based on his relevant traits and read the results to determine success. Most of the time, you roll a number of dice equal to an Attribute plus a Skill. For example, to get the cop off your back, you use your character's Manipulation Attribute of 4 and Subterfuge Skill

of 3, so you roll seven dice. If you have a Specialty (p. 154) that's relevant to the roll, add an extra die to your pool.

Each die that shows an 8, 9, or 10 is a success. Normally, you only need one success to achieve your goal. It's always better to get more successes — especially if you want to hurt someone, since your successes add to your damage in combat.

Every die that comes up 10 is a success. You also roll the die again, potentially scoring another success. If this second roll comes up as another 10, count the success and roll it again, on until you roll a number other than 10.

Many rolls have modifiers, either from equipment, circumstance, or someone working against your character. Most modifiers are within the range of +3 to –3, though they can range as low as –5 or as high as +5. Apply the modifiers to your dice pool before you roll. Add all the bonuses first, then apply penalties.

If your pool drops below one die, you instead roll a single chance die. The chance die only counts as a success if you roll a 10. Any other result is a failure. If you roll a 1 on the chance die, your character suffers a dramatic failure.

Roll Results

Your roll can succeed and fail in a few different ways:

Success: Your character's action goes off as planned. Achieved by having at least one success (a die showing 8, 9, or 10; or a chance die showing 10).

Failure: Your character's action fails. This doesn't mean "nothing happens," just that she doesn't get what she wants and complications are headed her way. Occurs when you roll no successes.

Exceptional Success: Your character's action succeeds beyond her expectations. Achieved by rolling five or more successes. Your character gains a beneficial Condition. (See "Conditions," p. 181.) Usually, the Inspired Condition is the most appropriate. You can give this Condition to another character when it's appropriate to the story.

Dramatic Failure: Your character fails badly, and things are about to get a whole lot worse. Suffered when you roll a 1 on a chance die. Alternately, once per scene, you can take a Beat in exchange for turning a normal failure into a dramatic failure.

When to Roll Dice

You don't need to roll dice for many actions. If your character isn't in a stressful situation — nobody's actively trying to tear his throat open, or demolish the building as he works — you don't need to roll. When the dice hit the table, the Storyteller should have some idea of what will happen if the roll fails, as well as if it succeeds. Sometimes that's coded in the rules. If you fail on an attack roll, you don't deal any damage. Other times, it's up to the Storyteller. If you fail a roll to jump between buildings with the prince's hit-squad on your tail, do you make it but fall on the other side, grab the next building by your fingertips, or plummet to the alley below?

Circumstance and Equipment

Sometimes, fortune favors your character. Other times she gives it a helping hand by packing the right tools for the job. The Storyteller should weight how the circumstances affect a character's chance of success. A slight advantage — picking an old and damaged lock — might be worth a bonus die, while a stressful situation — trying to pick a lock while people are shooting at you — might subtract three dice from your pool. Most of the time, the modifier from circumstances will be between +3 and –3, though in very rare cases — picking a lock while the room is *on fire* — it can range from +5 to –5.

Bringing the right equipment for a task also gives you extra dice to roll. A sharp suit might give bonus dice when trying to convince the CEO that your character knows the best plan, while a good pair of running shoes will help her escape from the things lurking in the shadows. Most equipment offers a +1 to +3 die bonus. A top-of-the-line or custom item might give a +4 or +5 die bonus, but such items often cost more than just money. When a task is impossible without some kind of equipment — hacking a computer, or driving a car — equipment bonuses indicate how far your tools are above the baseline. A beat-up old station wagon might not add any dice to a Drive roll, but a top-of-the-line sports car may add +4 or even +5 dice.

Willpower

A character's Willpower represents her determination and her ability to go above and beyond what should be possible to achieve her goals. Spending a point of Willpower adds a +3 die bonus to most dice pools, or +2 to a Resistance trait. You can only spend one point of Willpower per action.

Attribute Tasks

Some actions require no special expertise to perform. Mostly, these come in the form of Wits + Composure rolls to notice something that doesn't seem right, or using Strength + Stamina rolls to lift something. In these rolls, you add two different Attributes together to make your dice pool. If an action doesn't seem to involve any particular Skill, it can be handled by an Attribute Task.

Muddling Through

If your character has no dots in an applicable Skill, the Storyteller may allow you to roll your Attribute as a dice pool. Your character's dice pool suffers a penalty for being untrained: if the roll would involve a Mental Skill, you take a –3 die penalty, while a Physical or Social Skill applies a –1 die penalty.

Actions

The majority of actions in the game are *instant* actions. They represent acts that only take a couple of seconds. In combat, an instant action takes up your turn.

A *reflexive* action is the sort of thing you don't even need to think about doing. Most rolls to resist supernatural powers

are reflexive. You can take a reflexive action at any time, and it doesn't take your turn in combat.

When two people fight over a specific goal, they engage in a *contested* action. You roll your dice pool and the Storyteller (or other player) rolls the dice pool for the other party. Whoever rolls the most successes is the victor. Note that you count the total number of successes rolled when working out if you scored an exceptional success — don't subtract the other party's successes from yours. A contested action takes up the action of the person initiating the action; resisting it is a reflexive action.

Extended Actions

An *extended* action is an attempt to complete a complex task. You roll your dice pool multiple times. Each roll takes a certain amount of time, and represents a step in the process — your character either makes significant progress or faces a setback. You determine your dice pool for the action as normal — Attribute + Skill + Modifiers. Make a note of your Attribute + Skill + Specialty (if any); that's the maximum number of times you can roll before the action fails.

When you take an extended action, the Storyteller determines how many successes you require. Most actions require between five and twenty successes. Five reflects a reasonable action that competent characters can achieve with the right tools and knowledge. Ten represents a difficult action that's still realistic for a professional in a field. Twenty represents a very difficult action that even a particularly skilled character will have trouble pulling off.

The Storyteller also determines the interval between rolls. If an action would take weeks to complete, she might consider one roll per week. If it's likely to take a day's work, one roll per hour makes for a solid timeframe.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: In addition to the effects of a failure, the first roll on a further attempt suffers a –2 die penalty.

Failure: You face a setback. The Storyteller will offer you a choice: take a Condition of her choice or abandon the action. You can offer a different Condition if you think it makes sense. If you refuse or cannot agree on a Condition, you lose all accumulated successes **(see "Conditions," p. 181)**.

Success: Add the successes scored on the roll to your running total. Work with the Storyteller to determine what steps your character has taken towards his goal.

Exceptional Success: Choose one of: Reduce the number of successes required by your character's Skill dots, reduce the time on each following roll by a quarter, or apply the exceptional success result of the action when you complete your goal.

Resistance

Sometimes, an action is resisted. You roll your Attribute + Skill, but apply a modifier of one of your opponent's Resistance Attributes (Resolve, Stamina, or Composure), or your opponent's Defense. This resistance is over and above any other modifiers applied to the dice pool.

If you're not sure whether to use resistance or a contested action, use this guideline: Resistance applies in situations where the number of successes on the roll is an important factor. If what matters is just whether the roll succeeds or not, use a contested action. For example, combat applies Defense as a resistance because the number of successes on the roll determines how badly the attacker messes up his victim. A supernatural power that puts a victim in your thrall uses a contested action, because the number of successes that you roll doesn't matter to the power.

When uncanny powers are involved, supernatural creatures can sometimes add an additional trait, called Supernatural Tolerance. The Supernatural Tolerance trait for Beasts is Lair. Supernatural Tolerance is further explained on p. 222.

Common Actions

Here are some sample ways you can apply your Skills. Remember, you can invent your own at any time.

Argument

(Intelligence + Expression – Victim's Resolve)

You try to sway someone with a rational argument. (If arguing with a crowd, use the highest Resolve in the crowd.) (See also Social Maneuvering, p. 161.)

- **Dramatic Failure:** You convince them of quite the opposite.
- **Failure:** They listen, but are ultimately unaffected.
- **Success:** They accept the truth (or apparent truth) of your words.
- **Exceptional Success:** They're convinced, and become a recruit to your point of view. Though they might change their minds if they find themselves at risk.

Carousing

(Presence + Socialize or Streetwise)

You mix with a group, bringing high spirits with you and using them to loosen tongues.

- **Dramatic Failure:** A faux pas reveals that you don't belong...and maybe even hints at your supernatural nature.
- **Failure:** You end up a wallflower, with a drink in your hand that you don't even want.
- **Success:** You make a single-serving friend, who might be willing to pass secrets or go with you somewhere private.
- **Exceptional Success:** You make a friend you can contact again.

Fast Talk

(Manipulation + Subterfuge – Victim's Composure)

You may not be able to win the argument with facts, but you can try to get out of trouble with a little judicious spin.

- **Dramatic Failure:** The other party has a good idea what the truth is.
- **Failure:** The other party doesn't believe you.
- **Success:** The other party swallows your story.
- **Exceptional Success:** The other party believes you so thoroughly that they're even willing to offer a little aid... though they won't put themselves at any kind of risk.

Interrogation

(Manipulation + Empathy or Intimidation – Victim's Resolve)

You try to dig secrets out of a reluctant informant. (See also Social Maneuvering, p. 161.)

- **Dramatic Failure:** The informant is so alienated or injured that he will no longer reveal information.
- **Failure:** The informant blabs a mix of truth and falsehood — even he may not know the difference.
- **Success:** You get the information you were looking for.
- **Exceptional Success:** You get the information you were looking for, and the informant is willing to continue cooperating.

Intimidation

(Strength or Manipulation + Intimidation – Victim's Composure)

You try to get someone to do what you want by making them afraid of you.

- **Dramatic Failure:** They don't take you seriously, even if you knock them around a bit. They won't be doing what you want.
- **Failure:** They're unimpressed with your threats.
- **Success:** They're coerced into helping you.
- **Exceptional Success:** They develop a lasting fear of you, which could make them easier to coerce in the future.

INVESTIGATING A SCENE
(INTELLIGENCE + INVESTIGATION)

You look for clues to what's happened in the recent past… or tidy up so that no one else can find them.

- **Dramatic Failure:** You find clues, but you contaminate them, or you leave evidence of your presence.
- **Failure:** You find evidence, but it's damaged and hard to interpret. Or you miss a spot in your cleanup that you won't find out about until later.
- **Success:** You find a clue of exactly the sort you need, or manage to significantly confuse future investigators.
- **Exceptional Success:** You find a clue, and know exactly how it fits in, or you leave the scene immaculate and impossible to decipher.

JUMPING
(STRENGTH + ATHLETICS)

To get past an obstacle or get out of danger, you leap into the air.

- **Dramatic Failure:** The task not only fails but your character loses her balance.
- **Failure:** Your character doesn't achieve any significant distance at all — she jumps too early, has a false start, or loses her nerve.
- **Success:** Your character leaps a number of feet equal to the successes rolled, or a number of meters equal to the successes rolled divided by three.
- **Exceptional Success:** Your character leaps an impressive distance. If successes gained exceed the amount required to make the jump, your character may attempt another instant action in the air (say, firing a shot) or upon landing (maybe running up to her Speed), at the Storyteller's discretion.

REPAIR
(INTELLIGENCE + CRAFTS)

You try to fix something that's broken down.

- **Dramatic Failure:** The broken object's a lost cause. It'll never work again.
- **Failure:** You're stymied by the problem, but could come back to it in another scene.
- **Success:** You get the thing working…for now.
- **Exceptional Success:** The object works better than before. It won't break again anytime soon.

RESEARCH
(INTELLIGENCE + ACADEMICS OR OCCULT)

Using your existing knowledge, you look for information on a current mystery.

- **Dramatic Failure:** You learn something, but it doesn't help. In fact, it sets you back. If using Occult, this could mean dangerously false assumptions.
- **Failure:** You turn up a lot of promising leads, but they're all dead ends.
- **Success:** You find the basic facts you were looking for.
- **Exceptional Success:** You find what you were looking for, and leads towards a much bigger score of information.

SHADOWING A MARK
(WITS + STEALTH OR DRIVE VS. WITS + COMPOSURE)

You follow someone, perhaps in the hopes of ambushing them, or of finding out their destination.

- **Dramatic Failure:** You're caught, either by the mark or some observer that's become suspicious of you.
- **Failure:** The mark senses he's being followed, and manages to lose you.
- **Success:** You follow the mark to his destination.
- **Exceptional Success:** You find some means by which you can continue following the mark, such as an unlocked entrance into the building he arrived at.

SNEAKING
(DEXTERITY + STEALTH VS. WITS + COMPOSURE)

You're trying to avoid notice by someone…or multiple someones. Maybe you want to get into a place undetected. Maybe you're trying to break out.

- **Dramatic Failure:** You attract a lot of attention…enough that now it's going to be hard to get out.
- **Failure:** You're noticed, but still have the chance to slip away.
- **Success:** You avoid notice and get closer to your goal.
- **Exceptional Success:** You avoid notice and get away before anyone has another chance to catch you.

PERMUTATIONS

The Storytelling System has a few variations in how dice rolls work. This section lists the ones used most commonly in **Beast: The Primordial**; for a more complete list, see the **World of Darkness Rulebook,** p. 134–35.

- **9-Again:** You re-roll dice that show 9 or 10, as opposed to just 10. Keep rolling until you get a result that isn't a 9 or 10.
- **8-Again:** You re-roll dice that show 8, 9, or 10 — any successful die — and keep rolling as long as your dice show successes.
- **Extra Successes:** Assuming your roll succeeds, you get a number of extra successes added to your total. This permutation mostly applies to weapons, which add their damage bonus as extra successes on your attack roll.
- **Rote Actions:** When you've got plenty of training and the steps you need to follow are laid out in front of you, you've got a significant chance of success. When you make a roll, you can re-roll any dice that do not show an 8, 9, or 10. If you're reduced to a chance die on a rote action, don't re-roll a dramatic failure. You may only re-roll each die once.
- **Successive Attempts:** When you fail a roll, you may be able to try again. If time is not an issue and your character is under no pressure to perform, you may make successive attempts with your full dice pool. In the far more likely situation that time is short and the situation is tense, each subsequent attempt has a cumulative –1 die penalty — so the third time a character tries to break down the door that's keeping her inside a burning building, her roll has a –2 die penalty. Successive attempts do not apply to extended actions.
- **Teamwork:** When two or more people work together, one person takes the lead. He's the primary actor, and his player assembles his dice pool as normal. Anyone assisting rolls the same pool before the primary actor. Each success from a secondary actor gives the primary actor a bonus die. If one of the secondary actors rolls a dramatic failure, the primary actor gets a –4 die penalty.

Time

When you're playing **Beast: The Primordial**, time in the story can speed past or slow to a crawl compared to time in the real world. Weeks or months might pass in the space of few words, while a tense negotiation plays out in real-time — or takes even longer.

In addition to years, nights, and hours, **Beast** also uses six units of dramatic time. These build upon one another, from shortest to longest.

- Turn — The smallest increment of time, a turn lasts for about three seconds. A character can perform a single instant action in a turn. Turns normally only matter in combat or other dramatic and stressful situations.
- Scene — Much like a scene in a play, a scene in a roleplaying game is the time spent dealing with a single, specific event. The Storyteller frames the scene, describing what's going on, and it's up to the players to resolve the event or conflict. A scene might be played out in turns, progress in real-time, or skip forward depending on dramatic necessity.
- Chapter — A chapter is the collection of scenes that happen during one game session. From the moment you sit down and start playing to the point where you pack up your dice, you're playing out a chapter of your story.
- Story — A story tells an entire tale, following the dramatic arc of a related series of events. It might comprise several chapters or be completed in just one. It has an introduction, rising tension, a number of twists, and a climax that brings things to a conclusion.
- Chronicle — The big picture, a chronicle is the collection of interlinked stories that involve your characters. They might be linked by a common theme or overarching plotline, or they may only share characters and locations. As your story progresses, the players and Storyteller work together to create an ongoing chronicle.

Social Maneuvering

These rules replace the standard rules for Social actions in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. They assume your character is making effort toward getting another character or a group of characters to do what she wants. Social actions within this system may be direct or subtle, complex or simple. For example, your character may shout at another and demand he gets out of the way, or your character may subtly offer clues suggesting someone needs to vote for her.

It is not always possible to get someone to do what you want. For instance, no amount of Social maneuvering is going to convince the chief of police in a large city to hold a press conference and admit to murder, even if the player has a dice pool impressive enough to make it happen. This system is designed to allow characters to manipulate or convince other characters to perform favors or undertake actions, but it does raise the question: is one character dictating another's actions, and how much of that should be allowed in a role-playing game? Or, put a different way, can one character seduce another with this system?

Under a strict read of the rules, the answer is yes. The goal is "get that character to sleep with my character," the number of Doors is decided as explained below, and impressions and other factors play into the final result. This is not too different from how seduction and other less carnal forms of persuasion actually work — the persuader tries to make the offer as enticing as possible.

But because it's the persuader's player making the rolls, the target is left without a way to say "no." As such, we recommend reserving this system for use by player-controlled characters on Storyteller characters rather than on other players' characters. If one player's character wants to seduce, persuade, convince, or intimidate another, leave it up to roleplaying and let players make their own decisions about what their characters do.

Goals

When using a Social action with this system, the first step is to declare your character's intended goal. This is as simple as stating what you want the subject to do and how your character is going about making it happen. You need only announce the initial stages, as the effort will likely occur over multiple rolls, reflecting different actions.

At this point, the Storyteller determines whether the goal is reasonable. A character might, with time and proper tactics, convince a rich person to give him a large sum of money. He probably isn't going to convince the wealthy individual to abandon *all* of his wealth to the character (though it might be possible to get him to name the character as heir, at which point the character can set about speeding up the inheritance process).

Doors

Once you've declared your character's goal, the next step is to determine the scope of the challenge. We represent this with "Doors," which reflect a character's resistance to coercion: her social walls, his skepticism, mistrust, or just a hesitance toward intimacy. It's abstract and means different things in every given case.

The base number of Doors is equal to the lower of the character's Resolve or Composure. If the goal would be a breaking point for the character, add two Doors. If accomplishing the goal would prevent a character from resolving an Aspiration, add a Door. Acting in opposition to a Virtue also adds a Door. Doors may increase as the effort continues and the circumstances change. For example, if the goal seems mundane at first but the situation makes it reprehensible, it may increase the number of Doors required. If your character gives up on the goal and shifts to another, any Doors currently open remain so, but assess Aspirations, Virtues, and Integrity in case of a potential increase.

Doors must be opened one by one. Each successful roll — *not* each success — opens one. Exceptional successes open two. Also, Doors are specifically a one-way relationship between two characters. They may each have Doors to one another or Doors to other characters.

First Impressions

First (and later) impressions determine the time required between rolls. The Storyteller sets the first impression based on any past history between the characters, the circumstances of their meeting, the nature of the favor being asked (if the acting character is asking right up front — sometimes it's a better idea not to lead off with what you want!) and any other relevant factors.

"Average impressions" call for weekly rolls, which make the process very slow. Through play, your character may influence the interaction for a "good impression." This may mean meeting in a pleasant environment, wearing appealing clothing, playing appropriate music, or otherwise making the situation more comfortable. This should not require a roll during a first impression but requires one if attempted later. An excellent impression requires a roll to influence the situation.

For example, you may use a Wits + Socialize to find the right people to invite to a party. Perfect impressions require further factors. It may involve leverage or playing to a character's Vice (see below).

Hostile impressions come from tense first impressions or threatening pitches. These interactions require you manipulate the impression or to force the Doors (see below).

Vices

If your character knows her subject's Vice, she can use it to influence the interaction. With an offer that tempts that Vice, move the interaction one step up on the chart. As a rule of thumb, if by agreeing to the temptation the target were to gain Willpower, it's a valid temptation. If using Social maneuvering on a character that doesn't have a Vice (like a vampire or a Beast), a temptation that plays to a similar trait, like Life or Mask, can have the same effect at the Storyteller's discretion.

Soft Leverage (Gifts and Bribes)

Soft Leverage represents offers of services or payments in order to lubricate social interaction. Make the offer. If the recipient agrees, move the impression up once on the chart.

Mechanically, this can be represented in certain Merit dots. For example, a bribe may be represented by a Resources 3 offer, or an offer for service may be reflected by Retainer 3. By default, these bribes give the recipient use of the Merit for a designated amount of time.

Impression	Time per Roll
Perfect	1 Turn
Excellent	1 Hour
Good	1 Day
Average	1 Week
Hostile	Cannot roll

Opening Doors

At each interval, you may make a roll to open Doors and move closer to your character's goal. The roll might be different each time, depending on the character's tactics. Some of the rolls might not even be Social. For example, if your character is trying to win someone's favor, fixing his computer with an Intelligence + Computer roll could open a Door.

As Storyteller, be creative in selecting dice pools. Change them up with each step to keep the interactions dynamic. Similarly, consider contested and resisted rolls. Most resisted actions or contested rolls use either Resolve or Composure or a combination of the two, but don't let that stand as a limit. Contested rolls don't require a resistance trait. For example,

Wits might be used to notice a lie, Strength to help a character stand up to threats, or Presence to protect and maintain one's reputation at a soiree.

Failed rolls impose a cumulative –1 on further rolls. These penalties do not go away with successful rolls. When the player fails a roll, the Storyteller may choose to worsen the impression level by one. If she does so, the player takes a Beat. If this takes the impression level to hostile, the attempt cannot move forward until it improves.

Aspirations

Aspirations are quick routes to influence. Find a character's goals, wants, and needs, and they can help move interactions forward. If your character presents a clear path and reasoning for how they'll help a character achieve an Aspiration, remove a Door.

This doesn't require follow-through, but it does require a certain amount of assurance. If the opportunity presents itself and your character pulls out of an offer, two Doors close.

Failure

A Social maneuvering attempt can fail utterly under the following circumstances:

- The player rolls a dramatic failure on an attempt to open a Door (the player takes a Beat as usual).
- The target realizes that he is being lied to or manipulated. This does *not* apply if the target is aware that the character is trying to talk him into something, only if the target feels betrayed or conned.
- The impression level reaches "hostile" and remains so for a week of game time. The character can try again during the next story.

Resolution

Once your character opens the final Door, the subject must act. Storyteller characters abide by the intended goal and follow through as stated.

If you allow players' characters to be the targets of Social maneuvering, resolve this stage as a negotiation with two possible outcomes. The subject chooses to abide by the desired goal or offer a beneficial alternative.

Go With the Flow

If the character does as requested and abides by the intended goal, his player takes a Beat (see p. 82).

Offer an Alternative

If the subject's player chooses, he may offer a beneficial alternative and the initiator's player can impose a Condition (see p. 181) on his character. This offer exists between players; it does not need to occur within the fiction of the game (though it can). The alternative must be beneficial and not a twist of intent. The Storyteller adjudicates.

The initiator's player chooses a Condition to impose on the subject. It must make sense within the context of the scenario.

Combat

Beasts are capable of dealing with their family, both human and supernatural, in polite and respectful ways...but as the saying goes, there's many a slip twixt the cup and the lip. Sometimes a Beast can't avoid violence, and sometimes she just doesn't want to. Her Horror is almost always ready to fight, after all, especially when it's hungry.

Combat is a catch-all term for what happens when two people find that they cannot reach agreement like rational individuals and instead beat, claw, and bite the living shit out of one another until one of them gets what she wants.

Everybody wants something out of a fight. The very first thing you need to do — before worrying about who attacks first or anything like that — is to determine what each character wants to get out of the fight. Boil it down into a simple sentence that starts with the words "I want:" "I want to kill Johnny," "I want the book that Frances is holding," or "I want what's in Larry's wallet." Beasts often use combat to sate their Hunger, so "I want to take a bite of his shoulder" or "I want to make her submit" are appropriate goals.

A character's intent has to be something she could achieve through an act of violence in the current scene — even a gunman on the White House lawn couldn't get away with "I want to be President of the United States."

By stating her character's intent, a player is setting out how much her character is willing to hurt — even kill — someone else in order to get what she wants. If your intent has nothing to do with hurting people and you end up killing someone, you lose a point of Willpower.

Optional Rule: Beaten Down & Surrender

A character who takes more than his Stamina in bashing damage or any amount of lethal damage is Beaten Down: He's had the fight knocked out of him. He must spend a point of Willpower every time he wants to take a violent action until the end of the fight. He can still apply Defense against incoming attacks, can Dodge, and can run like hell, but it takes a point of Willpower to swing or shoot back.

Before that happens, he can surrender, giving his attacker what she wants according to her declared intent. If you give in, you gain a point of Willpower and take a Beat, but you take no more part in the fight. If the other side wants to attack you, they've got to spend a point of Willpower to do so, and probably suffer a breaking point. If everyone on one side has surrendered, the fight's over and the other side gets what they want.

If one side's intent involves violence, the other side can't surrender — not without being killed. If that's the case, their intended victims don't get Beaten Down and gain no benefit

from surrendering. When someone wants to kill you, the only thing you can do is to try to stop her, whether you run like hell or unload a shotgun at her.

These rules only apply to people (or supernatural beings) who would incur a breaking point for committing (or attempting) "murder." Creatures that don't have a problem killing people in general — like Beasts — can ignore surrender without penalty and don't have the fight beaten out of them like normal folks. Beasts can, however, surrender if they wish, and get the normal Beat for doing so.

Down and Dirty Combat

The Storyteller might decide that your character can get what she wants without focusing on the details of the fight. Maybe she's picking on people weaker than her. Maybe she's internalized the mechanics of violence. Or maybe the fight's not the important thing going on with regards to the character's intent. If that's the case, the Storyteller can opt to use a Down and Dirty Combat. This system resolves the entire fight in a single roll. Storyteller characters might deal some damage, but they're never able to initiate a Down and Dirty Combat.

Action: Contested; resistance is reflexive

Dice Pool: Combat pool (Dexterity + Firearms, Strength + Brawl, or Strength + Weaponry) versus either the opponent's combat pool (as above) *or* an attempt to escape (Strength or Dexterity + Athletics). Ignore Defense on this roll.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character's opponent gets the upper hand. This usually includes the opposite of the character's intent — if she wanted to disable the guards so she could escape, she is stunned instead.

Failure: The opponent wins the contest. If the opponent used a combat pool, deal damage equal to the difference in successes plus weapon modifier. Also, the opponent escapes unless he wants to press the combat.

Success: The character wins the contest. She deals damage equal to the difference in successes plus her weapon modifier and achieves her intent — if her intent includes killing her opponents, then she does so.

Exceptional Success: As a success, and the character also gains a point of Willpower from the rush of inflicting violence on an inferior opponent.

Initiative

When a fight's inevitable, it helps to know who acts first. Time in combat is always tracked in turns. At the start of combat, determine your character's Initiative by rolling one die and adding her Initiative Modifier.

When your character is using a weapon, apply its Initiative penalty for as long as she's got the weapon ready. The only way to avoid this modifier is to sling it or drop it. Dropping a weapon is a reflexive action, but picking it back up takes an instant action. A character wielding two weapons subtracts the largest Initiative penalty from her score, and then reduces it by a further one. Wielding a baton (Initiative penalty –2) and a riot shield (Initiative penalty –4) thus applies a –5 penalty to Initiative.

Surprise

Characters who don't realize that they're about to be on the receiving end of bloody violence have a chance to notice the ambush by rolling Wits + Composure, contested by the attacker's Dexterity + Stealth. Any character who fails the roll cannot take an action in the first turn of combat, and can't apply Defense for that turn. Determine Initiative in the second turn as normal.

Attack

On your turn, your character can attack using one of the following dice pools:

- **Unarmed Combat:** Strength + Brawl – Defense
- **Melee Combat:** Strength + Weaponry – Defense
- **Ranged Combat:** Dexterity + Firearms
- **Thrown Weapons:** Dexterity + Athletics – Defense

Resolve the attack roll like any other action. Determine damage by adding the successes rolled to any weapon bonus. See "Injury and Healing."

Defense

Subtract your character's Defense from any unarmed, melee, or thrown attacks that the character is aware of. Every time your character applies his Defense against an attack, reduce his Defense by one until the start of the next turn. Spending a point of Willpower increases his Defense by two, but only against one attacker.

You can choose not to apply your character's Defense against some attacks. If two unarmed flunkies attack before a Hero wielding an ax, you might want to let the flunkies get their blows in and apply your full Defense against the Hero trying to take your head off.

You cannot apply your character's Defense against firearms attacks.

Dodge

At any point before your action, your character can choose to Dodge. Doing so gives up her normal action. When Dodging, double your character's Defense but do not subtract it from attack rolls. Instead, roll Defense as a dice pool, and subtract each success from the attacker's successes. If this reduces the attacker's successes to 0, the attack does no damage. Apply successes from Dodging before adding any weapon bonus.

Against multiple opponents, reduce Defense by one for each opponent *before* doubling it to determine your dice pool. If your Defense is reduced to 0, you roll a chance die. A dramatic failure when Dodging leaves your character off-balance; reduce her Defense by one for her next turn.

Unarmed Combat

These rules present special cases that come up when fighting without weapons.

Bite

A human's teeth do –1 bashing damage. Other creatures treat their teeth like weapons, dealing lethal damage to mortals (see "Weapons," below). Most Beasts don't do any extra damage with their teeth, unless they use an Atavism. Animals have a weapon bonus depending on the kind of creature: a wolf applies +1, while a great white shark gets +4.

Humans and Beasts (usually) can only bite as part of a grapple, using the Damage move.

Grapple

To grab your opponent, roll Strength + Brawl – Defense. On a success, both of you are grappling. If you roll an exceptional success, pick a move from the list below.

Each turn, both grappling characters make a contested Strength + Brawl versus Strength + Brawl action on the higher of the two characters' Initiatives. The winner picks a move from the list below, or two moves on an exceptional success.

- **Break Free** from the grapple. You throw off your opponent; you're both no longer grappling. Succeeding at this move is a reflexive action, so you can take another action immediately afterwards.
- **Control Weapon**, either by drawing a weapon that you have holstered or turning your opponent's weapon against him. You keep control until your opponent makes a Control Weapon move.
- **Damage** your opponent by dealing bashing damage equal to your rolled successes. If you previously succeeded at a Control Weapon action, add the weapon bonus to your successes.
- **Disarm** your opponent, removing a weapon from the grapple entirely. You must have first succeeded at a Control Weapon move.
- **Drop Prone**, throwing both of you to the ground (see "Going Prone," below). You must Break Free before rising.
- **Hold** your opponent in place. Neither of you can apply Defense against incoming attacks.
- **Restrain** your opponent with duct tape, zip ties, or a painful joint lock. Your opponent is immobilized. You can only use this move if you've already succeeded in a Hold move. If you use equipment to Restrain your opponent, you can leave the grapple.
- **Take Cover** using your opponent's body. Any ranged attacks made until the end of the turn automatically hit him (see "Human Shields," below).

Touching an Opponent

Sometimes a combatant doesn't want to do damage. Maybe she wants to plant a bug or use the Fist of Nightmares Merit. Roll Dexterity + Brawl to touch, or Dexterity + Weaponry to tap an opponent with a weapon. A successful roll deals no damage.

Ranged Combat

These rules present special cases that come up when shooting at people.

Autofire

Automatic weapons can fire a short, medium, or long burst in place of a single shot.

- **Short Burst**: Three bullets fired at the same target. Add a +1 die bonus to the shooter's dice pool.
- **Medium Burst:** Ten bullets, which can hit one to three targets standing close together. Add a +2 die bonus to the shooter's dice pool. If firing at more than one target, subtract the total number of targets from the shooter's pool, then make one attack roll per target.
- **Long Burst:** Twenty bullets at as many targets as the shooter wants. Increase the shooter's dice pool by +3. If firing at more than one target, subtract the total number of targets from the shooter's pool, then make one attack roll per target.

Range

The firearms chart (below) lists the short, medium, and long ranges of some sample firearms. Shooting a target at medium range imposes a –1 die penalty, while shooting a target at long range increases that to –2. Shooting at targets beyond long range reduces the attack dice pool to a chance die.

Thrown weapons have a short range of (Strength + Dexterity + Athletics – object's Size), doubled for medium range, and doubled again for long range. Aerodynamic objects double each range — so an aerodynamic object's long range is {(Strength + Dexterity + Athletics) * 8}. Characters can only throw objects with a Size less than their Strength.

Cover and Concealment

Hiding behind something is a good way to not get shot. How effective it is depends how much the cover hides. Concealment penalties apply to a shooter's dice pool.

- **Barely Concealed:** –1 (hiding behind an office chair)
- **Partially Concealed:** –2 (hiding behind the hood of a car, with upper body exposed)
- **Substantially Concealed:** –3 (crouching behind a car).

A character who is concealed and wants to fire at someone else takes a penalty to his Firearms attack that's one less than the penalty afforded by the character's protection — so if he's substantially concealed, he can fire back with a –2 die penalty.

If a target's entirely hidden by something substantial, he's in cover. If the cover's Durability is greater than the weapon modifier, the bullets can't penetrate the cover. Otherwise, subtract the cover's Durability from the attacker's damage roll. If the cover is transparent (bulletproof glass, for example), subtract *half* the cover's Durability, rounding down. Both the object and the target take any remaining damage. Durability is explained on p. 170.

Human Shields

Sometimes, the only available cover is another person — be they a terrified member of the public or a life-long friend. Characters who use human shields treat them as cover, with Durability equal to the victim's Stamina + any armor. Unlike normal cover, the victim takes all of the damage from the attack.

Using a human shield is almost certainly a breaking point for characters that worry about such things. For a mortal, this means a pretty severe modifier (–3 or more) if the victim dies.

Reloading

Reloading a firearm is an instant action. If you need to load bullets separately, you cannot apply your Defense on the same turn. If you have a magazine or speed-loader, you don't lose your Defense.

General Combat Factors

Some conditions apply to all kinds of fights.

Movement

A character can move his Speed in a single turn and still take an instant action. He can forsake his action to move at double his normal pace.

Going Prone

When a character can't find cover, the next best thing when bullets are flying is to drop flat to the ground. Ranged attacks against him suffer a –2 die penalty. A standing attacker using Brawl or Weaponry to attack instead gains a +2 die bonus.

A character can drop prone at any point before his action. Dropping to the ground costs his action for the turn. Getting up from being prone also takes your character's action.

Specified Targets

Attacking specific body parts has its benefits. In addition to ignoring armor (see "Armor," p. 169), strikes to limbs and the head can have added effects, called Tilts. Tilts are explained in detail in the Appendix (p. 327).

- Arm (–2): A damaging hit can Arm Wrack the victim if it deals more damage than the target's Stamina.
- Leg (–2): A damaging hit can Leg Wrack the victim if it deals more damage than the target's Stamina.
- Head (–3): A damaging attack can Stun the victim if it deals at least as much damage as the target's Size.

Ranged Weapons Chart

Type	Damage	Ranges	Clip	Initiative	Strength	Size	Availability	Example
Revolver, lt	1	20/40/80	6	0	2	1	• •	SW M640 (.38 Special)
Revolver, hvy	2	35/70/140	6	–2	3	1	• •	SW M29 (.44 Magnum)
Pistol, lt	1	20/40/80	17+1	0	2	1	• • •	Glock 17 (9mm)
Pistol, hvy	2	30/60/120	7+1	–2	3	1	• • •	Colt M1911A1 (.45 ACP)
SMG, small*	1	25/50/100	30+1	–2	2	1	• • •	Ingram Mac-10 (9mm)
SMG, large*	2	50/100/200	30+1	–3	3	2	• • •	HK MP-5 (9mm)
Rifle	4	200/400/800	5+1	–5	2	3	• •	Remington M-700 (30.06)
Assault Rifle*	3	150/300/600	42+1	–3	3	3	• • •	Stery-Aug (5.56mm)
Shotgun**	3	20/40/80	5+1	–4	3	2	• •	Remington M870 (12-gauge)
Crossbow***	2	40/80/160	1	–5	3	3	• • •	

Damage: Indicates the number of bonus successes added to a successful attack to determine the amount of lethal damage dealt.

Ranges: The listed numbers a short/medium/long ranges in yards/meters. Attacks at medium range suffer a –1 die penalty. Attacks at long range suffer a –2 die penalty.

Clip: The number of rounds a gun can hold. A "+1" indicates that a bullet can be held in the chamber, ready to fire.

Initiative: The penalty taken to Initiative when wielding the gun.

Strength: The minimum Strength needed to use a weapon effectively. A wielder with a lower Strength suffers a –1 penalty on attack rolls.

Size: 1 = Can be fired one-handed; 2 = Must be fired two-handed and can be hidden in a coat; 3 = Can be fired two-handed but not hidden on one's person

Availability: The cost in Resources dots or level of Social Merit needed to acquire the weapon.

* The weapon is capable of autofire, including short bursts, medium bursts, and long bursts.

** Attack rolls gain the 9-again quality

*** Crossbows take three turns to reload between shots. A crossbow can be used to deliver a stake through the heart (–3 die penalty to attack rolls; must deal at least 5 damage in one attack)

- Heart (–3): If the attacker does at least five points of damage, the weapon pierces the opponent's heart.
- Hand (–4): On a damaging hit, the victim suffers Arm Wrack.
- Eye (–5): On a damaging hit, the victim is Blinded.

Killing Blow

When performing a killing blow, you deal damage equal to your full dice pool plus your weapon modifier. You've time enough to line up your attack so it avoids your victim's armor.

While people who kill in combat can justify their actions based on the heat of the moment, performing a killing blow is a premeditated attempt to end a sentient life without the target having a chance to do anything about it. Going through with a killing blow is breaking point whether the victim survives or not.

Weapons and Armor

Weapons are one of the fastest ways to turn a fight into a murder. Sometimes, that's what you want; pulling a gun shows you're serious about killing people.

A weapon's damage rating adds bonus successes to a successful attack roll. When a weapon might help out in other ways — using a chain to grapple someone or a gun to intimidate her — add the weapon's damage rating as an equipment modifier.

Melee Weapons Chart

Type	Damage	Initiative	Strength	Size	Availability	Special
Sap	0	–1	1	1	•	Stun
Brass Knuckles	0	0	1	1	•	Uses Brawl to attack
Baton	1	–1	2	2	n/a	
Crowbar	2	–2	2	2	•	
Tire Iron	1	–3	2	2	• •	+1 Defense
Chain	1	–3	2	2	•	Grapple
Shield (small)	0	–2	2	2	• •	Concealed
Shield (large)	2	–4	3	3	• •	Concealed
Knife	0	–1	1	1	•	
Rapier	1	–2	1	2	• •	Armor piercing 1
Machete	2	–2	2	2	• •	
Hatchet	1	–2	1	1	•	
Fire Ax	3	–4	3	3	• •	9-again, two-handed
Chainsaw	5	–6	4	3	• • •	9-again, two-handed
Stake*	0	–4	1	1	n/a	
Spear**	2	–2	2	4	•	+1 Defense, two-handed

Type: A weapon's type is a general classification that can apply to anything your character picks up. A metal club might be an antique mace, a metal baseball bat, or a hammer, while a hatchet might be a meat cleaver or an antique hand-ax.

Damage: Indicates the number of bonus successes added to a successful attack to determine the amount of lethal damage dealt.

Initiative: The penalty taken to Initiative when wielding the weapon. If using more than one weapon, take the higher penalty and increase by 1.

Strength: The minimum Strength needed to use a weapon effectively. A wielder with a lower Strength suffers a –1 die penalty on attack rolls.

Size: 1 = Can be hidden in a hand; 2 = Can be hidden in a coat; 3+ = Cannot be hidden.

Availability: The cost in Resources dots or level of Social Merit needed to acquire the weapon.

Concealed: A character who wields a shield but doesn't use it to attack can add its Size to his Defense, and uses its Size as a concealment modifier against ranged attacks.

Grapple: Add the chain's damage rating to your dice pool when grappling.

Stun: Halve the victim's Size when aiming for the head with intent to stun **(p. 332)**.

Two-handed: This weapon requires two hands. It can be used one-handed, but doing so increases the Strength requirement by 1.

* A stake must target the heart (–3 die penalty to attack rolls) and must deal at least 5 damage in one attack.

** The reach of a spear gives a +1 Defense bonus against opponents who are unarmed or wield weapons of Size 1.

Every weapon deals lethal damage to mortals. A baseball bat, club, or mace does just as much serious trauma to the human body as an edged weapon or a bullet.

The full traits of a range of weapons are presented in the Ranged and Melee Weapons Charts.

Improvised Weapons

The weapons charts can only go so far. Characters who grab improvised weapons still stand a chance of doing serious damage.

If your improvised weapon is close enough to one of the weapons above, use the associated weapon profile. Otherwise, an improvised weapon does (Durability – 1) damage, with an initiative penalty and Strength requirement equal to the weapon's Size.

Using an improvised weapon reduces your attack pool by one die. On a successful attack, the weapon takes the same amount of damage as it inflicts; Durability reduces this damage as normal. Once the weapon's Structure is reduced to 0, the object is wrecked.

Armor Chart

Type	Rating	Strength	Defense	Speed	Availability	Coverage
			MODERN			
Reinforced clothing*	1/0	1	0	0	•	Torso, arms, legs
Kevlar vest*	1/3	1	0	0	•	Torso
Flak Jacket	2/4	1	–1	0	• •	Torso, arms
Full Riot Gear	3/5	2	–2	–1	• • •	Torso, arms, legs
			ARCHAIC			
Leather (hard)	2/0	2	–1	0	•	Torso, arms
Chainmail	3/1	3	–2	–2	• •	Torso, arms
Plate	4/2	3	–2	–3	• • • •	Torso, arms, legs

Rating: Armor provides protection against normal attacks and Firearms attacks. The number before the slash is for general armor, while the number after the slash is for ballistic armor.

Strength: If your character's Strength is lower than that required for her armor, reduce her Brawl and Weaponry dice pools by –1.

Defense: The penalty imposed on your character's Defense when wearing the armor.

Speed: The penalty to your character's Speed when wearing the armor.

Availability: The cost in Resources dots or level of Social Merit needed to acquire the armor.

Coverage: The areas of a character protected by the armor. Wearing a helmet increases the armor's coverage to include a character's head.

* This armor is concealed, either as normal clothing (e.g. biker leathers) or being worn under a jacket or baggy shirt.

Armor

Armor provides protection against attacks, including bullets and knives. Though it's rare to find Kindred wearing armor, police officers and other law enforcement agencies rely on it.

- Ballistic armor applies to incoming firearms attacks. Each point of ballistic armor downgrades one point of damage from lethal to bashing.
- General armor applies to all attacks. Each point of general armor reduces the total damage taken by one point, starting with the most severe type of damage.

If armor has both ballistic and general ratings, apply the ballistic armor first.

When applying armor to an attack dealing lethal damage, you always take at least one point of bashing damage from the shock of the blow.

Armor-Piercing

Some weapons have an armor piercing quality, usually between 1 and 3. When attacking someone wearing armor, subtract the piercing quality from the target's armor. Subtract from ballistic armor first, then general armor. Armor-piercing attacks in close combat subtract from general armor only.

When shooting at an object — or a person in cover — subtract the piercing quality from the object's Durability.

Injury and Healing

Characters can suffer three types of damage. Fists and feet, along with other kinds of low-impact trauma, deal *bashing* damage. Brass knuckles, knives, and speeding trucks deal *lethal* damage.

Some horrifying powers deal *aggravated* damage. When something deals aggravated damage directly, it's quite obvious. Flesh bubbles and sloughs away. Foaming pustules taint the victim's flesh. Blackened veins streak out from the site of the injury.

When a character's health track is filled with bashing damage, his player must make a reflexive Stamina roll each turn for him to remain conscious. If it fills with lethal damage, then each minute thereafter in which the character receives no medical attention — mundane or supernatural — he suffers one more injury. One health box currently marked with an X is upgraded to an asterisk for aggravated damage, from left to right on the character's Health chart. Once all boxes are filled with asterisks, he's dead.

Supernatural characters often have different reactions to their health track filling up; Prometheans, for instance, don't risk unconsciousness or start to bleed out, while werewolves regenerate damage quickly. Beasts suffer damage normally, as described above (though many have powers that help mitigate injury).

Marking Damage

When a character suffers bashing damage, mark it with a slash (/) in the leftmost empty box of his health track.

When a character suffers lethal damage, mark it with a cross (X) in the leftmost box of his health track that doesn't contain lethal or aggravated damage. If you mark over a point of bashing damage, it moves one box to the right.

When a character suffers aggravated damage, mark it with a large asterisk (*) in the leftmost box that doesn't already contain aggravated damage. If you mark over a point of bashing or lethal damage, it all moves one box to the right.

Always mark the most severe injuries at the left of a character's health track, and push any less severe injuries to the right. Characters heal their rightmost health boxes first and progress left.

Example: Eve has seven dots of Health. She's just taken two points of bashing damage. Her Health boxes look like this:

If she's later stabbed and takes a point of lethal damage, her Health track would be:

If Eve next suffered a point of aggravated damage, her Health boxes would look like this:

Wound Penalties

As your character takes damage, it impairs her ability to act. When one of her three rightmost Health boxes has damage marked, she suffers a penalty accordingly. Subtract this penalty from every action she performs, including rolling for Initiative, but not including Stamina rolls to stay conscious.

Health Boxes Marked	Penalty
Third-to-last	–1
Second-to-last	–2
Last	–3

Upgrading Damage

If your character's Health track is already full of bashing damage, any further bashing or lethal damage upgrades the leftmost point of bashing damage to lethal — turn one of the slashes into a cross.

If your character's health track is full of lethal damage, any further damage upgrades an existing point of lethal damage to aggravated damage. Turn the leftmost X into an asterisk.

When a character's rightmost Health box has bashing damage marked in it, she has to make a Stamina roll each turn or fall unconscious. If it has lethal damage, she takes another point of damage each minute (upgrading existing lethal damage to aggravated) until she receives medical attention.

Healing

Characters need time to heal once they've been beaten to a pulp. Mortal — and Beast — characters heal their rightmost health box at the following rate. The healing time is enough for the wound to fully recover — lethal damage doesn't "downgrade" into bashing. Normally, a character can heal without medical attention, though use of the Medicine Skill will doubtless help him recover. The only exception is if a character has all her Health boxes full of lethal damage — she's bleeding out. She can't recover from that without urgent medical attention and emergency surgery.

Wounds recover at the following rates:

Bashing: One point per 15 minutes

Lethal: One point per two days

Aggravated: One point per week

Example: After a friendly scrap with a werewolf cousin, Eve is out of harm's way for now. She isn't looking for another fight ("friendly scrap" is a relative term). Her health track is the same as it was at the end of the fight.

Her rightmost wounds heal first. Each point of bashing damage takes 15 minutes to heal. Her lethal damage then heals over the course of the next two days. Finally, her aggravated wound heals over the course of the next week. In all, it takes a little over a week and two days for her to recover from her injuries, barring magical healing.

Healing in the Lair

Beasts can enter their Lairs, merge with the Horrors, and repair their bodies very quickly. This leaves them hungry, however. A Beast in her Lair can spend one point of Satiety to heal *all* bashing damage; three points of lethal damage, or one point of aggravated damage. If the Beast currently has multiple types of damage, the player chooses which to heal, but can't heal different types with one expenditure. For example, a Beast with three points of aggravated damage and two lethal damage would have to spend four dots of Satiety (one for each aggravated and one for the lethal) to heal it all.

Objects

Objects, such as lead pipes, walls, or cars, have three traits in the Storytelling System: Durability, Size, and Structure. Mostly, these relate to how easy the object is to destroy.

Durability: How hard the object is to damage. Subtract Durability from any damage dealt to the object. Durability has no effect against attacks that deal aggravated damage.

Durability	Material
1	Wood, hard plastic, thick glass
2	Stone, aluminum
3	Steel, iron
+1	per reinforced layer

Size: How large the object is. Objects smaller than Size 1 can fit entirely in a person's palm.

Size	Object
1	Pistol
2	Crowbar, sawn-off shotgun
3	Assault rifle
5	Door
10	Sports car
15	SUV

Structure: An object's Structure is equivalent to its Health and equals its Durability + Size. Each point of damage removes a point of Structure. Once it's taken more damage than it has Durability, anyone using the object suffers a –1 die penalty. When its Structure hits 0, the object is destroyed. Objects do not differentiate between bashing and lethal damage, and can be repaired with an appropriate Craft roll.

Disease

Outside of combat, a character who suffers from a disease suffers damage over a period of time. Resisting the damage inflicted by a disease requires a reflexive Stamina + Resolve roll. This roll is not contested but it is modified by the severity of the disease. Only one success is necessary to avoid damage each time.

Some diseases are the kinds that don't heal. A character's cancer could go into remission, or he can hold his HIV back with medication, but time alone won't cure him. The Storyteller should set a benchmark of how many rolls the character has to succeed at in a row for the disease to go into remission. Medical treatment can offset any penalties to the Stamina + Resolve roll applied by the disease — but might inflict penalties on other rolls, as sometimes the cure is almost as bad as the disease.

Drugs

A character who has taken drugs, willingly or not, must fight off the effects of the drug. Resisting the effects requires a reflexive Stamina + Resolve roll. This roll is not contested, but it is modified by the potency of the drug ingested. Only one success is necessary for a character to regain her senses. In the case of some drugs, this roll must be made once per hour, once per scene — or even once per turn, in the case of strong hallucinogens or narcotics.

Overdose

Characters who overdose on drugs treat the drug like a poison, with a Toxicity somewhere between 3 and 7. The overdose deals damage once per hour until the drug has run its course — if a character's spent 8 hours drinking, then the poison takes another 8 hours to fade, with Toxicity from 3 (beer or wine) to 5 (rubbing alcohol). A character who injects stronger heroin than expected takes damage for (8 – Stamina) hours, with Toxicity 7.

Electricity

Beasts are hard to kill, but the primal forces the world — including electricity — can be deadly even to the Children. Electrocution automatically causes bashing damage per turn of exposure. No attack roll is made.

If harm from electricity is more than just instantaneous — there's a constant flow such as through power cables — a victim may not be able to escape. His muscles contract, which can prevent him from pulling away. Roll Strength as a reflexive action in each turn of contact. Failure means your character is still connected to the source and suffers its damage each turn until a successful roll is made.

Source	Damage
Minor; wall socket	4 (B)
Major; protective fence	6 (B)
Severe; junction box	8 (B)
Fatal; main line feed/subway rail	10 (B)

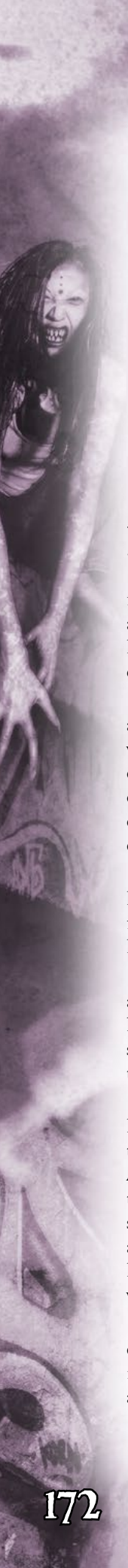
Worn armor provides no protection against electrocution.

Extreme Environments

The human body is not conditioned to withstand extreme heat, cold, air pressure, and other harsh weather. These harsh conditions hinder and endanger unprepared characters. When exposed to a harsh environment, the Storyteller assigns a level to the environment using the associated chart as a guideline. Survival gear can reduce the effective environment level.

While characters are exposed to these conditions, they suffer the level of the environment as a penalty to all actions. After a number of hours equal to the character's Stamina, he takes bashing damage equal to the environment's level once per hour. In the case of a Level 3 exposure, the damage is lethal instead of bashing. Level 4 environments cause lethal damage each *turn* after a number of turns equal to the character's Stamina.

Any damage caused by levels 2–4 exposure leaves lasting marks, scars, and tissue damage. Damage caused by extreme environments cannot be healed until the character is back in a safe environment.



Environment Levels

Level	Example Environs
1	Safe environment
2	Light snow, heavy storms; too cold to sleep safely; air pressure causes shortness of breath; sweltering sun can cause first-degree burns
3	Heavy snow; cold causes physical pain and potential hypothermia; sun quickly causes first-degree burns, can cause second-degree burns with time; minor radiation poisoning
4	Desert exposure; heat rapidly causing second-degree burns; moderate radiation exposure
5	Desert sandstorm, severe hurricane, tornado, tsunami

Falling

Your character tries to jump between buildings but doesn't make it. He tries to scale a ladder but someone above pushes it away from the wall. Or your character is simply thrown from a height by a powerful opponent. Regardless of the reason, your character plummets and may be hurt on impact.

Falling damage is bashing, unless your character lands on a fence spike or broken glass, or hits the ground at terminal velocity. A person suffers one point of bashing damage for every three yards fallen. Terminal velocity is achieved in a fall of 30 yards or more; damage is lethal at that point. So, if your character falls 30 yards, he loses 10 Health points to lethal damage.

Once your character reaches terminal velocity, the damage he suffers remains 10 Health no matter how far he actually falls. Thus, falls from 30 yards and 100 yards both inflict 10 lethal damage.

The Storyteller may allow armor to be subtracted automatically from damage taken, assuming it can absorb the kind of damage incurred, and if it makes sense. Generally speaking, no protective clothing helps once someone reaches terminal velocity.

The Storyteller may allow your character to try to break his fall by some means, perhaps by grabbing for awnings or twisting to strike soil rather than concrete. A single Dexterity + Athletics roll may be called for, with each success diminishing the damage. There may be a limit to how much damage can be shaved, though. There's only so much that desperate flailing and grabbing can do when someone falls from a significant height. Efforts to slow one's fall are usually useless at terminal velocity.

Falling into deep water, snow, or a pile of pillows might diminish damage taken automatically, if the Storyteller allows it. No such "soft" landing is possible once terminal velocity is achieved. At that speed, hitting water is like hitting concrete.

Fire

Fire automatically inflicts lethal damage per turn of exposure (no attack roll is required). The damage inflicted depends on both the size and intensity of the flames.

Size of Fire	Damage
Torch	1
Bonfire	2
Inferno	3

Heat of Fire	Damage Modifier
Candle (first-degree burns)	—
Torch (second-degree burns)	+1
Bunsen burner (third-degree burns)	+2
Chemical fire/molten metal	+3

So, a fire the size of a bonfire (2) and with the intensity of a torch (+1) inflicts three damage per turn of contact.

In general, if exposure to fire persists for more than a turn, it catches anything combustible. A burning character continues to take full damage, even if he escapes the original source of the flame. Depending on the accelerator involved, the size of a fire can be reduced by one point per turn by means such as a hose or extinguisher. The Storyteller may rule that a fire goes out immediately under some circumstances (local oxygen is removed with a controlled explosion or your character is completely immersed in water). Or, a fire could continue to burn despite efforts to put it out, such as with a grease fire when water is poured on it.

Most armor can block its general rating in fire damage automatically for a number of turns equal to that rating.

Poison

Outside of combat, a character who is the victim of a poison or toxin suffers lethal damage over a period of time equal to the poison's Toxicity. Some substances deal this damage only once. Others deal this damage once per turn or once per hour until purged — or until the poison has run its course. To resist the damage, make a reflexive Stamina + Resolve – Toxicity roll. Each success reduces the damage taken by 1. This roll must be made every time the poison deals damage unless the character stops fighting and gives in.

Equipment

Here are some examples of the equipment you can buy with Resources.

Equipment, tools, and technology help to solve problems. Having the right tool for the job can mean the difference between life and death — or in the World of Darkness, the difference between life and a fate worse than death. This list is

not all-inclusive, but features many of the tools that characters in the World of Darkness might have at their disposal.

Equipment is divided up by the Skills they typically assist with. Mental Equipment typically assists with Mental Skills, for example. Supernatural Equipment deals with the paranormal, and may not be suitable for every chronicle. Lastly, Bygones are items that characters cannot procure easily or recreate. They're unique items that deal with the otherworldly.

Availability and Procurement

The dot cost of a piece of equipment reflects directly on the Resources cost if your character wishes to purchase it (or the components, for some things). It also reflects the level of Allies or other Social Merit required in order to find the item and the Skill level required to procure it with a single dice roll. For example, if a Party Invitation has Cost •••, a character with Larceny •• should not be able to find and steal the item without a roll, but a character with Politics •••• might be able to get one by virtue of saying the right words to the right organization. If your character wishes to obtain higher Availability items with their Skills, doing so requires a deeper effort.

Size, Durability, and Structure

These are guidelines that represent common, standard examples of the items in question. For most items, characters could procure better examples at a higher Availability rating.

Dice Bonuses

Most equipment offers a bonus to dice rolls pertaining to its use. Multiple items can influence a given roll, but a roll should not receive more than a +5 bonus.

Game Effect

A character with the item can use these Effects. Any restrictions, costs, or parameters are listed individually.

Mental Equipment

Mental equipment is all but essential for many character types. Mental Skills without the proper tools are almost useless in most cases. A doctor without medicine is hardly capable of healing, and an auto mechanic without a toolbox couldn't change even some minor belts on a car.

Automotive Tools

Basic (Kit): Die Bonus +1, Durability 2, Size 2, Structure 3, Availability •

Advanced (Garage): Die Bonus +2, Availability •

Effect: Automotive tools are a necessity for all but the simplest automobile repairs. Even then, a fully stocked garage with heavy equipment is required for more involved tasks such as engine or transmission replacement. If time is not a factor, any trained character with a Crafts Automotive Specialty can repair a vehicle's mundane issues without rolls. Complex modifications and enhancements or massive damage always requires a greater effort (an extended Intelligence + Crafts roll) to work out.

Cache

Die Bonus +1 to +3, Durability 2, Size 1–5, Structure 5, Availability • to •••

Effect: A cache is a hidden and defensible place for items, usually weapons. It keeps important items from prying eyes. A cache can never be more than half the Size of its parent object. For example, a Size 6 car can support no larger than a Size 3 cache. A given cache can hold two items of its Size and any reasonable number of smaller-sized items. Its Availability determines its die bonus, which both adds to concealment rolls and subtracts from rolls to find the items within.

Communications Headset

Die Bonus +2, Durability 0, Size 1, Structure 1, Availability ••

Effect: Communications headsets keep characters in constant contact. Different varieties work over different distances, but most commercial models work over about 200 feet. A common alternative is a conference call between cellular phones and Bluetooth headsets. If the users have practiced using their headsets together, they gain the die bonus on any coordinated efforts. In the case of a teamwork action, the die bonus only applies to the final roll. If the users are unpracticed, the bonus falls to +1 and actors must make reflexive Wits + Composure rolls to participate successfully.

Any heavy objects can obstruct a headset's signal. Anything obstructing with Durability higher than 3 requires listeners to make a Wits + Composure roll to understand shared messages. Levy a –1 penalty for each point of Durability over 4.

Crime Scene Kit

Die Bonus +2, Durability 2, Size 3, Structure 2, Availability ••

Effect: A crime scene (or CSI) kit is a toolbox full of investigative aids such as magnifiers, fingerprinting dust, cameras, tape, testing chemicals, and sample bags. While the kits offer a die bonus to Investigation rolls, the more important benefit of the CSI kit is that it allows evidence to be moved and digested elsewhere. Properly applied, it allows investigators to do the bulk of their work off-site and at their own pace.

SERVICES

In addition to the equipment in this chapter, characters may look for services from other characters. Below is a list of some things characters may pursue. Each has an Availability rating that works identically to other equipment. This can act as a foundation for what certain levels of Allies, Status, and other Social Merits might accomplish. Most are sorted by Skills to reflect their general uses. Many include a die bonus as well. Assume most services take a week to procure at the listed Availability levels. Raise Availability by one to make that a day instead.

Note that some services listed could be highly illegal and should be limited in access to appropriate Merits. In many cases, illegal services only offer negligible die bonuses. Their real advantage comes from a layer of separation from legal authorities.

Service	Availability	Die Bonus
ACADEMICS		
Historical specialist consulting	•••	+3
Research assistance from grad students	••	+2
Translation of a dead language	•••	+2
COMPUTER		
Custom phone application	•••	+2
Digital image enhancement	••	+3
Graphic design/forgery	••	+2
CRAFTS		
Antiquities restoration	•••	+2
Auto repair	••	+3
Custom equipment modifications	•••	+2
INVESTIGATION		
Consultation on evidence	•••	+3
Investigative photography	•••	+2
Private investigation/ background check	••	+2
MEDICINE		
Black market surgeon	••••	+3
Expert medical witness	••••	+2
Rush plastic surgery	••••	+2
OCCULT		
Esoteric consultant/sage	••••	+3
Exorcist	•••	+2
Protective amulets or wards	••••	+1
POLITICS		
Campaign assistant	•••	+3
Cutting red tape (read: bribe)	•••	+2
Spin doctor	•••	+2

Service	Availability	Die Bonus
SCIENCE		
Fact-checking	••	+3
Falsifying research/cover-up	•••	+2
Lab access	••	+2
ATHLETICS		
Meditative assistance	•••	+2
Personal trainer	•••	+3
Throwing an athletic competition	••••	+4
BRAWL		
Arrange underground boxing ring	•••	+2
Bodyguard service	•••	+3
Self-defense classes	•	+1
DRIVE		
Chauffer	••	+2
Stunt performance/ mock crash	•••	+3
Tour bus rental	••••	+2
FIREARMS		
Antique gun repair	•••	+2
Cover fire from gangs	•••	+3
Procuring smuggled military arms	••••	+2
LARCENY		
Breaking and entering	•••	+2
Security consulting	•••	+2
Stealing a protected relic	••••	+3
STEALTH		
Strategic distraction	•••	+3
Tailing a suspect	•••	+2
Targeted vandalism	••	+2

Service	Availability	Die Bonus
SURVIVAL		
Field dress and preserve an animal	•••	+1
Trail guide	••	+3
Weatherproof a shelter	••	+2
WEAPONRY		
Properly forged sword	•••	+2
Identify wound from obscure weapon	•••	+2
Training in archaic warfare	•••	+2
ANIMAL KEN		
Buy a trained animal	•••	+2
Identify animal droppings	••	+1
Rule out natural causes of death	•••	+2
EMPATHY		
"Good cop" interrogator	•••	+2
Neutral arbitrator	•••	+2
Therapy session	••	+1
EXPRESSION		
Document forgery	•••	+3
Ghostwriting	••	+2
Motivational speech	•••	+1

Service	Availability	Die Bonus
INTIMIDATION		
Anti-interrogation training	••••	+3
"Bad cop" interrogator	•••	+2
Deprogramming therapy	•••	+2
PERSUASION		
Defense attorney	•••	+3
Hostage negotiator	••••	+3
Pickup artist	•••	+2
SOCIALIZE		
Catering	••• or ••••	+1 or +2
Elocution consulting	•••	+1
Escort	•••	+2
STREETWISE		
Arrange a rave or block party	•••	+2
Black market access	••	+2
Find crash space	••	+1
Smuggling contraband	•••	+1
SUBTERFUGE		
Amateur Actor/Actress	••	+2
Con artistry	•••	+2
Gambling ringer	•••	+2

Code Kit

Die Bonus +5, Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 1, Availability •

Effect: A code kit is a series of tools created for the purpose of making and interpreting a code for a specific audience. A common example is a book code, where a page, paragraph, and word from a certain book are used as the foundation for a cypher. This keeps any uninformed eyes off the intended message. In the case of a book code, a book is often chosen that all message recipients can access easily. This guarantees that the code never has to travel with the code key.

A successfully designed cypher is difficult to break. The die bonus acts as a penalty to any rolls to crack the code without the necessary reference key.

Cracking Software

Die Bonus +2, Durability N/A, Size N/A, Structure N/A, Availability • • •

Effect: Crappy software's a dime a dozen. Good, reliable cracking software is hard to come by. With solid software, a hacker can force passwords, breach firewalls, and otherwise be a nuisance in computer systems. Beyond the dice pool modification, the benefit such software offers is a sort of buffer between the hacker and security. Any efforts to track the hacker takes two steps: one to identify the software, then one to trace it back to the source. Functionally this means two rolls on behalf of the security personnel, with an opportunity for the hacker to withdraw before detection.

Digital Recorder

Die Bonus +1 or +2, Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2, Availability • or • •

Effect: In the last decade, digital audio recorders have gotten smaller, more effective, and more affordable. Now, any student can carry a coin-sized device that would have put intelligence agencies of the 1980s to shame. The cheaper model of recorder gives its +1 bonus to any rolls to catch words or

sounds. The bonus also applies to concealment rolls. The more expensive model gives +2. With an Intelligence + Computer (with die bonus), a character can contest any rolls to obscure discussion or mask noises.

Duct Tape

Die Bonus +1, Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2, Availability •

Effect: Duct tape has as many uses as one can think of, and just as many you never would. It can reinforce barricades, stabilize weapon handles, bind prisoners, repair broken pipes, and so much more. In most cases, duct tape can offer a +1 bonus to Crafts-related rolls. Alternatively, it can add a point of Durability to almost anything. If used as a restraint, rolls to break free suffer a –3 penalty, and must overcome the duct tape's Structure.

First-Aid Kit

Die Bonus 0 or +1, Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 3, Availability • or • •

Effect: A first-aid kit contains all the necessary supplies to stabilize an injury and stop wounds from getting worse until the victim can find proper treatment. The one-dot version of the first-aid kit does not offer a die bonus; it simply allows for treatment. The two-dot version offers a +1 to treatment rolls due to superior supplies.

Flashlight

Die Bonus +1, Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 3, Availability •

Effect: In a world of darkness, a flashlight can be a person's best friend. It generally does what it's supposed to; it helps cut a path through the unknown. Its die bonus subtracts from any penalties due to darkness, and adds to any rolls to search in the dark. A good flashlight can serve as a club in a pinch. As well, it can blind an unfortunate subject. A Dexterity + Athletics roll, subtracting an informed opponent's Defense, will put the beam where it needs to be. The victim's player may make a contested Stamina roll. If your character scores more successes than the subject, they're blinded for one turn. Victims with especially acute senses are blinded for two turns.

Glowstick

Die Bonus +2, Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 1, Availability •

Effect: Glowsticks use a chemical mixture to summon forth enough light to see in a small area. Most commercial glowsticks last a couple of hours; police and other professional varieties can

last twelve. Because they're small, airtight containers, they serve the added benefit of being useful underwater or in the rain. Functionally, they work the same as a flashlight. However, they cannot be used to blind a target, since their soft glow is far less obtrusive than a flashlight's beam. They're also very conveniently worn, which can serve strategic purposes for a group operating in low-light conditions. A member will not go missing without being noticed so long as they have a glowing neon bar on their belt.

GPS Tracker

Die Bonus +3, Durability 2, Size 2, Structure 2, Availability • •

Effect: With the advent of the modern cellular phone, most modern people have a GPS-enabled device on their person at any given time. With a bit of know-how and access to someone's phone, your character can track their every move (provided those moves are not in caves, tunnels, or sewer systems). Some characters will trade GPS data in case one of the group becomes lost or if they have to follow someone without notice. Planting a phone on an unwitting subject can serve as a highly effective tracking device.

Keylogging Software

Die Bonus +2, Durability N/A, Size N/A, Structure N/A, Availability • •

Effect: Keylogging software does exactly one thing: it logs keystrokes on a computer. This is usually done to record incriminating data or passwords. Usually, keylogging software is coupled with software to transmit the data once captured. The challenge for the would-be intruder is installing the software. Email scams are an unreliable way to get onto a specific computer, but could fool one member of a large organization. A thumb drive is very effective, but requires direct, physical access to the recipient computer. The software's die bonus offers an advantage to breach a network or to find important data.

Luminol

Die Bonus +2, Durability 0, Size 1, Structure 1, Availability •

Effect: Luminol is a chemical that reacts to certain metals in human blood and other bodily fluids. The reaction causes a faint neon glow for about thirty seconds, visible in the dark. It comes in an aerosol can and will seek out faint traces, even after a thorough cleaning. In addition to showing the exact locations of violent crimes, luminol can assist in tracking wounded people and animals. Luminol's die bonus applies to any roll to track by the fluid traces, or to piece together the details of a crime scene.

Multi-Tool

Die Bonus +1, Durability 3, Size 1, Structure 4, Availability •

Effect: Sometimes, the need for mobility doesn't allow for your character to carry around a full tool kit. In these cases, a multi-tool can be a lifesaver. From sawing to stripping wires, to opening bottles, to filing off serial numbers, a multi-tool can do the job in a pinch. The multi-tool offers a negligible die bonus on numerous Crafts and other assorted tasks, and most importantly, allows for rolls when sometimes they couldn't be made for lack of proper equipment. While not made for use as a weapon, it can serve as one causing 0 lethal, but suffering a –1 penalty to hit.

Personal Computer

Die Bonus +1 to +4, Durability 2, Size 3, Structure 2, Availability • to • • • •

Effect: In the developed world, almost every household has access to a personal computer. They can vary in size, functionality, and price, from decade-old models that barely surf the web to high-end machines that process gigabytes of data per second. In today's world, many lives revolve around computers. For some people, their entire careers and personal lives exist within digital space. The Availability of the computer determines its die bonus.

Smartphones

Die Bonus +1 to +2, Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 1, Availability • to • • •

Effect: By themselves, smartphones can make calls, send text messages and emails, take pictures, maintain an agenda, and search the web. With a bit of software, the Smartphone becomes the multi-tool of the electronic age. While it cannot accomplish the raw computing power of a full-sized personal computer, higher-end smartphones can manage almost all the same tasks with ease.

Most major gadgets have been successfully replicated with smartphone applications. GPS scanning and tracking are staples of the amateur investigator. Facial recognition software finds a face in a crowd with relative accuracy. They can photograph and transcribe text, then translate ancient tomes. They can store a library's worth of text and allow for automated searches. They offer directions with photographic assistance. Even the value of a mindless video game on a stakeout is often underestimated.

Special Effects

Die Bonus +2, Durability 2, Size 5, Structure 3, Availability • • •

Effect: Special effects is a catch-all term for the tricks and chicanery used by amusement parks and stage magicians to fool witnesses. A character may use these as a distraction or a defense. For example, the Pepper's Ghost illusion is relatively easy to set up with the right tools. It uses a large mirror and a sheet of glass, along with a model and a light source. It projects an illusion of the model's reflection, and makes witnesses see a "ghost."

In addition to the die bonus, special effects generally fool their audience at first. A witness will fall for the trick unless given good reason to be suspicious. This can waste valuable time or lead the witness into a trap.

Surveillance Equipment

Die Bonus +2, Durability 2, Size 2, Structure 2, Availability • • •

Effect: Standard surveillance equipment usually consists of motion detectors, cameras, and monitors. High-end versions may include infrared heat sensors, barometric scanners, or even more complex gear. Either way, the point of surveillance equipment is to survey, detect, and otherwise track who enters or leaves a location. Often, this also means locking down breached zones. Unless someone knows surveillance equipment exists and actively avoids it, his presence is noticed and recorded. If he tries to avoid it, contest his Dexterity + Stealth against the installing technician's Intelligence + Computer or Intelligence + Crafts (for digital and analog systems, respectively). The technician may add the equipment's die bonus. If the intruder scores more successes, he remains unnoticed. Otherwise, he goes on record.

Survival Gear

Die Bonus +1 or +2, Durability 2, Size 2 or 3, Structure 3, Availability • or • • •

Effect: Survival gear is the catch-all term for the various kits of equipment needed to survive in harsh environments. This could encompass tents, canned foodstuff, raingear, sleeping bags, sterile water, or any of the various things a person can use to survive the world outside their cushy homes. They come in two levels: a basic level and an advanced level. The basic level offers +1 and subtracts one from the effective level of environment, (see Extreme Environments, p.171), while the advanced offers +2 and subtracts two from the effective environment level. This does not help with a Level 4 environment. A resourceful character can rig or scavenge the necessary supplies for basic survival gear, but an advanced set of gear requires very specialized equipment. Basic survival gear can assist with most any environment, but advanced survival gear must target one particular type of environment.

Talcum Powder

Die Bonus +2, Durability N/A, Size 1, Structure N/A, Availability •

Effect: Talcum powder can keep a baby's bottom from getting diaper rash, but it can also show the presence of the unseen, and show evidence of intrusion if placed at a portal of entry. If dusted with talcum powder, a character must achieve five successes on a Dexterity + Stealth roll to enter without a trace. Fewer successes will only obscure the specifics of their feet and hands. Some paranormal investigators use talcum powder as a way to give ghosts and other invisible entities a method for communication.

Ultraviolet Ink

Die Bonus +2, Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2, Availability •

Effect: Ultraviolet Ink, or invisible ink as it's commonly called, is an outstanding way to relay messages in plain sight. Since the naked eye cannot perceive the ink without an ultraviolet light, a character can scrawl messages for other recipients in-the-know. It also allows for secretive information to be passed around through mundane channels. If someone's being surveyed by nefarious forces, an ultraviolet message scribbled on a throwaway magazine is much easier to get into their home unmolested than, say, a suspicious letter slid through their doorframe. If you need to mark a path to a secret hiding place, what better way to conceal the guiding marks?

Physical Equipment

Physical equipment enhances the use of Physical Skills. This often means the use of simple and complex machines to make things easier, or simple tricks to heighten the effectiveness of a character's inherent talents.

Battering-Ram

Die Bonus +4, Durability 3, Size 4, Structure 8, Availability • •

Effect: The purpose of the battering ram is to bring down doors and other barricades with direct, focused force. A battering ram uses a Teamwork action (see the World of Darkness Rulebook, p. 134), allowing up to four participants. The primary actor adds the ram's die bonus to her roll. A ram ignores two points of Durability.

Bear Trap

Die Bonus +2, Durability 3, Size 2, Structure 5, Availability • •

Effect: A bear trap is a large metal contraption that looks something like a set of deadly jaws. For this reason, they're also commonly called jaw traps. When a human or large animal steps into the bear trap, it snaps shut on their leg. Due to the serrated edges on the trap, this can cause massive bleeding or even broken bones.

The jaw trap causes 3L damage and ignores two points of armor or Durability. A character trapped in the jaws can attempt to escape as an instant action. Doing so requires a Strength + Stamina roll, with the trap's die bonus as a penalty due to the distracting pain and the strength of the jaws. Failure on this roll causes another point of lethal damage as the jaw digs in further. Creatures without opposable thumbs cannot escape this way and must rip themselves free.

Any rolls to hide a bear trap suffer its die bonus as a penalty. They're difficult to hide due to their awkward shape and weight.

Caltrops

Die Bonus +2, Durability 2, Size 2, Structure 3, Availability • •

Effect: Caltrops are small, pointed pieces of metal, arranged in such a way that one point is always facing upward. This makes walking (or driving) through a patch of caltrops inconvenient and painful. These traits assume enough caltrops to fill a doorway or other narrow corridor.

Moving through caltrops causes one point of lethal damage. Caltrops ignore a point of armor or Durability. To move through safely, a Dexterity + Athletics roll is required with the caltrops' die bonus applied as a penalty to the roll. A character may only move half Speed (rounded down) while moving safely through caltrops.

A character may hide caltrops, although it is difficult. A Wits + Larceny – 3 roll is required; the caltrops' die bonus does not apply to this roll.

Camouflage Clothing

Die Bonus +2, Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 3, Availability • •

Effect: Camouflage clothing allows its wearer to blend in with her surroundings enough for the untrained eye to pass over her completely. Effective camouflage must be catered to the environment; greens and browns in the woodlands, shades of grey in an urban area. Proper camouflage adds its bonus to rolls to remain unnoticed.

Climbing Gear

Die Bonus +2, Durability 3, Size 2, Structure 2, Availability • •

Effect: Climbing gear includes ropes, pulleys, handles, carabiners, hooks, and other assorted tools for scaling things. They serve a twofold purpose. First, they add their die bonus to the normal Strength + Athletics rolls for climbing. Second, if properly applied (with a Wits + Athletics roll), they prevent a character from falling more than ten feet at a time.

Crowbar

Die Bonus +2, Durability 3, Size 2, Structure 4, Availability •

Effect: A crowbar is a curved piece of steel used to pry open shipping pallets, jammed doors, and other things a normal person would be incapable of doing by hand. It adds to any dice rolls used to establish leverage. When prying things open, it allows your character to ignore two points of Durability on the lock or barricade. A crowbar can also be used as a weapon (see p. 168).

Firearm Suppressor

Die Bonus +2, Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 2, Availability • •

Effect: A firearm suppressor is popularly and misleadingly referred to as a silencer in cinema and other media. It's a cylinder placed on the end of a gun barrel that changes and lightens the sound of a shot. A suppressor delivers many minor benefits, but offers two noteworthy advantages: short-range accuracy and concealment.

Increased Accuracy: A suppressed firearm travels through a longer barrel and the muzzle crown evens the expulsion of hot gasses that can slightly affect trajectory. In game terms, reduce a suppressed gun's damage rating by 1 due to the bullet's subsonic flight, but increase the attack dice pool by 2 when firing at short range.

Position Concealer: The sound changes dramatically, to the point where many people do not recognize the sound as that of a gunshot and are often unable to place where the lower tone came from. The muzzle flash is also reduced dramatically with a suppressor, helping to conceal a shooter's position. A character trying to identify a suppressed shot must roll Wits + Firearms – 2. Any character searching for the shooter using the gun's tells suffers a –2 penalty.

Gas Mask

Die Bonus +5, Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 3, Availability • •

Effect: A gas mask is a filtration device placed over the face that defends against noxious chemicals in the air. With a working gas mask, a character can stand minor toxins for as long as he needs, whereas other characters might take damage over time or require rolls to remain conscious. Powerful toxins may still require rolls. A gas mask adds five dice to these rolls.

Handcuffs

Die Bonus +2, Durability 4, Size 1, Structure 4, Availability •

Effect: A solid pair of steel handcuffs is made to restrain even a remarkably strong person. Applying handcuffs to an unwilling combatant is an additional option in a grapple. Roll Strength + Brawl – the opponent's Strength. Success means the handcuffs are where they need to be.

Breaking out of successfully applied handcuffs requires a Strength + Stamina – 4 roll. Each success on the roll reduces the Structure of the cuffs by 1. Cuffs reduced to 0 Structure snap open. Each attempt to escape causes 1 point of bashing damage.

A character may also try to finagle their hands out of the cuffs. This requires a Dexterity + Athletics – 4 roll. Success allows for an escape, and causes one point of bashing damage.

Failure on this roll causes one point of lethal damage, as the thumb jerks out of socket.

Attempting to do anything requiring manual dexterity while cuffed incurs a –4 penalty, or –2 if the hands are cuffed in front. Witnesses are unlikely to behave favorably around a cuffed character, Social rolls against strangers incur a –3 penalty.

Many police forces and security companies now prefer heavy-duty plastic zip ties in place of handcuffs. While they're slightly less durable (Durability 3), they incur a –5 penalty from behind or –3 from the front, because they can be far tighter on the wrists. They can also be cut free.

Lockpicking Kit

Die Bonus +2, Durability 2, Size 2, Structure 2, Availability • •

Effect: A lockpicking kit consists of picks, tools, and rods for manipulating tumblers and opening locks. A good kit contains a wide array of tools to all but guarantee intrusion of an analog lock. With such a kit and at least a dot of Larceny, a character can pick a lock without a roll if time is not an issue. If time is an issue, the die bonus applies to the Dexterity + Larceny rolls. At Availability •, a character may procure a portable lockpick. It has Size 1, Structure 1, and is far more concealable. However, it only offers a +1 bonus and doesn't allow for picking without rolls since the kit realistically may not have the right tools for a given job.

A lockpicking kit only works on mechanical locks. Digital locks require more specific hacking and code prediction. A character may procure a digital lockpick at Availability • • •, but typically only works on one type of lock, such as the keycard locks used in hotels. Digital lockpicks can be Size 2, or Size 1 if crafted as an extension of a laptop computer or smartphone.

Mace (Pepper Spray)

Die Bonus +1, Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 1, Availability •

Effect: Pepper spray, or "mace" as it's commonly called, is a blend of chemicals (mostly capsaicin, the "hot" part of a chile pepper) in a small spray can, designed to debilitate threats. Civilians use these devices in self-defense; police use them to subdue unruly criminals. Use of pepper spray requires a Dexterity + Athletics, or Dexterity + Firearms roll. Each yard is a range category, so one yard is short range, two yards is medium, three yards is long range. An opponent's Defense applies, but in normal wind conditions, the die bonus applies to the roll.

Upon the first attack, the victim suffers the Stunned Tilt (see p. 332). An opponent struck suffers a –5 penalty to all actions. This penalty can be reduced by 1 for every turn spent rinsing the eyes with water. Commercial chemicals designed to clean the eyes will fully remove the penalty after a turn.

Rope

Die Bonus +1, Durability 2, Size 3, Structure 2, Availability •

Effect: Rope is one of the oldest tools known to humankind. It's never left prominent use because of its simple and efficient utility. A good rope adds its die bonus to relevant Crafts rolls and anywhere else it would assist. As a binding agent, it resists breaking with a Durability (or effective Strength) equal to its user's Crafts score, due to the multiplicative effect of solid knots. An applicable Specialty adds one to the user's Crafts score for this purpose. Some interrogators, shibari fetishists, and boy scouts alike specialize in remarkable knot-tying, potentially rendering subjects completely and hopelessly immobile.

Stun Gun

Die Bonus 0, Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 2, Availability •, • •, or • • •

Effect: A stun gun is designed to deliver an overwhelming amount of electricity to an assailant in order to shut down her muscles and send her to the ground. As a defensive item, this gives the would-be victim time to run or get help. As an offensive item, it leaves the victim ready for restraint or worse.

These devices come in two varieties (hand-held and ranged) and three intensities (1–3, corresponding to their Availabilities). The hand-held model has live leads on the edge of a handle and can be used as many as fifty times on one battery charge. The ranged model fires small wired darts up to fifteen feet away. While the ranged model has similar battery life, it uses a compressed air cartridge that must be replaced after each shot.

Use of a handheld stun gun requires a Dexterity + Weaponry roll, penalized by the victim's Defense. The ranged model uses Dexterity + Firearms, also penalized by the victim's Defense. On a successful hit with either, the victim takes one point of lethal damage. The successes subtract from the victim's next dice pool. With the ranged version, the darts remain in the victim's body, adding three successes automatically each turn. They can be removed with a Strength + Stamina roll, with the initial successes penalizing the action. With the hand-held version, the attacker can attempt to maintain the shock, which takes a Strength + Weaponry, penalized by the greater of the opponent's Strength or Defense. Once the accumulated successes exceed the victim's Size, the victim collapses in neuro-muscular incapacitation. Once the shock ends, this lasts for (10 – victim's Stamina) in turns.

Social Equipment

Social actions deal with people. Social Equipment offers tools for leverage, influence, and manipulation.

Cash

Die Bonus +1 to +5, Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 1, Availability • to • • • • •

Effect: This represents a wad of cash, a briefcase of money, an offshore bank account number, or some other lump sum. It can't be reflected in the Resources Merit since it's not a regular income. However, it can be expended to offer a bonus equivalent to its Availability on any social roll where a bribe could benefit. As well, it can be expended to purchase one item of equal Availability. For more complex uses, consider it a single month's allotment of the same Resources.

Disguise

Die Bonus +1 to +3, Durability 1, Size 3, Structure 2, Availability • to • • •

Effect: A good disguise goes a long way to help fit in with a strange group or go unnoticed in a crowd where one doesn't belong. Properly costumed for a situation, no rolls are required to blend into the crowd. Any rolls to actively detect the outsider suffer a penalty equal to the die bonus of the disguise; the disguised character also gains the bonus to remain hidden.

With a disguise, a character can emulate the first dot of a single Social Merit that would make sense within the scope of the scene. For example, it doesn't make money appear from thin air, but it would allow a character to get their drinks on a nonexistent tab, reflecting Resources •. This requires a Composure + Subterfuge to maintain in the face of anyone in the know, contested by the witness's Wits + Subterfuge. The die bonus of the disguise applies to the liar, but does not affect the witness.

Fashion

Die Bonus +1 to +3, Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 1, Availability • to • • • • •

Effect: Never underestimate the value of high fashion. Like a disguise, fashionable clothing allows a character to fit in. However, the point of fashion is to draw attention, not to fade into the crowd. As opposed to anonymity, fashion means being noticed. Note that the clothing chosen must be appropriate to the setting. Punk chic will not work at a Senator's fundraiser, for example. When improperly dressed, the die bonus applies as a penalty to all Social Skill rolls.

The die bonus for Fashion is equal to half the Availability, rounded up.

Conditions

Conditions represent ways in which the story has affected your character, and what she can do to move past those events. Players don't buy Conditions, events in the game apply them and they remain until certain *resolution* criteria are met. A character can't have more than one copy of the same condition unless each applies to a distinctly different thing — for example you may be Delusional about both spiders crawling under your skin and your friends plotting to kill you. You'd have to resolve each independently.

Characters can gain Conditions as a result of various factors. Nightmares inflict a number of Conditions, most of them bad for the victim. A player can also choose to take a Condition relevant to the situation as a result of an exceptional success, and breaking points can cause Conditions as a character deals with them. Sometimes, the Storyteller will inflict Conditions based on the circumstances of the story.

The listed resolutions for each Condition are the most common ways to end its effects; other actions may also resolve it if they would reasonably cause the Condition's effects to end. Work with the Storyteller to determine Condition resolution. When your character resolves a Condition, take a Beat. If a Condition has a natural time limit and then fades away, don't take a Beat — just waiting the Condition out isn't enough to count as resolving it.

Some Conditions are marked as Persistent. These Conditions typically last for a long time, and can only be resolved permanently with a specific and impressive effort. Once per game session, a character can gain a Beat when a Persistent Condition impacts her life.

Improvised Conditions

Need a Condition for a first edition game's conversion, but none of the ones in this book quite fit? If you have access to them, the other **World of Darkness Second Edition** core rulebooks offer plenty of options you can easily cannibalize. You might want to change the descriptions or the names of the Conditions to suit your needs, but you should be able to find a mechanical effect that does what you want.

If you can't find an existing Condition that fits, or if you don't have the other rulebooks, follow this simple template to create your own Conditions:

First choose from one of the following effects:

- Add +2 to certain types of rolls, or subtract –2 from certain types of rolls.
- Add 9-again to certain types of rolls.
- Remove 10-again from certain types of rolls.
- Add or remove one Door in a Social Maneuvering action.
- Automatically fail a certain kind of action to resolve the Condition.

Then decide what the sufferer can do to resolve the Condition. Does it require a particular action, or for the character to improve a certain Trait? Does it require outside help, or is it a random turn of the dice? Finally, is it Persistent? If the Condition models something that will stick around for a long time, decide on a circumstance in which the Condition can be activated to give the affected character a Beat in addition to a circumstance in which it can be permanently resolved.

Congratulations — you now have a Condition.

Lingering Conditions

Conditions are designed as reminders that events that happened earlier in the story have repercussions later. Usually, Chekhov's rifle applies — if you put the Condition on stage, it should fire by the end. But storytelling games are slippery things, and sometimes a story thread represented by a Condition is better to drop for the sake of the ongoing narrative.

For example, an emotional state like Wanton might no longer be relevant to events in the game because a long time has passed, or it might have been the result of a conflict with a character you don't care about anymore. In those cases, it's perfectly fine to just cross off the Condition. We recommend awarding a Beat as if resolving it, but that's at the Storyteller's discretion.

We recommend doing this sparingly, but bottom line: If a Condition doesn't feel relevant to the story anymore, just let it go.

Ephemeral Beings: Ghosts, Spirits, and Angels

Humanity isn't alone. It shares the World of Darkness with innumerable entities, lurking invisible and intangible in a Twilight state, waiting for the right conditions to arise. When an area becomes tainted by the touch of death; when the wall between the world and the terrible, hungry Shadow of animist spirits grows thin; when people begin to see the gears of the God-Machine: these are the times when the ghosts, spirits and angels around us can manifest, interact, and further their alien goals. All of them want something from humanity — memories, obedience, emotion...even bodies. Sometimes, humanity fights back.

Invisible Incursions

The physical World of Darkness borders on multiple realms, each with its own peculiar laws. The inhabitants of those realms aren't material beings and although many are intelligent and self-aware, their thoughts are alien to humans. Mortal investigators almost never see the worlds these beings come from with their own eyes, for which they should be grateful. Everything occultists have been able to learn about the animistic Shadow World and the chthonian deep of the Underworld paints both realms as deadly and teeming with "natives." The enigmatic servant-angels of the God-Machine might come from such a realm, or might be created within the world by the processes and Infrastructure they serve. No one knows for sure.

Whether the beings are fleeing the dangers of their home realm, avoiding banishment to it, summoned from their home by mortal occultists, sent as agents by more powerful members of their own kind, or forced to cross over to complete a mission by the God-Machine, most encounters between characters and ephemeral beings in a God-Machine chronicle take place in the physical world where characters have the home ground advantage.

Manifestation and Possession

Instead of bodies formed of flesh and bone, ephemeral beings are made up of spiritual matter called ephemera, which comes in several varieties. These substances are both invisible and intangible to anything not comprised of the same sort of ephemera — ghosts can see and touch one another, but are invisible to most living people and don't interact with solid objects or even other ephemeral beings that aren't ghosts. Spirits happily float through walls and pass through ghosts without even noticing them, and are incapable of interacting with people without help.

Almost every ephemeral being has the ability to *Manifest* — to make its presence known and to affect the physical world, ranging from remaining invisible but using powers, appearing as insubstantial but visible images, or even possessing a victim, sending his soul into hibernation and warping the commandeered body to suit their own uses. Some are more skilled at it than others (those so weak they can't Manifest at all are essentially impotent in the physical world and don't interact with humans), but all require certain appropriate conditions before they can use these powers.

An ephemeral being that wants to shift into physical form or to inhabit an object, animal or person requires the specified area, item or character to be prepared for it to successfully Manifest. Ghosts require Anchors — places, objects and people that are linked to their living days and reinforce their failing identities. Angels can only appear in the world when enough Infrastructure has been laid out by the God-Machine. Spirits need the emotional resonance of the area or victim-host to match their own.

The more powerful the Manifestation, the stronger the Condition needed is. The most powerful physical forms and tightly-held victims are the result of careful husbandry by the Manifesting being, slowly building up the necessary Condition by leveraging whatever Manifestation they can produce at first. Unless Conditions are very strong or the possessing entity extremely powerful, a human being falling victim to a possession is first urged to follow the entity's wishes instead of his own, then later forced to do it's bidding, and only then physically mutated into a bizarre amalgamation of nature and supernatural power.

Summoning or exorcising entities from locations or Possession, then, is a matter of creating or destroying the appropriate setting for the creature, preferably near to a place it can cross over from or to its native realm. Most entities waste away as though starving outside of the needed Conditions, so

breaking those Conditions is a sure-fire way of forcing the being to abandon its attempt at Manifestation and send it fleeing toward either a way "home" or another appropriate vessel. Cultists wanting to summon entities attempt to ritually create appropriate Conditions near to a crossing-point, or offer up a suitable vessel in the hope that the right sort of ephemeral being will accept the gift. In the case of angels, most participants in a "summoning" never realize the significance of their actions — Infrastructure is gradually built as the God-Machine moves pawns and machinery around like game pieces until an angel is brought forth.

Ghosts

Echoes of the Dead

When human beings die, especially in a sudden or traumatic fashion, they sometimes leave parts of themselves behind. Ranging from broken, animated after-images unable to do anything but re-enact their death to intelligent, malevolent once-human spirits with power over whatever kind of calamity killed them, the World of Darkness teems with vast numbers of the restless dead. More ghosts exist than any other supernatural creature, but the truly powerful independent specters of legend are rare.

The majority of ghosts are poor at influencing the world, trapped in their insubstantial state and unable to even Manifest; they are noticed only as a strange chill or eerie vibe, if the living sense them at all. Ghosts are drawn to places and people that they had emotional connections to in life — these things anchor the ghost in the world and allow those with enough power to Manifest, whereupon they carry out whatever mad urges they still feel and attempt to further the goals they left undone in life.

Ghosts feed on Essence, a spiritual energy created by memory and emotion that builds up in their Anchors and is fed directly to them when they are remembered by the living. Ghosts that lose their Anchors and can't transfer their attachment fade from the world, passing over to a dread realm filled with all the orphaned Ghosts that have gone before. This realm has many names in occult writings: Tartarus, the Great Below, the Land of the Dead, the Dominions, or simply the Underworld.

The living seldom visit the Underworld, though mediums and death-obsessed mystery cults all over the world teach that gateways leading there are more common than supposed. Its doors exist in the same Twilight state as ghosts themselves, invisible and unnoticed by the living. Tales of living occultists who learned the right places and the proper ceremonies to open the gates of death describe the Underworld as a chthonian hell of passageways, tunnels and caverns, filled with desperate ghosts that lost their grip on the world.

The Underworld sustains the dead, allowing them more freedom to move and act than the living world, but also imprisons them. Once there, ghosts may increase in power and influence, evolving beyond the image of the person they were into twisted rulers of dead kingdoms or sponsors and advocates of particular forms of death. If summoned back to the

physical world or allowed to escape the Underworld by chance conditions, a ghost that has spent centuries growing stronger can wreak havoc until exorcised.

Spirits

Warped Reflections

Animist religions describe the world as being full of spirits, every object, animal and place hiding a spirit within it. They're partly right; everything in the World of Darkness apart from humans *does* cast a spiritual reflection, even transitory events and strong emotions, but all spirits apart from the cunning or a powerful few are confined to a world of their own. Spirits war on each other for survival everywhere. Separated from the physical world by a barrier known to knowledgeable occultists as the Gauntlet, the spirit — or *Shadow* — world is a murky reflection of the physical. Its geography is (mostly) the same as the World of Darkness, but places appear twisted to reflect their inner truth rather than showing an exact physical representation.

Spirits come into being alongside the thing they're a reflection of, but are dormant, barely-living, tiny lumps of ephemera at first. As well as creating new spirits, actions in the physical world and any emotions associated with them create Essence in the physical world, some of which cross over into the Shadow. If enough Essence is created around an embryonic spirit, it becomes roused into activity. By absorbing Essence, the spirit remains active. By consuming other spirits, it merges those spirits into itself and grows larger and more powerful.

As spirits become more powerful, they become less pure as reflections of their origins and more thematic in nature. For example, the spirit of a single owl grows by consuming other owl-spirits. As it consumes spirits of night, hunting, the prey its owl eats, and other owl-spirits, the spirit subtly changes. By the time it becomes an independent, thinking being that no longer follows around the physical creature that created it, it has warped into an exaggerated spirit of silent nocturnal hunting. The Essence it consumes also has an effect — an owl-spirit evolving in an urban area feeds on different Essence to one in the countryside, and its appearance is colored by its diet.

When mortal characters encounter spirits, something has gone wrong. Some spirits are capable of using their powers through the Gauntlet and, as their self-awareness grows with power, decide to create food sources for themselves by influencing what sort of spirits and Essence will be created around them. The true culprit behind an unusual pattern of domestic murders, for example, might be a murder-spirit using its abilities to heighten arguments to homicide.

The spirits that mortal investigators encounter in the physical world are refugees and escapees: those that cross the Gauntlet to flee the constant risk of being killed and absorbed by larger spirits. They constantly strive to maintain their Essence, desperate to avoid returning to their own world. Without an easy source of Essence, spirits must anchor themselves like ghosts by finding an object or person that reflects their nature and tying their ephemeral bodies to them. The spirit remains intangible — and is often actually "inside" the host — but is safe from starvation as long as the host generates enough Essence to feed it. By influencing the host, or humans interacting with a material host, to more closely reflect its nature, the spirit gets a ready supply of Essence and may move on to more permanent forms of possession. Many items thought of as having "wills of their own" or as being cursed actually house spirits.

Other Entities

The ghosts, spirits, and angels presented here aren't the only ephemeral entities to exist. The various World of Darkness games have used the spirit rules this section updates to represent many different beings, from the inhabitants of an astral world visited by mages to demonic owls made of smoke with a strange connection to vampires.

Just as ghosts, spirits, and angels are slightly different, adapting these beings to use the rules here involves setting out both where they follow these rules and where they don't. Future chronicle books may detail ephemeral entities particular to those chronicles.

Angels

Functions of the God-Machine

Unlike ghosts, who feed from being remembered and struggle to maintain their grip on the world, and spirits who flee their own Darwinian hell to carve a foothold in material reality, angels are both temporary visitors to the mortal realm and its only true "natives" among ephemeral beings. The God-Machine isn't some far-off thing lurking in a distant dimension; it's here, in the material world, built from mechanisms hidden from sight by guile and magic. When cultists summon a spirit, it journeys from the Shadow. When an angel is needed, the God-Machine is as likely to build the angel right there as to direct an existing one to journey to the site. When angels *are* reused, they spend the downtime "resting," dormant, in storage facilities hidden by the very deepest Infrastructure. Sometimes, cultists and prying outsiders who witness the gears catch glimpses of these facilities — cavernous chambers folded neatly into impossible spaces, filled with hydraulics, gears, and the hissing of machines surrounding the angels while keeping them fed with Essence. They're always guarded.

Being essentially tools designed by an intelligent if unknowable creator to fulfill specific functions, angels are far more specialized than spirits or ghosts. They're also usually more subtle and able to go unnoticed even when Manifested, but are extremely single-minded, aiming to complete the task they've been sent for and then vanish.

Game Systems

Ghosts, spirits and angels share a broad set of rules with minor variations to cover situations such as spirits reaching across the Gauntlet.

The State of Twilight

Unless they Manifest or use a power to appear, ephemeral beings remain in their insubstantial state when in the material world. This state is described as "Twilight." To beings in Twilight, physical objects appear pale and semi-transparent, light sources are dimmed and sounds are distorted as though underwater. Twilight isn't a place, though; it's more of a description of how ephemera interacts — or fails to interact — with material reality.

When in Twilight, only items, creatures, and phenomena that are also in Twilight and comprised of the same kind of ephemera can touch an ephemeral being. Attacks simply pass through the Twilight being; solid concrete and steel are no more hindrance than fog.

The exception to this rule is ghost structures. Destroyed objects — everything from a pen to a building — appear as after-images in Twilight, formed of the same ephemera as ghosts. These spiritual structures and items fade away on a timescale depending on how strongly they're remembered. Famous structures, or even obscure ones that are loved and thought about frequently after they're destroyed, can last decades, solid and substantial only to ghosts.

If no ghostly structures get in the way, ephemeral beings in Twilight can move at walking pace in any direction. Gravity has no sway, though Twilight beings can only truly "fly" if it's appropriate for their form — most hug the material terrain. A ghost could walk up the side of a tower block, for example, but couldn't then float through mid-air to the next tower.

Some occultists and supernatural creatures practice Astral Projection, which allows a character to leave her body behind and explore the world in invisible form. These projected selves are technically in Twilight, but lack ephemeral bodies and so aren't solid even to one another.

Ephemeral Traits

Ephemeral beings aren't alive the way humans are alive. They aren't biological creatures and don't have the divides between body, soul, and mind that mortals and once-mortal supernatural beings possess. In game terms, ephemeral beings are represented by simplified game traits.

Rank

All ephemeral beings have dots in an Advantage called Rank, which notes how self-aware and powerful the entity is. Rank technically ranges from 1 to 10 dots, but entities with more than Rank ••••• are so alien they can't support themselves in the Conditions lesser beings use. They can only be brought into the world by story- and chronicle-defining maneuvers, conjunctions, and events. The Lords of the Dead, Gods of Shadow, and the mighty archangels are out of the scope of the Storytelling system. If they appear at all, they do so as plot devices.

Rank is used to determine the maximum ratings in other game traits an ephemeral being can have, as described in a table below, along with how many dots of Attributes the entity can have. All ephemeral beings have the ability to sense the relative Rank of other entities, and may attempt to conceal their own Rank by succeeding in a contested Finesse roll. Success means that the entity appears to be the same Rank as the being sensing the relative Rank.

Rank*	Trait Limits **	Attribute Dots	Max. Essence	Numina
•	5 dots	5–8	10	1–3
••	7 dots	9–14	15	3–5
•••	9 dots	15–25	20	5–7
••••	12 dots	26–35	25	7–9
•••••	15 dots	36–45	50	9–11

* Each Rank levies a –1 modifier on attempts to forcibly bind that entity and acts as a Supernatural Tolerance trait.

** These represent permanent dots, not temporarily boosted ones.

Ghosts can't increase Rank outside of the Underworld and come into existence as either Rank 1 or 2 depending on how much self-awareness they have. Nonsapient "recording" type ghosts are Rank 1, while those that retain most of their living memories are Rank 2. Ghosts summoned back from the Underworld, however, may be of any Rank.

Spirits and **Angels** run the full range of Ranks, depending on how old and successful a spirit is or how much importance the God-Machine places upon an angel.

Essence

Combination food, oxygen, and wealth, Essence fuels ephemeral entities' powers, sustains their insubstantial bodies, and allows them to continue existing. As a game trait, Essence resembles Willpower in that each entity has a permanent maximum Essence rating and an equal number of Essence points it can spend to achieve effects. Maximum Essence is determined by Rank.

Entities can use Essence in the following ways:

- Ephemeral beings must spend a point of Essence per day to remain active. If they have run out of Essence, they fall into hibernation until something happens to let them regain at least one point, which can then be spent on returning to activity. Such dormancy is dangerous — the entity remains in Twilight and can be destroyed if it loses all Corpus and Essence at the same time (see p. 188). When spirits enter hibernation, they are pushed

back across the Gauntlet into the Shadow. Ghosts that don't have any anchors remaining are similarly forced into the Underworld. Angels remain dormant wherever they were.

- Ephemeral beings outside of a suitable Condition bleed one point of Essence per *hour*. The Influence and Manifestation Conditions starting on **p. 191** state whether they protect from Essence bleed for different types of ephemeral being. Entities that run out of Essence due to bleed suffer a single point of lethal damage and enter hibernation.
- Ephemeral beings can spend Essence to boost their traits for a single scene on a point per dot basis. They can't boost a single trait by more than Rank + 2 dots; boosting takes a turn and they can only boost a single Attribute in a turn.

Entities can sense sources of Essence appropriate for their needs from up to a mile away. Spirits can use this sense through the Gauntlet. The "Seek" Numen **(p. 195)** increases this range.

- Ephemeral beings regain one point of Essence per day they are in proximity to any Condition relating to them — ghosts are sustained by staying near their anchors, spirits in the Shadow eke out an existence by feeding across the Gauntlet, and angels are fed by Infrastructure.
- Ephemeral beings can attempt to steal Essence from beings of the same type — ghosts from ghosts, spirits from spirits and so on. The attacking entity rolls Power + Finesse, contested by the victim's Power + Resistance. If the attacker succeeds, it steals up to the successes in Essence, as long as the victimized entity has Essence remaining to lose.
- Ghosts regain a point of Essence whenever someone remembers the living person they once were. Visiting their grave, simply sitting and remembering them, or recognizing their Manifested form as the person they used to be all qualify.
- Spirits may attempt to gorge themselves on a source of appropriate Essence. Once per day, when in proximity (even if it's on the other side of the Gauntlet) to a suitable Condition, a spirit can roll Power + Finesse, regaining successes in Essence. If the spirit is still in the Shadow, the dice pool is penalized according to Gauntlet strength.
- Angels are mechanisms in the God-Machine, and like any machine they are sustained by fuel. God-Machine cultists sacrificing precious resources (metaphorical or literal), animals, or even humans to the angel in its presence allow it to regain the Resources value of the item or animal, or the current Integrity of a human sacrifice, as Essence.

Attributes and Skills

Ephemeral beings don't have the nine Attributes familiar in material characters, but use a simplified set of the Power, Finesse, and Resistance categories mortal Attributes fall into. When creating an ephemeral being, look at the Rank chart earlier in this section to determine how many dots are available and what the trait maximum is. Ghosts usually use the average rating in each category from when they were alive — for example, a man with Strength 3, Intelligence 2, and Presence 2 would become a ghost with Power 2.

Power describes the raw ability of the entity to impose itself on other ephemeral beings and the world at large. It is used in all rolls that call for Strength, Intelligence, or Presence.

Finesse describes how deft the entity is at imposing its desires with fine control. It is used for all rolls that call for Dexterity, Wits, or Manipulation.

Resistance describes how well the entity can avoid imposition from its peers and how easily it is damaged. It is used for all rolls that call for Stamina, Resolve, or Composure.

Ephemeral beings don't possess skills, but also don't suffer unskilled penalties as long as the action they're attempting is appropriate to their former self, nature, or mission. They roll the appropriate Attribute + Rank for actions relating directly to their concept, or Attribute + Attribute for actions like surprise and perception.

Gauntlet Strength

The strength of the wall between the World of Darkness and its Shadow depends mostly on how many people are present in the area. The paradox of why human activity pushes the Shadow away when it also creates vast quantities of emotionally-resonant Essence is a mystery. If the spirits know, they aren't telling, but the Gauntlet breaks away more easily from civilization.

Whenever a spirit attempts to cross between the material world and the Shadow, uses Influence or Manifestation to reach across, feeds from the material world's Essence while still being in the Shadow, or uses a Reaching Manifestation **(see p. 191)**, the dice pool is penalized by a number of dice according to the following chart.

Location	Modifier
Dense urban areas	–3
City suburbs, towns	–2
Small towns, villages	–1
Wilderness, countryside	0
Locus	+2

A Locus is a location in which the Shadow world is especially close. Spirits don't need the Reaching Manifestation Effect to use their powers across the Gauntlet at a locus, attempts to cross over are at +2 dice, and spirits whose nature matches the Locus' Resonant Condition heal at twice the normal rate.

Advantages

Ephemeral beings differ in how they treat Integrity, Virtue, Vice, and Fate. When they possess these traits, the descriptions used are often unusual and the specifics change according to the entity's origin.

Ghosts retain their Virtue and Vice from life, but they are reversed in effect — ghosts regain all spent Willpower by fulfilling their Vice, but can only do so once per chapter, and regain up to one Willpower point a scene by fulfilling their Virtue. Alone among ephemeral beings, ghosts also possess Integrity, set at the level they had before death. Their Integrity scores don't change, however, as ghosts do not suffer breaking points. Their self-image is fixed unless something happens to push them back to the level of cognizance and self-awareness they had in life. If this should happen somehow, they can suffer breaking points the same way living people can.

Spirits don't have an Integrity trait or a Virtue or Vice. Instead, they regain one point of spent Willpower per three points of Essence they consume by gorging or stealing as described above.

Angels lack Integrity — they simply obey the God-Machine in all things — and likewise don't have Fates. They do have Virtues and Vices, though, built into them as operating guidelines and preset responses. Angelic Virtues and Vices don't have to be anything a human would describe as virtuous or wicked. Examples include "Silent," "Hidden," "Obedient," "Curious," "Punctual," "Wrathful," and "Precise," all as either Virtue or Vice depending on the angel in question.

Other Traits

Because they have simplified traits, ephemeral entities calculate derived traits a little differently to mortal characters.

Corpus: Ephemeral beings don't have Health, but measure how intact their Twilight form is using Corpus. Permanent Corpus is equal to Resistance + Size and grants Corpus boxes that act like Health boxes, filling when the entity suffers injury. Corpus boxes don't have wound penalties associated with them.

Willpower: Entities have Willpower dots equal to Resistance + Finesse, with a maximum of 10 dots for entities with the Ranks presented in this book. As well as the Willpower gaining methods described above, all ephemeral beings regain one spent Willpower per day.

Initiative: Initiative is equal to Finesse + Resistance.

Defense: Defense is equal to Power or Finesse, whichever is lower, except for Rank 1 spirits which use the higher of the two Attributes. The more an entity is driven by raw instinct, the more animal defense it displays in combat.

Speed: Speed is equal to Power + Finesse + a "species" factor. Spirits of inanimate objects usually have a species factor of 0.

Size: Ephemeral beings can be of any size. Ghosts are usually Size 5, while spirits often use Rank as Size, growing larger as they become more powerful. Angels designed to blend in are sized as humans or animals, but some angelic entities are very large, up to Size 10 or more.

Language: Rank 1 ghosts can't communicate verbally; they don't have enough of their sense of self left to employ language. Rank 2 and higher ghosts know whatever languages they knew in life. Spirits all speak the native tongue of the shadow-world, a strange, sibilant language that resembles Ancient Sumerian, but often learn the human languages common around their Essence-feeding grounds. Angels speak all human languages simultaneously, and more — they sometimes "speak" in strange glossalia or sounds more like electronic noise than a language and appear to understand each other when doing so. When an angel wishes to be understood, everyone present hears it speak fluently in their native languages.

Bans

All ephemeral beings suffer from a mystical compulsion known as the ban, a behavior that the entity must or must not perform under certain conditions. They can be as simplistic as "the angel cannot cross railway lines," moderately complex like "the ghost must come if you call her name into a mirror three times within her anchor," or as difficult as, "the angel must receive a tribute of a printing press that has used blood as ink once a month or lose a Rank."

Bans increase in both complexity and consequences with Rank.

Rank 1 entities have mild bans that are easily triggered but don't endanger the entity. A spirit of bliss can't resist an offering of opiates. The ghost of a nun has to immediately use an offered rosary. A weak angel must stop still and parrot hexadecimal numbers when they're spoken to.

Rank 2 and 3 entities have moderate bans that curtail the creature's activities in a more serious way than mere distraction. A ghost must immediately dematerialize when it hears the sound of a cat. The murderous spirit of a car that has run down multiple people loses all Willpower if it doesn't kill one person a month. The angel of the records answers any question about the family, background, or true identity of a subject if the questioner accurately tells the angel her time (to the minute) and place of birth.

Rank 4 and 5 entities have complicated bans that put an end to whatever the creature is trying to do — often in an explosive fashion. They have consequences in game traits or long-term actions, but esoteric requirements. The Smiling Corpse, a ghost summoned back from the Underworld by a mystery cult, is immediately banished back to the Great Below if anyone should sing a particular nursery rhyme in his presence. The spirit of Mount Iliamna, a volcano in Alaska, will use its Numina to kill a victim named by anyone who makes it an offering of platinum that was mined from its foothills. The angel Uriminel, four-faced enforcer of destiny, has Defense 0 against individuals who have suffered lethal or aggravated damage within the last lunar month.

Banes

Ephemeral entities are not of the material world and react strangely to some elements of it. The interaction between

their ephemeral Twilight form and physical substance always contains a flaw — a *bane* — that damages the entity's Corpus through symbolic or mystical interference. The bane is a physical substance or energy that the entity can't abide.

- Ephemeral beings voluntarily attempting to come into contact with the bane must spend a Willpower point and succeed on a Resolve + Composure roll with a dice penalty equal to their Rank.
- Banes are solid to entities, even when they are in Twilight. They do not, however, affect spirits on the other side of the Gauntlet.
- Simply touching the bane — even voluntarily — causes 1 level of aggravated damage per turn if the entity is Materialized, and causes the relevant Condition to end unless the entity succeeds in a roll of Rank in dice. The roll must be repeated every turn if contact holds.
- If the item or person to which a Fettered entity is linked comes into contact with the bane, the entity suffers 1 level of Lethal damage per turn as long as contact holds. The entity must use the Unfetter Manifestation Effect to escape.
- Touching the bane while in Twilight causes 1 point of lethal damage per turn to non-Manifest entities.
- If the bane has been used as a weapon against the entity, the wounds suffered are aggravated for Manifest entities and lethal for entities still in Twilight.

Banes are increasingly esoteric and obscure for entities of increasing Rank.

Rank 1 entities have common substances and phenomena as banes. Ghosts burn at the touch of salt. The spirit of a forest is poisoned by the fumes of burning plastic. A low-ranking angel can't touch gold.

Rank 2 and 3 entities have difficult to obtain but still "natural" banes. Powerful ghosts are repelled by holy water. A spirit must be killed by a sharpened stake made of pine. A mid-rank angel can be killed by a weapon dusted with the ground-up remains of a meteorite.

Rank 4 and 5 entities have highly-specific banes that require great effort to acquire. The lord of an Underworld realm now walking the Earth and served by a cult of worshippers can be killed by an obsidian blade marked with the names of thirteen Gods of Death. The spirit of the US Treasury (the building) can be killed by a silver bullet made from a melted-down original dollar. A high Rank angel can't willingly touch the sigils of a certain incantation in Sumerian and dies if the signs are carved into the flesh of its host.

The hierarchical nature of ephemeral beings also plays a part — Rank isn't a social convention for them but a fundamental part of their nature. Ephemeral entities of 2 Ranks or more higher than an opponent of the same type (a Rank 5 spirit attacking a Rank 3 spirit, for example) count as their opponent's bane when using unarmed attacks, claws, or teeth.

HONORARY RANK

Some supernatural creatures that are closely related to a form of ephemeral being have "honorary" Rank in the appropriate otherworldly hierarchy; Sin-Eaters are all Bound to a ghost, for example, and werewolves are treated with respect by spirits according to their Renown.

Technicalities count, in this case, but only *against* the ephemeral entity. A werewolf who "outranks" a minor spirit will deal devastating wounds to it with his claws, but a high-Rank spirit can't burn that werewolf by touching him. There are other ways to assert dominance; high-Rank entities are quite capable of showing the half-fleshed who's boss.

Combat

As noted earlier, ephemeral beings use the lower of Finesse or Resistance for Defense unless they are Rank 1, in which case they use the higher. They apply Defense against *all* attacks, even firearms.

Ephemeral beings roll Power + Finesse to attack. Their attacks inflict bashing damage unless the nature of the entity (a spirit with metal fists, for example) indicates that it should inflict lethal wounds instead. Some entities use weapons, in which case roll Power + Finesse and then apply weapon damage on a successful attack.

Entities in Twilight can only attack or be attacked by other ephemeral beings of the same type, unless the attack utilizes the entity's bane.

Physical attacks on a manifest entity that normally cause lethal damage only cause bashing damage unless the attack utilizes the entity's bane. Despite appearing to the naked eye and being solid, a manifest spirit, ghost, or angel doesn't have any internal organs to injure.

Ephemeral beings record and heal from wounds the same way as material characters, but in addition lose one point of Essence for every aggravated wound they suffer.

Ephemeral entities that lose all Corpus from lethal or aggravated wounds explode into a burst of ephemera stylized to their nature. A forest-spirit dies in a hail of rapidly-vanishing pine needles, while ghosts crumble, screaming, into the ground. The entity isn't actually dead, though, unless it has also run out of Essence. If it has even a single Essence point remaining, it reforms in a safe place (a Conditioned location, usually), hibernating. Once it has regained Essence points equal to Corpus dots, it spends an Essence point and reawakens. As the entity can't act while hibernating, this means waiting for the one point of Essence a day for being in a suitable area to slowly build up to Corpus, and that more powerful entities take longer to recover from being "killed."

Influence Effects

Level	Effect
• Strengthen	The entity can enhance its sphere of influence; it can add to the Defense of a loved one, make an emotion stronger, an animal or plant healthier, or an object more robust, gaining the entity's Rank in Health or Structure. This Influence can shift the Anchor, Resonant or Infrastructure Condition to Open for its duration. The cost is one Essence.
•• Manipulate	The entity can make minor changes within its sphere of influence, such as slightly changing the nature or target of an emotion, or making minor changes to an animal's actions, a plant's growth or an object's functioning. The cost is two Essence.
••• Control	The entity can make dramatic changes within its sphere of influence, twisting emotions entirely or dictating an animal's actions, a plant's growth or an object's functioning. This Influence can shift the Open Condition to Controlled for its duration. The cost is three Essence.
•••• Create	The entity can create a new example of its sphere of influence; creating a new anchor, instilling an emotion, creating a new sapling or young plant, creating a young animal or brand new object. The entity can cause a temporary Anchor, Infrastructure, or Resonant Condition in a subject for the duration of the Influence. The cost is four Essence.
••••• Mass Create	The entity can create multiple examples of its sphere of influence; triggering emotions in multiple people; creating new copses of trees, small groups of animals, or multiple identical items. The cost is five Essence. The number of examples of the Influence created is equal to Rank. Alternatively, the entity may create one instance of its sphere of influence — including creating the base Condition for its type — permanently, although an ephemeral entity can't permanently alter the mind of a sentient being.

Influence

All ephemeral beings have a degree of Influence over the world that they can leverage to control and shape the basis of their existence. Ghosts have power over their own anchors, spirits can control and encourage the phenomena they were born from, and the God-Machine grants angels broad authority over things relating to their mission.

Entities begin with dots in Influence equal to their Rank. Although a being's Rank is also the maximum rating for an Influence, ephemeral beings can split their dots to have more than one Influence. A Rank 4 spirit of dogs, for example, might have Influence: Dogs ••• and Influence: Loyalty •.

Entities may reduce their number of Numina granted by Rank to increase Influence dots at a cost of one Numen per dot.

Influence Durations

Level	Duration	Cost
0	One minute per success	No additional Essence cost
•	Ten minutes per success	No additional Essence cost
••	One hour per success	1 additional Essence
•••	One day per success	2 additional Essence
••••	Permanent	2 additional Essence

Spirits and angels have Influences that relate to their natures, but that may be used in multiple circumstances — the dog spirit, for example, has Influence: Dogs, not Influence over a *particular* dog. Ghosts always have Influence: Anchors, though may have other Influences as well as they increase in Rank.

Influence is measured in both scale and duration. To use an Influence, compare the entity's Influence rating to the total dots of the intended effect and how long it is to last. The total must be equal to or less than the entity's Influence rating in order for the Influence to be attempted.

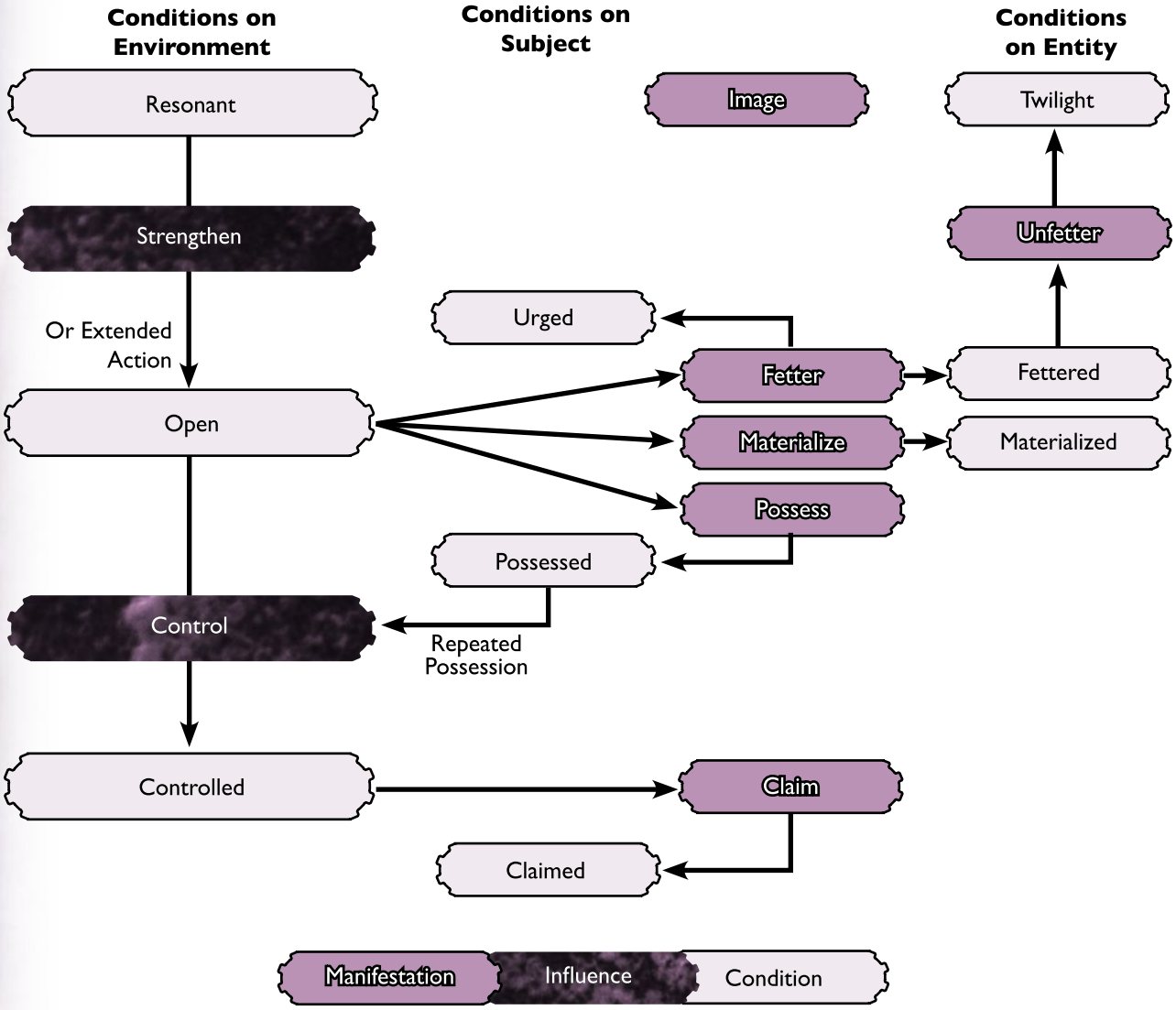
The entity pays the listed cost in Essence and rolls Power + Finesse, with success creating the desired effect. If the Influence is altering the thoughts or emotions of a sentient being, the roll is contested by Resolve or Composure (whichever is higher) + Supernatural Tolerance.

Manifestation

Ephemeral beings can interact with the mortal world in many different ways, from lurking in Shadow and reaching across the Gauntlet to physically Manifesting or merging into a human soul. Just as Influence traits determine what level of control the creature has over their environment, Manifestation traits note which forms of Manifestation are possible for a particular entity.

Entities begin with the Twilight Form Manifestation and a number of Manifestation Effects from the list below equal to Rank. Some effects are only available to certain kinds of entity. Entities may increase their capabilities by reducing the number of Numina they are granted by Rank, at the cost of one Numen per Manifestation Effect.

Spirit Flow Chart



Most Manifestation Effects have prerequisite Influence or Manifestation Conditions — a spirit can only Fetter to something with an Open Condition, for example.

All Manifestation Effects require a Power + Finesse roll to use. Most have an associated cost in Essence, and some are contested or resisted.

Ephemeral Influence and Manifestation Conditions

If something falls into an ephemeral being's sphere of influence, this is handled mechanically by declaring an Influence Condition. Influence Conditions resemble Tilts and character Conditions.

The different forms of Manifestation Effect are also Conditions applied to the location, object, or character the entity is Manifesting into or, in cases like Reaching, to the entity itself.

Unlike many Conditions, Influence and Manifestation Conditions are tiered and interrelated; Manifestation Conditions have Influence Conditions as prerequisites and vice-versa. The lower tiers are naturally occurring, while the later ones must be created by entities using Influences and Manifestations.

In the most advanced forms of Influence and Manifestation, entities may attempt to create a long-lasting Condition that has a prerequisite of a very temporary one. When one Condition is advanced into another, the remaining duration of the prerequisite Conditions is "frozen."

If a prerequisite Condition is removed from a character (for example, a Possessed character's Open Condition is removed by exorcism) any Conditions relying on it, any relying on them, and so on are immediately removed. The most advanced remaining Condition then resumes its duration.

ANCHOR

The subject of this Condition — usually a location or object, though it can be a person in rare cases — is within the sphere of influence of a ghost. Ghosts in or within Rank x3 yards of their Anchors do not suffer Essence bleed.

Causing the Condition: This Condition is immediately created when a new ghost is formed, based on whatever subject anchors the ghost's identity. Summoning rituals intended to release ghosts from the Underworld or call them from elsewhere temporarily create this Condition in their target. Finally, a high-Rank ghost can use a Create Influence to mark a target as an Anchor.

Ending the Condition: The easiest way to end an Anchor condition is to destroy the subject. Some ghosts cling to Anchors that represent unfinished business, in which case resolving those issues can remove the Condition.

RESONANT

The subject of this Condition is within the sphere of influence of a spirit.

Causing the Condition: This Condition is common and naturally-occurring — if an object, phenomenon, person, or place matches the spirit's purview in some way, it has this Condition. Anything matching the description of one of a spirit's Influences counts as having this Condition tagged to the spirit. Summoning rituals intended to entice a particular spirit to a location work by instilling the qualities that result in this Condition. Finally, a high-Rank spirit can use a Create Influence to cause the prerequisites for the Condition itself.

Ending the Condition: The Condition ends if the phenomenon creating it ends. A forest stops being Resonant for a tree spirit when all the trees are logged, a grief spirit can't Influence someone who has healed and let go of his pain, and a fire spirit must move on when the fire is extinguished. Abjuration and Exorcism may temporarily suppress the Condition or be the cause of it "naturally" ending if the ritualists remove the causal phenomenon as part of the ritual.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The subject of this Condition is within the sphere of influence of an angel.

Causing the Condition: The Infrastructure Condition, unlike Anchor and Resonant Conditions, is never naturally-occurring. The God-Machine requires effort to prepare the way for its angels: extended actions by cultists, unwitting pawns, or even other angels to create Infrastructure. High-Rank angels can use the Create Influence to instill this Condition on behalf of themselves or a subordinate angel. In addition, characters with the Destiny Merit are always subject to this Condition.

Ending the Condition: Infrastructure's intricate nature makes it much more difficult to remove. Multiple extended actions taking place over whole stories are necessary to dismantle the Condition, opposed by the Angel itself.

OPEN

The place, object, animal, or person covered by a previous Condition has now been conditioned to accept the entity. That entity can now attempt to Fetter itself to the subject of the Condition, or, if the Condition is on a location, Manifest.

Prerequisites: The Anchor, Resonant, or Infrastructure Condition for the same phenomenon to which this Condition is tagged.

Causing the Condition: This Condition is usually the result of fine-tuning the prerequisite Condition as part of an extended action, involving the subject and entity acting in concert for a number of scenes equal to Rank or a living subject's Resolve, whichever is higher. Using a Control Influence allows an entity to temporarily create the Open Condition as an instant action.

Ending the Condition: The Condition ends if the prerequisite Condition is removed. Exorcism rituals work by removing this Condition, reverting it to the prerequisite.

CONTROLLED

The object, creature, or person covered by an Open Condition has now been so conditioned that the entity may attempt to Claim it, permanently merging with it.

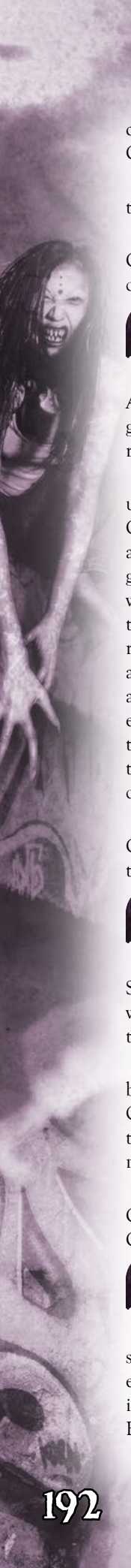
Prerequisites: The intended subject of this Condition must have the Open Condition, tagged to the entity attempting to cause it.

Causing the Condition: This Condition is the result of repeated use of the Possess Manifestation effect by the causing entity. It must have succeeded in possessing the subject on a number of separate occasions equal to the Willpower of entity or subject (whichever is higher). If any Possessed Condition is removed before its duration ends, progress is lost on building to the required number of possessions.

Ending the Condition: Successfully ending the Claimed Condition against the entity's will, whether by Exorcism or by forcing the Claimed subject into contact with the entity's bane, removes this Condition and reverts the subject to Open.

REACHING

The spirit has opened a conduit through the Gauntlet, allowing it to use Influences and Numina to affect the other side. Numina with ® after their name can be used with this Condition. Characters capable of perceiving spirits in Twilight



can sense the conduit's presence with a successful Wits + Composure roll.

Causing the Condition: This Condition is the result of the Reaching Manifestation Effect and lasts for one Scene.

Ending the Condition: At the end of the scene, the Condition fades. Mortals may attempt an Abjuration with a 3 dice penalty to close the conduit and end the Condition early.

UNDERWORLD GATE

The location has an open gateway to the Underworld. All ghosts regain one Essence per scene that they are in the gateway's presence. Ghosts without anchors may use it to reenter the world.

Causing the Condition: This Condition can be created by using the Avernian Gateway Manifestation Effect on an Open Condition. Some supernatural beings with ties to death are also able to open Avernian Gateways. Even mortals can open a gate if one is present and they know the proper means. Mortals who conduct rituals to first Open a Death-Resonant location that houses a gate can unlock it, causing this Condition, but require the *key* to do so. Every Gateway has a key — an item or action that will open it. Keys can be physical objects, but are also sometimes actions or emotions or are tied to times and events: a Gate might open for a murder at midnight, when touched with a certain doll, or when a woman betrayed in love turns her back on it three times. Researching a proper key is a difficult Intelligence + Occult roll, with a –3 to –5 dice modifier.

Ending the Condition: At the end of the scene, the Condition fades. An Exorcism directed at the gate can end the Condition early.

SHADOW GATE

The location has a hole punched through the Gauntlet. Spirits — and even incautious people — can cross through it without the use of any powers. The Shadow Gate is visible even to material beings, as the Shadow world and material worlds mix.

Causing the Condition: This Condition can be created by using the Shadow Gateway Manifestation Effect on an Open Condition. Very rare summoning rituals can also create this Condition, allowing the spirit being called to access the material world.

Ending the Condition: At the end of the scene, the Condition fades. An exorcism directed at the gate can end the Condition early.

MATERIALIZED

The entity has shifted from ephemeral to material substance, manifesting in physical form. All the rules for ephemeral entity's traits still apply except for the effects of being in Twilight. This Condition protects the entity from Essence Bleed for its duration.

AVERNIAN GATEWAYS

Doorways to the Underworld, also called *Avernian gates*, exist all over the world but are invisible to all but a handful of psychics. The gateways are in Twilight, made of ghostly ephemera, and appear in places with the Resonant Condition tagged as "Death" — anywhere that people die in large numbers or that has a feel of Death about it can house a gate. They remain closed unless they are the nearest gate to a ghost who loses his last Anchor, in which case they open for a turn as his Corpus passes on.

Causing the Condition: This Condition is created by an entity using the Materialize Manifestation Effect on an Open Condition. If the Open Condition used is on an object or person, the entity must materialize within its Rank in yards.

Ending the Condition: Materialization lasts for one hour per success on the activating roll. When the duration ends, the entity fades back into Twilight. Physical contact with a Bane or removal of a prerequisite condition can cause the Condition to end early.

FETTERED

The entity has secured itself to an object or creature. As long as it remains Fettered, the entity is safe from Essence Bleed. The entity remains in Twilight and must stay within five yards of the Fetter. Most entities Fettering themselves literally hide inside their Fetters if they are small enough.

The entity pays one less Essence for using Influences on the Fetter, but may not use them or Numina on another target as long as the Fetter lasts.

Prerequisites: The intended subject of this Condition must have the Open Condition, tagged to the entity attempting to cause it.

Causing the Condition: This Condition is created by an entity using the Fetter Manifestation Effect.

Ending the Condition: Fetters are permanent unless the prerequisite Conditions are ended, or if the subject of the Fetter is destroyed or killed (if a living being). The entity can voluntarily end the Condition by using the Unfetter Manifestation Effect. A successful Exorcism removes this Condition.

URGED

This animal or human host has been used as a Fetter by an ephemeral being. The entity may read the subject's thoughts with a successful Power + Finesse roll, contested by Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance. Success reveals surface thoughts. The entity may urge the host to take a specified action with a successful Power + Finesse roll contested by Resolve + Composure with an extra die. If the entity wins, the urge is created. Following it rewards the host with a Beat.

Causing the Condition: This Condition is created by an entity using the Fetter Manifestation Effect.

Ending the Condition: The Urged Condition ends whenever the linked Fetter ends.

POSSESSED

This object, corpse, or living being is temporarily controlled by an ephemeral entity. Living hosts are put into a coma-like state while being possessed — they experience the possession as missing time, except for flashbacks that might come out in dreams or times of stress such as losing Integrity. The entity may not use Numina or Influences while controlling the host, but is safe from Essence Bleed as long as the possession lasts.

The entity may pay one Essence per turn to heal one lethal or bashing wound or a point of structure lost to damage. Corpses that died through damage begin Possession incapacitated and must be "healed" with Essence

Entities possessing inanimate objects or corpses have a great deal of control over their host. An entity controlling an object can't make it do anything it couldn't do while being operated, but it can turn switches on and off, operate machinery, use keyboards, and turn dials. Use the entity's Finesse if dice rolls are necessary.

Corpses and other articulated hosts capable of movement, such as shop mannequins or industrial robots, use their own Physical Attributes but the entity's Attributes in Social or Mental rolls. By spending a point of Essence, the entity can use its own Attributes instead of the host's for Physical tasks for a turn, but doing so causes one point of lethal damage or structure loss to the host.

Living hosts require more time for the entity to gain full control and always use their own Attributes. The entity may read the host's mind with a Finesse Roll at a –4 die penalty, use the host's Physical Skills at a –3 penalty, and the host's Social and Mental Skills at –4. These penalties are all reduced by one die per day that the entity has been Fettered to the host. Most possessing entities Fetter themselves to their intended hosts and use the Possess Manifestation Effect to take full control only in emergencies.

To possess a host, the entity must remain in Twilight, superimposed over the host. This means that if the host touches the entity's bane or is injured by a weapon made of the bane, the entity will suffer wounds to its Corpus.

Causing the Condition: This Condition is created by an entity using the Possess Manifestation Effect. The object or victim must be under the Open Condition, tagged to the entity.

Ending the Condition: The possession lasts for a single scene, unless the entity abandons it early or the host is killed or destroyed. Abjurations, Exorcisms and forced contact with banes and bans can all motivate an entity to release a host.

CLAIMED

A Claimed object, corpse, creature, or person has been permanently possessed and merges with the entity involved. Unlike Possess, living Claimed aren't put into a fugue state, but remain mentally active while their soul and the Claiming entity merge together over the course of several days. During the period of fusion, the subject is under all the effects of the Urged Condition, described above. Once per day, starting with the moment the Claimed Condition is created, add one dot of the entity's Attributes to the host's, permanently raising them. Power may be assigned to Strength, Intelligence, or Presence, Finesse to Wits, Dexterity, or Manipulation, and Resistance to Stamina, Composure, or Resolve. The host's physical form begins to mutate, taking on an appearance influenced by the original host and the entity.

Claimed corpses add points to Attributes as above, but start with all Mental and Social Attributes at 0. Inanimate objects use the statistics appropriate for their type (Adding Resistance to Structure and Durability, Power to Acceleration and Finesse to Handling) instead of Physical Attributes, and also start the claiming process with all Mental and Social Attributes at 0. Corpses and inanimate hosts don't spend the claiming period under the Urged Condition, having no minds of their own to warp.

Claimed may use the entity's Influences, but not Numina or Manifestation Effects. They may develop supernatural powers as Merits. From the moment the Claimed Condition is laid, the entity is safe from Essence Bleed. The hybrid being that results has the entity's Essence trait, Virtue, Vice, Fate, Ban, and Bane, but is a material being. Claimed that were once spirits may cross the Gauntlet at a Locus with a successful Intelligence + Presence roll. Claimed that were inanimate objects are fully animate, fusions of spiritual power, metal and plastic.

Causing the Condition: This Condition is created by an entity using the Claim Manifestation Effect.

Ending the Condition: Claim is permanent in living hosts unless the entity decides to detach itself, rolling its original Power + Finesse penalized by Rank in dice and contested by the Claimed hybrid's Resolve + Composure, including any dots gained from being Claimed. If the entity succeeds, the entity and host are separated. Former hosts are physically and mentally scarred — the physical appearance changes back at the same rate it mutated and the extra Attribute dots fade at a rate of two per day. The Essence trait and any supernatural powers the Claimed developed immediately vanish. Former Claimed, however, retain the Virtue and Vice of the entity that took them over.

In nonliving hosts, Claim is only temporary – once the Claim has fully formed, the host loses one dot of a Physical Attribute (or equivalent for formerly inanimate objects) per three days. When any of these Attributes reaches 0, the host disintegrates and the entity is released into Twilight.

Numina

In addition to Influence and Manifestation, all ephemeral entities have a number of discrete magical powers called Numina. Each Numen is a single ability linked to the entity's nature — activated by a successful Power + Finesse roll unless stated otherwise.

The Numina described here are deliberately generic. Individual ephemeral beings display their Numen in ways reflecting their type, theme and biases — a ghost's Blast is a empty, freezing cold in the bones of its victim, while an angel's Awe manifests as a terrible holy aura.

Numina with ® next to their name are usable in conjunction with the Reaching Condition.

AGGRESSIVE MEME

The entity speaks to a person (it must be in a Condition capable of doing so) and plants an idea in their mind. When that person tells someone else the idea, it takes hold in their mind, too. And whoever *they* tell, and so on. The Numen costs seven Essence to activate and is contested by Resolve + Composure + Supernatural Tolerance.

AWE

The entity causes terror in anyone who can see it. The Numen costs 3 Essence and activation is contested individually with Presence + Composure + Supernatural Tolerance by anyone looking at the entity. Anyone gaining fewer successes than the entity is unable to move or speak for a turn. If the entity gains an exceptional success, the effect lasts three turns.

BLAST

The entity may wound opponents at a distance. Range is equal to 10 yards per dot of Power and the entity does not suffer range penalties. If the activation roll succeeds, the Blast wounds as a +0L weapon. The entity may increase the lethality of its Blast by paying Essence — every two Essence spent increases the "weapon" by +1L. The maximum weapon bonus is equal to the entity's Rank.

DEMENT ®

The entity may torture its victims mind via psychic assault. This Numen costs 1 Essence. The activation roll is contested by the victim's Intelligence + Supernatural Tolerance. If the entity succeeds, the victim suffers the Insane Tilt (p. 330) for the rest of the Scene.

DRAIN

The entity can steal Essence or Willpower (chosen at activation) from a material being. The activation roll is contested by Stamina + Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance. Whichever character — entity *or* target — gains the most successes receives points of Willpower or Essence equal to the number of successes, while the other party loses the same number.

EMOTIONAL AURA ®

The entity sends out a wave of powerful — and distracting — emotion. This Numen costs 1 Essence and lasts for a scene or until the entity uses another Numina. The activation roll is made once but anyone coming within 5 yards of the entity must make a Resolve + Composure + Supernatural Tolerance roll. If the activation roll has more successes, the victim suffers a –2 dice penalty to all actions as long as the aura remains. If the victim gains more successes, he is immune to the aura unless the entity uses the Numen again.

ESSENCE THIEF

The entity may consume and steal Essence from ephemeral beings other than its own type — for example, spirits with this Numen may consume ghosts and angels. The Numen costs 1 Essence to activate.

FIRESTARTER ®

The entity causes flammable materials to combust. This Numen costs 1 Essence and causes one small fire to break out per activation success within the entity's Power in yards.

HALLUCINATION

The entity may create an illusion experienced by a single target: it can be anything from a sight or sound to an imaginary person who holds a conversation. The Numen costs 1 Essence and is contested by the victim's Wits + Composure + Supernatural Tolerance. Each success over the contesting roll alters one of the victim's senses.

HOST JUMP

The entity may leap from host to host when using the Possess or Claim Manifestations. The current host must touch the intended host while the entity spends 3 Essence; the new host must be under all necessary prerequisite Conditions. If both prerequisites are met, the entity immediately transfers the Possessed or Claimed Condition to the new host, although Claimed hosts must begin the process of Claiming again. The entity does not need to re-spend Essence on the Manifestation Effect when jumping hosts with this Numen. Living Claim victims who are vacated with the use of this Numen still suffer the aftereffects listed under the Claimed Condition.

IMPLANT MISSION ®

This Numen grants a mortal a vision of a task the entity wishes him to accomplish as well as a magical determination to see it through. The entity pays 2 Essence and rolls Power + Finesse. On a success, the subject receives a short vision of whatever the entity wishes him to do and is under the Obsessed Condition regarding carrying that mission out.

INNOCUOUS

The entity is very good at being overlooked. Perception rolls to notice the entity are penalized by 2 dice. This Numen does not require a roll to activate and has no cost.

LEFT HANDED SPANNER

The entity disables a device, paying 1 Essence and touching the object if Manifest, or moving its Twilight form to superimpose with it if not. The device must be a human-manufactured object with at least three moving parts. If the activation roll succeeds, the device malfunctions for a number of turns equal to the successes rolled. Using this Numen in combat requires the entity to Grapple and gain control of the object, and so can't be used this way in Twilight unless the target is in Twilight as well.

MORTAL MASK

This Numen disguises a Materialized entity as a human and can be used at the same time as the Materialize Manifestation Effect. Using the Numen costs 1 Essence and the human seeming lasts for activation successes in hours. The human "costume" is flawed—witnesses may make a Wits + Composure roll penalized by the entity's Finesse to realize that something is wrong. Characters able to sense the entity in Twilight do not suffer a penalty to the roll.

OMEN TRANCE

Once every 24 hours, the entity may enter a trance in order to gain a glimpse of the future. The Numen costs 1 Essence if the entity is trancing on its own behalf or 3 Essence if it is searching for omens for another. The activation roll is an extended action, lasting at least one scene. If successful, the entity sees a vision of an event sometime in the next week. The visions are predisposed to be warnings of danger.

PATHFINDER ®

This Numen allows an entity to know the quickest route to a destination. The fastest route isn't always the safest, of course; the Numen doesn't reveal any dangers on the way, only a set of directions to the target. If the destination is the subject of the Safe Place Merit, the activation roll is contested by the lowest Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance among any owners. The Numen costs 1 Essence and lasts for a scene. If the destination is too far away to reach that quickly, the entity must use the Numen again.

RAPTURE ®

The entity forces a response from the pleasure centers of a living being's brain, granting ecstatic visions, a feeling of communion with the universe, and sensations of bliss. The Numen costs 2 Essence to activate. If successful, the victim suffers the Insensate Tilt (p. 331). If the victim fails a Resolve + Supernatural Tolerance roll, she gains a temporary derangement for the entity's Power in days, in a form that binds her closer to the entity's wishes.

REGENERATE

The entity can use Essence to heal bashing and lethal wounds on its Corpus. This Numen does not require a roll to activate, but costs 1 Essence and heals one level of damage—the entity must reactivate the Numen each turn to heal more severe wounds. Bashing damage is healed first, then lethal.

RESURRECTION

This Numen—only available to Rank 4+ angels and spirits of healing—raises the dead. The Numen costs 10 Essence to use and the activation roll is penalized by one die per day that the subject has been dead. Supernatural beings that have already died as part of their transformation—vampires, mummies and Sin-Eaters—can't be resurrected, nor can anyone who died of natural causes. Other supernatural beings lose their powers when resurrected. Mages become Sleepwalkers and werewolves, wolf-blooded.

SEEK ®

The entity can sense the presence of suitable Conditions from a distance. The base range is two miles per Rank; entities may spend an Essence to multiply this by 10. If successful on a Finesse roll, the entity becomes aware of the direction and distance to the nearest suitable Anchor, Infrastructure or Resonant Condition.

SPEED

The entity accelerates into a blur of movement. The entity chooses whether to spend 2 or 4 Essence when activating this Numen. Spending 2 Essence doubles its Speed for the remainder of the scene, while spending 4 Essence triples it.

SIGN

The entity creates messages or images in any media they would be able to access to be used by a mortal—it can write in the condensation on cold glass, produce images on computer screens, and send audible messages via phone lines. The Numen costs one Essence to activate, and if successful creates a single message.

STALWART

The entity appears armored in Twilight form and uses Resistance as its Defense score instead of the lower of Power or Finesse.

TELEKINESIS ®

The entity can manipulate objects without using a Manifestation Effect. This Numen costs 1 Essence. Successes on the activation roll become the entity's "Strength" when attempting to lift or throw an item. Fine motor control is impossible using this Numen.

LAIR

This is such bullshit! Ben said the words, but the serpent simply roared, slamming its vast coils against a nearby tree and taking off a chunk of it. Not that it mattered; in Robin's Lair, there were always more trees. Rows and rows stretching off into a misty distance, in fact, the scent of rotting leaves and fallen branches thick in the air. Right now, it was also as close to neutral ground as the brood could manage. *You're the one who told me to talk to Noelle in the first place!*

That was when it was just Noelle. Robin's reply was something between a growl and a low purr. *Then she made another of her kind. That's a problem.* The monstrous tiger crouched, and Ben could hear the effort it was taking to control her voice. *A big problem.*

How? Ben spat. *Just fucking tell me already.*

One vampire, nobody gives a damn. Not her kind, not ours. So long as she's careful. Robin gave Ben a pointed look. The serpent was many times the size of the tiger, but this was the tiger's Lair, and the serpent shuddered. *But more than one vampire, in a town this size? Their kind start to pay attention. Which is bad for her, and worse for us.*

Especially since you invited her in, James hissed from the shadows. *What the fuck were you thinking, letting her in here? And without asking us?* The serpent coiled and reared back.

Enough, Robin snarled. *Ben did as we asked getting to know her, and you didn't complain when they were just hunting bullies and johns, so shut it.* The shadows rustled, and a cold breeze blew from where James' voice had come, but he said nothing.

But, Ben, Robin continued, *why did you bring her here? I mean, you had to know we would want to be consulted on something like that. I know you're close, but her seeing this place…it's not good. Not without warning.*

I love her. If James had said so much as a single unkind thing Ben would have spat poison into the trees, but whether he managed on his own or Robin kept him in check, he stayed silent. *I love her. I'm sorry.*

For a long moment, the only sound was the wind in the trees.

Look, Robin began, but Ben cut her off with a hiss.

I know what you're going to ask, all right? He said.

Do you. James said, quietly. It wasn't quite a question.

I'm not stupid. I know what happens if we draw too much attention. Ben exhaled, and venom dripped from his maw. *She's gotta get rid of the new fucker, or they both gotta leave town.* He left the other option unsaid, but in the stillness of the forest he might as well have shouted it. *I'll make it happen. I promise.*

You're strong. Robin looked at the serpent's yellow eyes, unafraid. *I know you can do it.*

Family first, right? Ben said. Robin opened the Pathway and they walked back to the waking world, leaving the serpent, the tiger, and the formless horror behind. Ben was already imagining how Noelle would react and hoping he was wrong.

TALES OF THE DARK MOTHER
EMBLA

"If I fall and die, I'll haunt you," Embla says, clutching her safety rope as she climbs down the cave wall, inching over each rock at the speed of snail. Khepri makes no effort to slow, skittering down without so much as a second thought.

"Stop whining. We're almost there."

Embla tries to force herself into a faster clip, but every move makes her stomach flip. The cave grows wider with each meter, a great, bleak funnel through the earth. She feels increasingly like a bug in a bathtub.

Friction was banished from this place. The rocks are slick with stagnant water, and blue, glowing fungus. She and Khepri have been descending for hours, a half-mile below any cracks or crevices that might reveal daylight. Embla tries to imagine the cloudless sky hanging over the forest in her Lair, but even her imagination is hard to make out in this light.

By the time she reaches the ground, Khepri is already digging. She throws him a sour look, and starts to assemble her pickax. "I don't know why we had to go this way."

He doesn't look at her. "Are you helping or not?"

Embla fumbles with the handle of the ax, struggling to lock it in place. "Stupid piece of—"

"Forget it. I found it."

Khepri's concentrates and turns his fingers to thick, sharp insect claws. He tosses clumps behind him as he burrows, and nearly clocks Embla's head with a rock.

"Come on, man! Shit. Why the fuck am I here?"

"You're the only one I know who reads Sumerian," he says, and pulls something from the earth. It's a clay urn, shaped like a headless, armless belly with two legs. It's the color of ochre, but long streams of black ooze stain its sides. The spout is engraved with jagged cuneiform. It leaves its grave with little resistance, and dirt falls away as if the earth rejects it.

"What is—"

"It was the Mother's vessel. Her royal cup, to sip the blood of her enemies." Khepri beams, vindicated.

"You can't be serious."

"Listen."

He holds the urn to her ear. The screams come in too many voices to count. All in pain. All begging. Embla's flight instinct kicks in for the first time in decades, and it takes every ounce of self-control she has not to jump straight out of the cave.

"I need you to translate it. It can't be removed without the spell inscribed on it."

"Christ. Okay, put it down and get out of my light," she says, studying it for a minute. "I don't think this is what you think it is, Khef. Look."

Khepri kneels, and Embla smashes the pickax through his temple. She moves the urn to collect his blood.

"Mea culpa, but she's been calling me way longer than you. And the voices were really clear about you being the sacrifice. If it's any consolation, you were half right! But it's not a cup."

The ichor from the urn flows into the ground. The dirt and rock turn to mud, swirling into a spiral.

"It's a key."

Chapter Five
Heroes and Other Monsters

When you see a monster in a story, chances are it's a story about someone who's trying to kill that monster. Beasts don't need to make enemies. After the Devouring, a Beast has become a target, whether she likes it or not. The world is full of people who'd like to make her just another note in some old epic, another monster slain to make the world a safer place, or for a Hero's glory.

Even amongst family, a Beast is not always safe. Her brothers and sisters who have undergone Inheritance may lack a Hero's all-consuming need to see her dead, but a Horror doesn't always distinguish between friend and foe. Likewise, a Beast can't count on a friendly greeting from their monstrous siblings any more than she can rely on her human family to always treat her with kindness and compassion.

No Beast wants to become the trophy head mounted on some monster-slayer's wall, so fighting for their lives is something they simply can't avoid.

He struck such a savage blow/that the sharp blade slashed through her neck,/ smashed the vertebrae; it severed her head/from the fated body; she fell at his feet./ The sword was bloodstained; Beowulf rejoiced.

— Beowulf

Heroes and Legends

The stories of heroes slaying monsters have peppered humanity's legends since the very beginning of recorded history. Common themes repeat themselves through various cultures, and the modern-day Heroes seeking out modern-day Beasts frequently study the old legends for ways to subdue and destroy their prey. Nearly all Heroes, whether working as solitary hunters or in a group, find themselves drawn to these myths, taking them as their own birthright and incontrovertible proof that their cause is just. While many of the victorious heroes are portrayed as deities, some Heroes theorize that these stories came from watching Heroes slay some of the earliest Beasts in antiquity.

Marduk

Marduk was the patron deity of the city of Babylon, associated with water, vegetation, judgment, and magic. In the Enuma Elish, Marduk takes his place as chief among the gods by slaying Tiamat, the primordial ocean goddess associated with unbridled creation and chaos. He arms himself with a net, a bow and arrows, a club, a spear, and the winds themselves to do it. The stories even claim that Marduk invented new kinds of wind to destroy Tiamat. Accounts of Tiamat's death are frequently brutal, describing Marduk bashing in the creature's head or splitting open her belly, and city festivals frequently featured reenactments of the myth.

Those Heroes who have at least a little knowledge of the limited culture of the Begotten theorize that Tiamat is but one name of the revered Mother of All Monsters. The story of the sky god slaying a serpent-like chaos creature repeats itself through other cultures as well, such as Ra slaying Apep every night to ensure the sun rises every morning. Heroes today take that as a sign that their cause brings order to the world, and every Beast they slay brings them one step closer to curing the world's ills.

Sauska

Sauska was a Hittite goddess, purportedly the daughter of Tarhun, the god of the hunt. When the daughter of the sea birthed the sea monster Hedammu, the creature's mere existence threatened the whole world, and even Tarhun shed a tear in fear of the beast. Sauska took it upon herself to defeat the creature, girding herself for battle and using a love potion to beguile Hedammu. The legends are unclear as to whether or not Sauska actually killed Hedammu, but the tales at least imply that Hedammu was no longer a threat.

Heroes familiar with this tale are of two minds on the subject. Some insist that if Sauska was one of them, then surely she killed Hedammu. To them, death is the only viable outcome of a final confrontation with a Beast and a Hero. Others with softer hearts look to the tale and wonder if death truly is the only option to subdue the Children.

Heracles

Heracles is a hero's hero, with superhuman strength and several kills and captures under his belt. The Nemean Lion, the Lernaean Hydra, the Stymphalian birds, and a host of other creatures fell to Heracles' might, not to mention kings, robbers, and other men who merely met with his displeasure. Several Roman emperors identified with his strength, even claiming him as an ancestor, though they called him Hercules instead.

Atalanta

Atalanta stands out as one of the few women in Greek mythology to take part in the hunt of a great Beast directly. She pursued the Calydonian Boar with a group of other hunters, a creature that Artemis set loose as punishment for insufficient worship. Atalanta struck first blood on the creature and assisted Meleager, the leader of the hunting party, with the killing blows. While Meleager's lust for Atalanta got her on the hunting party, she did not rely on that solely to get her through the hunt. In fact, she refused to marry unless her future husband beat her in a foot race, and the man who finally did had to rely on divine assistance and trickery.

Heroes of a feminist bent look to Atalanta as an example of not relying solely on men to fight the monsters of the world.

Theseus

Theseus is a classic, straightforward example from mythology. His ordeal with the Minotaur stands as a shining example of what a Hero stands for. A prince of Athens, he went to Crete to slay the creature to free his kingdom from sending sacrifices to sate its hunger. With the assistance of the Cretan princess Ariadne, he navigated the Labyrinth to its lair and safely escaped.

While he initially took Ariadne with him when he fled Crete, Theseus abandoned Ariadne on the island of Naxos, even though he could not have succeeded without her. Some Heroes interpret this to justify leaving their loved ones behind in their quest to slay the Children. Whether the abandonment is out of love or shedding dead weight depends on the individual Hero.

Durga

Durga was a Hindu goddess of the victory of good over evil. She took form from the rage and power of several gods for being exiled from heaven by the demon Mahishasura. According to the stories, she was armed with every divine weapon the gods could provide and slew every demon Mahishasura threw between them. Finally he had to fight her himself, changing shape into several different creatures during their battle. Every time, she found a solution to ensnare or stymy him. Finally, he took the form of a buffalo. Durga took a sip of wine before decapitating her foe with a trident. Many young Heroes aspire to that level of nonchalant power. More cautious veterans know that getting too cocky can cost lives and save the drinking for right before or just after the hunt.

While Durga's main foe was a demon, many Heroes take inspiration from Durga. Those young Heroes who still cultivate religious leanings see her as a patron goddess. Shrines to her frequently appear in the safehouses of Heroes living in India.

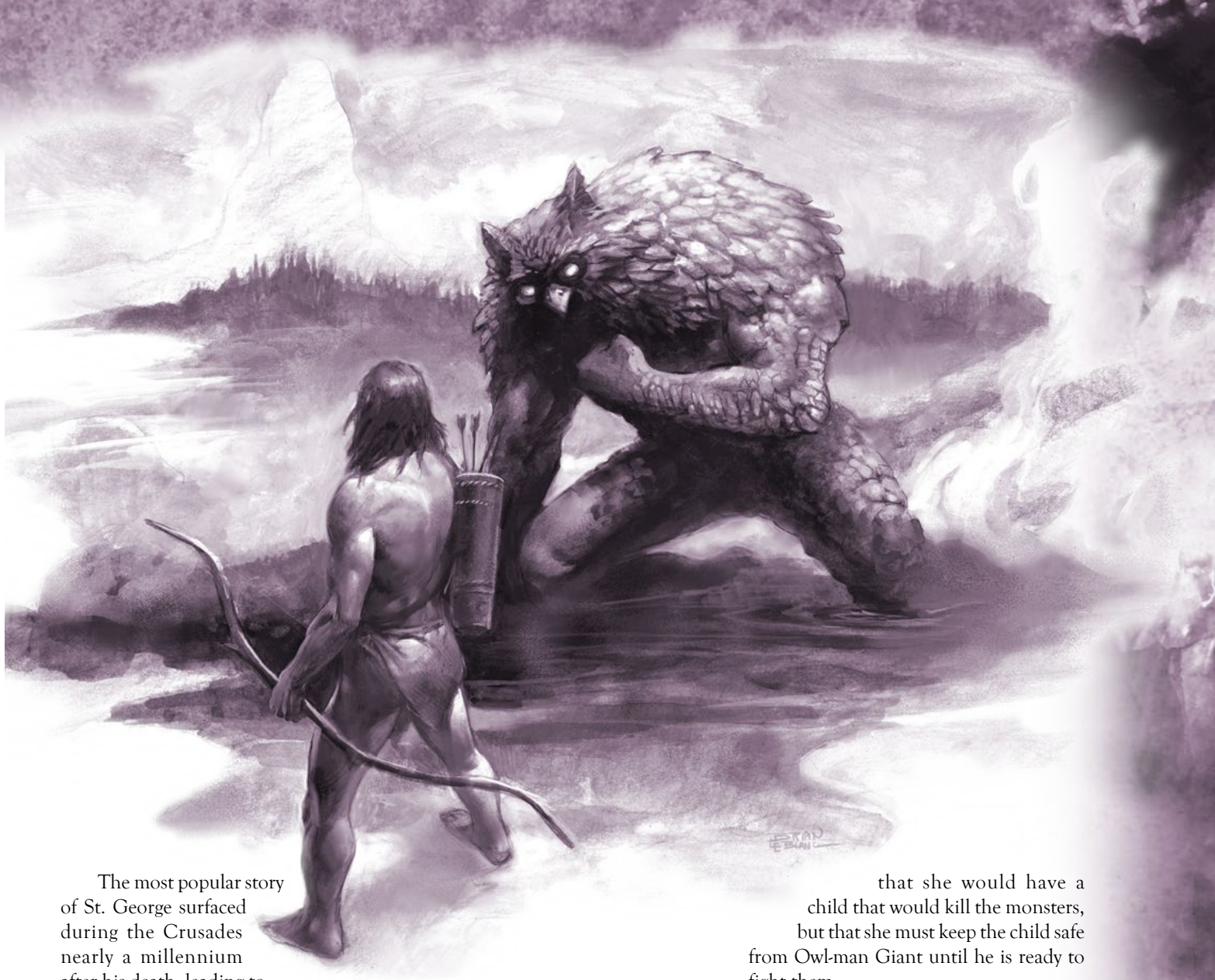
Beowulf

Beowulf came to the court of King Hrothgar after hearing tales of Grendel, the horrible creature who plagued the aging king's meadhall. At first, Beowulf tried using weapons out of fear that Grendel might kill him. However, when nothing pierced the creature's hide, Beowulf cast the weapons aside and tore off Grendel's arm with his bare hands. Grendel escaped, fleeing to the marshes while trying not to drop from his own wounds. Later, Beowulf followed Grendel to his lair to kill him once and for all. He also killed Grendel's mother, who viciously protected her son.

Fifty years later, as king of his own people, Beowulf took up arms once again to fight a dragon plaguing his lands. At first, he insisted on fighting the beast alone, but when the struggle proved too much for the aging king, his friend Wiglaf joined the fray. Beowulf and Wiglaf defeated the dragon, but Beowulf suffered a mortal wound in the fight. He received a full hero's sendoff. The classic tale serves as a reminder that asking for help can be the difference between life and death.

St. George

St. George was a soldier who fought under Diocletian, enjoying promotions and prestige due to his friendship with the Emperor. George martyred himself when he loudly refused to make sacrifices to the Roman gods. He was purportedly resurrected three times in the course of his torture and finally died when his jailers decapitated him.



The most popular story of St. George surfaced during the Crusades nearly a millennium after his death, leading to the most common depiction of him slaying a dragon. Most versions of the story feature the dragon terrorizing a small kingdom, preventing them from accessing water. The only way the village could get the water they needed was to provide daily tribute of a sheep, or a maiden chosen through drawn lots if no sheep were available. When the princess of the city became the unlucky victim, St. George crossed himself, slew the dragon with newfound strength from the Almighty, saved the princess, and converted the entire town to Christianity.

Many Christian scholars claim that the story is a metaphor and the dragon symbolizes Satan, but modern day Heroes know how real such a dragon can be.

Child of the Water

Child of the Water is a figure from Apache legend who is regarded as the divine ancestor of the Apache people. Long ago, four monsters plagued mankind, stealing food from the hunt. Life-Giver came to White-painted Woman, declaring that she would have a child that would kill the monsters, but that she must keep the child safe from Owl-man Giant until he is ready to fight them.

While still very much a young boy, Child of the Water declared himself ready to defeat the monsters and challenged Owl-man Giant to a duel of shooting arrows at each other. With the aid of a protective piece of turquoise, none of Owl-man Giant's shots even touched Child of the Water. Child of the Water chipped away Owl-man Giant's flint armor with each shot, with the last piercing the monster's heart. Child of the Water then went on to slay the other three monsters with little in the way of further commentary. With these four monsters dispatched, humanity could freely exist without fear for their own existence.

The Quest Begins

Heroes, like Beasts, are born different. They experience the Primordial Dream, but whereas a Beast dives deep, seeing the horrors that lurk there and taking wisdom from the nightmares they grant, Heroes skim the surface, glimpsing the monsters but never knowing them. In the past, this sort of person would never experience the Devouring, but rather served a different purpose. A Hero could act as an early warning, sensing that the monsters

were coming and giving people time to learn their lessons on their own, without fear or pain. A Hero could interpret the terrifying dreams that people had, putting them into context. Sometimes, a Hero would even take on the job of experiencing the nightmares by ingesting hallucinogens and plunging deeper into the Primordial Dream than they would normally be able to in the hope of sparing others from nocturnal terror.

It would be a lie to say that Heroes and Beasts ever worked together, but it is true that their relationship was once very different. While Heroes did sometimes feel the need to hunt down and kill one of the Children, doing so wasn't the first response and it wasn't an obsession. Such violence happened only when it was necessary to protect people from a Beast driven to excess by her Horror.

It All Went Wrong

Beasts don't have a complete view of their own history; too much of it is bound up in mythology and folklore to have a truly accurate sense of dates and eras. They agree, however, that as the human population exploded, the roles of Beast and Hero alike changed. The population at large became unable to hear the Primordial Dream, and so Beasts couldn't feed simply by creating nightmares here and there. They had to take their Horrors out into the waking world and teach lessons more forcefully, more directly. Heroes, likewise, couldn't feel the broader currents of the Primordial Dream anymore, and so they started searching, instinctively, for what was causing the disturbance. They were unable to understand that the Dream was troubled on a deep and primal level, rather than as the result of any one Beast's actions. They homed in on the worst of the disturbances and found the Children, then marked their maps: *here there be monsters*.

Nowadays, when Heroes find Beasts, the results of that meeting are usually bloody. Steeped in a cultural narrative that very clearly states that monsters must die at the swords of champions, a Hero instinctively tracks disturbances in the Primordial Dream. A number of things can cause these disturbances, not all of related to the Children, and so some Heroes go their whole lives never knowing that Beasts exist. Once they find a Beast, though, they associate it with the constant turmoil in the Dream; they know, beyond doubt, that killing the Beast will calm the Dream. They are, of course, wrong about that, but they usually have no way of knowing it.

First Contact

Heroes feel the Primordial Dream in a light, broad sort of way, much like placing one's palm flat on a smooth body of water. As long as nothing breaks the surface tension of the water, the hand doesn't get wet, but the person can still feel the water quiver. Anything that disturbs the water, though, upsets that feel (and might even submerge the hand). Beasts have a habit of disturbing the Primordial Dream, and that means they draw the attention of Heroes.

When a Hero feels a Beast disturb the Dream, his own dreams become upset. The Hero doesn't dream in concrete, understandable vistas, but in surreal, endless mindscapes — he is touching the endless vista of humanity's base fears, after all. When the Dream is disturbed, he feels an undeniable pull toward the physical location corresponding to the disturbance. What he does next defines him as a Hero. He might ignore the feeling or attempt to learn what it stems from without actually tracking down that particular manifestation. In any event, he recognizes that whatever is going on, it isn't about him specifically.

The Heroes who Beasts tend to encounter, however, lack that awareness. Misinterpreting their instincts as a call to action, they charge out to find the source of the disturbance. They find the Children and see the Horror lurking behind human eyes.

It's not only in dreams that Beasts can attract Heroes. Heroes can also encounter Beasts manifesting themselves in the real world. Some simply find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time, while a Beast is feeding her Horror and teaching her terrifying lessons.

In either case, the Hero-to-be can't let go. The obsession can start slow, a simple tickle of the back of the mind that nags at the Hero as he tries to go back to his normal, everyday life. With each passing day, he looks over his shoulder more frequently and even starts carrying some sort of weapon with him regularly. He does not do it out of fear, but out of determination to be prepared for a fight if he comes across that Beast again.

Armed with this new knowledge, he gains a level of paranoia those around him consider unhealthy. The newly minted Hero dismisses their concerns; how could these people possibly know what he has gone through to protect them?

The Good Hero

What, then, about the Hero that listens to reason? What about the Hero that chooses to follow her better angels, as it were, trying to soothe the Primordial Dream by providing therapy to troubled individuals, by hunting down violent or destructive supernatural creatures, or by taking on an advisory role such as clergy? Surely these Heroes exist?

They do, but Beasts don't tend to cross paths with them because they resist the urge to hunt down the Children, or because, for whatever reason, they never *find* any of the Children. In game terms, the Heroes that stalk Beasts tend to have low Integrity ratings — their souls are weak and ill-defined. Being a Hero is, like being a Beast, something that a person is born with. Also like being a Beast, being a Hero is what one makes of it.

The Hero's narrative role in a **Beast** chronicle is discussed in more detailed in Chapter Seven. Heroes discussed in this chapter, however, are the Heroes that react with violence and hatred to the Children. Other Heroes exist, yes, but we're not talking about them right now.

They just don't understand and never will. The Hero could show people the danger, but that risks exposing the people he wishes to protect to the very thing he wishes to protect them from. Besides, how could they understand? They didn't see it.

As the Hero fixates further on the Beast, he comes to realize what it is—an abomination. A monster. It is a creature from Hell, or another dimension, or some obscene laboratory, here to prey upon the good and normal people of the world. In recognizing what the Beast is, he recognizes what he is and what he must do.

He's a Hero...and Heroes kill monsters.

Tools and Weapons

Heroes are not simply the rank-and-file of humanity. They cannot hope to stand against the monsters of the world with mere mortal ability. In the stories of old, Heroes always possess extraordinary ability, whether it comes from brute strength or remarkable cunning. Real Heroes are no different. Their stories of how they gained this ability vary from Hero to Hero. Some Heroes claim to have received a gift from God or some other deity, while others gleaned it from esoteric magic or extensive training. Some simply assume they have these skills because they *are* the Heroes; of course they are special. Who else could slay a Beast?

Heroes don't suffer the brutal attacks of their foes as easily as others. After all, what kind of Hero falls to the first swipe of his adversary's claws? This increased hardiness protects a Hero from the mundane troubles of disease and minor injuries, and even major injuries heal quickly on their own. Many a Hero discovers that they simply never catch that cold that's been making the rounds, or they walk away from a lethal explosion, only sustaining a few scratches and a limp that goes away in a day or two.

In addition, a Hero's heightened awareness of the existence of the Children keeps her alert for their presence, especially the Begotten who awakened her. From time to time, though, her high levels of paranoia cloud her senses. Many a Hero has caused herself a great deal of trouble by singling out an individual as her quarry when that individual was, in fact, mostly harmless.

Beyond that, a Hero's new abilities are as many and varied as the Heroes themselves. Some prevail through sheer physical prowess. Some have a special weapon they carry that gives them an advantage in battle. Others rend open the escape routes used by the Children and continue in relentless pursuit once they have an advantage. Others call on safety in numbers, rallying entire crowds of people to fight the monster in their midst. Still others recall infinitesimal details about the creatures they fight, using that knowledge to defeat other monsters or aid other Heroes.

First Blood

Very few Heroes emerge from their first encounter with a Beast fully prepared and equipped to take their adversaries head-on. Those who do usually received such preparation before one of the Children ever darkened their doorstep. However, no amount of physical or mental training can fully prepare the new Hero for the horrors he will face.

On Heroes – Angela Black Namtaru Nemesis

A Hero's powers might stem from the same source as ours. I don't mean the Mother, I mean the Dream. We're the monsters from people's nightmares, whether we came first or the nightmares did. What if Heroes are just another kind of dream? What if they're the stories people told each other to puff each other up? What if we're fear of the dark, fear of spiders, fear of heights, but they're national pride, righteous fury, and unerring justice?

That all sounds great, but consider something else: Just as the monster (that is, us) is only bad if you're telling the story of the guy who kills it, the Hero is only good if you're on his side. Lots of heroes of stories, books, movies, they're the Hard Man making Hard Choices. Those guys kill a *lot* of people, and they very rarely feel bad about it, or even acknowledge it except to justify it. If *that's* where you're getting your power, I don't see why you're any better than me.

Sometimes, a Hero gets lucky. He somehow manages the wherewithal to follow the Begotten he encountered back to her Lair and defeat her through sheer will, cunning, and brute force. Sometimes he runs, living to fight another day and seeking shelter and time to process exactly what happened to him until a weaker Beast crosses his path, which he can easily subdue and vanquish. With that kill, he learns something new about the creature and himself that he can then use in future quests against other Children. Sometimes, a veteran finds the new Hero, training her and granting her right of the kill when they go after a powerful Beast together.

With every kill, a Hero grows stronger, learning more tricks to defeat his adversaries and becoming more secure in his belief that he is a true champion of mankind, an unstoppable god-king among men or an unappreciated and tragic warrior. While Heroes have attempted to teach what they know to other Heroes they encounter, the trick of it never really catches on until the Hero strikes another killing blow, and even then, the Hero frequently must seek out and slay a particular Beast to fully understand what she has learned.

The Rest of the Cast

Frequently, a Hero sees himself standing alone against the hordes of unnatural creatures feeding on the fears of mankind. Often they are initially surprised when they encounter others like themselves. Once that initial shock wears off, however, most Heroes cannot imagine a world where they alone are the only defenders of humankind. After all, every Hero of myth and cinemas has sidekicks and helpers.

Of course, friction arises because every Hero assumes that he is *the* Hero. Heroes don't typically work well in groups, at least not for long, because of their baked-in belief in their own importance. When the chips are down, a Hero might sacrifice himself for "his men," but it's much more likely he'll assume that his men are happy to die in his stead.

Worthy Companions

Heroes frequently encounter one another in the pursuit of their quarry. If two Heroes go after the same Beast, they may find themselves working at cross purposes, or one's efforts to stymie and isolate the target dovetails nicely with the other's stalking efforts. The two Heroes may not even meet face-to-face until they both independently track the Beast to her Lair.

A group of Heroes after the same Beast or brood is called a *band*. When the quarry is vanquished, the band frequently dissolves, with each Hero continuing on her own personal quest. However, a handful of bands stick together long after the deed is done, especially in places where Children congregate. When a band forms, the first challenge the Heroes within it face is dealing with each other. Tempers flare regularly, and frequent squabbling occurs over strategy, reputation, or even whether or not the Beast in question is the one the band should really fight. Attempts at cohesion turn into a battle of dominance, where only one is allowed to come out on top.

One quick, dirty method to get a band of Heroes all on the same page is to attack their mutual interests. Wise Children who hear of a band of Heroes forming rarely attack the band before they seek out their quarry, unless they have a good opportunity and a strong plan of attack. These Children know full well that a failed attack can galvanize a band of Heroes faster than letting them become cohesive on their own. Still, cunning Heroes can provoke weaker, less wary Beasts to attack their band with the express purpose of getting the whole band to work together.

When a band of Heroes manages to work together to take down a single Beast, the question of who claims the kill causes the most contention. After all, only the Hero who strikes the killing blow benefits from the kill. This argument frequently breaks up the band on the spot; if the Begotten can still move, she can easily escape while they fight over the privilege. Particularly magnanimous bands allow the least experienced Hero of the group reap the reward, but accepting such a gift carries the stigma of being unable to handle a fight by oneself. Still, the kill counts, even if other Heroes may disagree on its validity.

When Heroes gather without the sole purpose of vanquishing a single quarry, the event can become a rollicking good time filled with great stories of individual kills. It can also easily devolve into a contest of egos, with each Hero trying to one-up the rest and brawls breaking out. Fortunately, such gatherings are rare, as each Hero is so focused on his or her quest that such a meeting would need to have some tangible benefit to said quest for a Hero to even show up.

That said, it's not that Heroes do not communicate with each other when not actively working together on pursuing a single quarry. Heroes seek each other out for specialized knowledge and training that no mundane dojo or library can provide. Some offer their expertise to their fellows for free, while others exact daunting costs, such as an exchange of information or skills, a favor involving access to places or people the individual Hero cannot reach herself. Still others demand more esoteric prices, such as a sprig of a rare plant that neutralizes a Namtaru poison or the head of an Eshmaki with black eyes.

The Internet makes contacting other Heroes infinitely easier. Younger Heroes with few or no kills use social networking, email, or even heavily encoded phone conversations to convey information. Even a few veteran Heroes have adopted secret chat rooms and social networks, if only to tap into the information network themselves. Not everyone has jumped on this bandwagon, however; several Heroes see it as a waste of time or even dangerous exposure.

Followers

Heroes and hunters frequently cross paths, and rightly so. Both hunters and Heroes pursue the creatures that threaten mankind, even if their targets and tactics vary. It stands to reason that when one becomes aware of the other's existence, they would work together, and they do. However, it's never an easy alliance.

Heroes see hunters as useful tools at best, primarily as effective shock troops against the creatures they view as a Beast's mere minions. If hunters are available, Heroes need not waste their time on lesser targets such as vampires or werewolves. Let the second-string benchwarmers fight among themselves. Heroes belong in the real fight against the real threat. Still, these organizations have their uses, such as providing income and key equipment crucial to the Hero's quest.

Hunters have the same opinion of Heroes that Heroes have of hunters. The strong Kinship Beasts share with other supernatural creatures makes them a lightning rod to the prey that hunters seek. Hunters value a Hero's ability to sense Beasts in the vicinity, since where a Beast dwells, other creatures will certainly follow.

Some compacts and conspiracies even welcome Heroes into their ranks. Ashwood Abbey in particular seeks Heroes out to find quarries for their legendary hunting parties, treating them like the proverbial hound after the fox. Members of the Union frequently end up in Hero-inspired mobs. Conversely, mortals find their way to the Union or other compacts and conspiracies as a hunter after a Hero leads their normal, everyday life into the deep, dark places they never knew existed before.

A Hero's single-minded focus on their pursuit of the Children can give even the most fanatical hunters pause, to the point that Task Force Valkyrie has a standing order to observe but not engage with any independent Heroes they encounter. Heroes pose too great a risk to equipment and personnel just by jumping into a fight they have no way of winning (that the hunters see). Most hunters have an imperfect understanding

of all of the advantages a Hero brings to a fight, and Heroes are not about to advertise.

Still, if a Hero joins with a hunter group, she makes a point to distance herself from them. While hunters understand the threats they face, they are still only human. They cannot grasp the depth and gravity of the Hero's quest. They easily lose focus on the truly important matters. Also, unfortunately, they cannot hope to stand up against the primordial horror that the Children represent.

Other Nightmares

Heroes often assume, initially, that supernatural creatures are all cut from the same cloth: Waking nightmares who very presence disturbs the Primordial Dream. If they try and hunt such creatures, though, they find the experience strangely disappointing. The death of a werewolf or a vampire doesn't provide the same fulfillment of purpose that the death of a Beast does, although a Hero can certainly buy into the same philosophy or rhetoric that motivates any other hunter. Still, since Beasts tend to involve themselves in the affairs of other beings (and since other beings *can* disturb the Primordial Dream by creating Chambers, even if the ripples they create are much smaller), Heroes do run across them.

Vampires

Heroes have few interactions with Kindred without good reason. Not only do vampires heavily police themselves, but most Heroes cannot tell a vampire apart from the normal populace unless the vampire in question goes out of her way to reveal herself. Those Kindred who do know of Beasts and have had the opportunity to taste the blood of both Beast and Hero report a distinct similarity in the flavor of their blood, but they generally keep that to themselves.

Werewolves

On the surface, it might seem that the Uratha would sympathize with Heroes, focused as they are on defending their territory and hunting down threats. In actuality, werewolves tend to find Heroes insufferable. A werewolf is happiest in a pack, and the pack relies on the members knowing each other and being willing to call each other on their shit, having each other's backs, and not sacrificing their safety for personal glory. Heroes understand none of that, to say nothing of the fact that they tend to assume that werewolves are just lesser Beasts.

Mages

Heroes and mages butt heads frequently when they come together. Both possess remarkably strong wills, and neither are willing to back down if they come to cross purposes. Still, the pursuits and interests of the Awakened vary so wildly that only direct relationships with the Children, such as through Kinship, make Heroes and mages cross paths. If a Hero can convince a mage that a particular Beast is dangerous, the mage can prove to be a remarkably powerful ally. If the Hero can acquire a magically enhanced weapon from the mage before they go their separate ways, even better.

Changelings

The Lost pose a quandary to the Heroes who know of their existence and capabilities. Their tendency to meddle with human dreams makes them a potential ally if the Hero can convince a changeling that the Children are a threat. Indeed, the Hero who can gain a changeling skilled in dream combat as an ally becomes remarkably more formidable. If the changeling refuses, though, he could very well side with the Begotten, and Heroes simply cannot have that. Any appeal to the Lost for aid is a carefully calculated risk.

Prometheans

The Created cross paths with Heroes so infrequently that any encounter between the two at all is noteworthy. Their quest to become human endears Prometheans to more sentimental Heroes (at least at first), while other Heroes fail to grasp why being simply human is a worthy goal. After all, Prometheans have formidable supernatural powers, can function eating any organic material, and can shrug off fatal injury with ease — doesn't all of that trump being human? Regardless of how a Hero feels about the Promethean condition, Disquiet eventually leads to a Promethean supplanting a Beast in a Hero's quest. After the kill, or after the Disquiet wears off, the Hero wonders why he bothered and gets back to the real task at hand.

Sin-Eaters

Sin-Eaters follow death with interest, and Heroes often do cause death. Whether a Sin-Eater is interested in helping a Hero on his quest depends heavily on that particular Sin-Eater, but in general, Heroes strike Sin-Eaters as too wrapped up in themselves to be entirely safe. If a Sin-Eater carries a geist who died as a result of a Beast's actions, of course, the situation might be very different. A Hero in dogged pursuit of one of the Children may also find herself passing through an Avernian Gate. With the Hero already mired in her obsession with hunting the Begotten, what new insanity would going into the Underworld inflict? Or, perhaps after delving deep into the secrets of Great Below, the Hero might learn that his violent approach is not his true calling.

Mummies

The Arisen care little for the pursuits of Heroes killing monsters, and Heroes feel much the same way; after all, mummies are still human, after a fashion. Both can easily pass their lives with no knowledge of the other. Bull-Headed understand the Hero's drive all too well, and if both work in concert, they will not rest until their goal is achieved. Heroes who know of the Arisen are fascinated by their ability to return from the dead, and would give anything to possess that for themselves. The Arisen, on the other hand, know that if the secrets of their magic got out, Heroes would be the last people they would want to possess it, especially the Rite of Return.

Demons

Demons have better things to do, for the most part, than join Heroes on their insane quests; the Dark Mother has no relationship to the God-Machine, but that doesn't matter one way or the other to the Unchained. Still, if a Hero manages to witness a Beast and a demon attempting to interact, she may notice that the Beast's normal tricks don't seem to have the same effect on the demon. This could lead her to attempt to garner the demon as an ally. The Unchained are sometimes willing to provide various kinds of aid in exchange for a Hero's signature, and many Heroes see the act of selling their souls as the ultimate sacrifice to the quest. Angels, likewise, have no problem with using a Hero's obsession to the God-Machine's ends.

Heroic Traits

Heroes resemble the Beasts that spawned them in most ways, but several concepts that are integral to Beasts do not apply to their Heroic opponents:

Aspirations: Heroes do not track Beats or Experiences, since they are Storyteller-controlled characters. Though having some understanding of his life goals outside of monster hunting can be useful for determining how a Hero will react in more mundane situations, he is first and foremost an antagonist in the stories of the Beasts around him. Heroes do not track Aspirations. When a Hero should receive a Beat, he instead regains a point of spent Willpower.

Satiety: Since Heroes do not experience Hunger, they do not have a Satiety rating. Instead, they track Integrity like normal human beings (see p. 155).

Lair: A Hero does not have a Lair or a Lair rating.

Nightmares and Atavisms: Heroes cannot gain or use Nightmares or Atavisms. While they lack the same supernatural powers as Beasts, Heroes do gain access to more-than-human abilities and gifts of their own.

Hard to Kill

Heroes are sturdy — they have to be to have any chance against a Beast. Perhaps more importantly, they're persistent. The legend they've come to embody means more to them than any amount of pain they endure to get there. Heroes never suffer from the Beaten Down Tilt (p. 327), and never Surrender to a Beast unless they feel that doing so will give them a better chance to kill that Beast later.

Beasts who mercifully allow a defeated Hero to live soon pay for their good deed, as Heroes can't be kept down for long. A Hero is immune to mundane illnesses and never requires medical attention for injuries, even when they are particularly severe. When injured, a Hero recovers wounds at the following rates:

Bashing: One point every 10 minutes

Lethal: One point every day

Aggravated: One point every three days

Legend and Life

Like Beasts, Heroes are tied to the stories that they help create. But while Beasts hang precariously between the legends of their monstrous selves and the human lives they grew up with, Heroes are far more thoroughly tethered to the roles they feel they have been called to fulfill. A Hero's Life represents his human nature, the part of him that is still the same person that he was before his heroic calling. In this regard, Heroes are not so different from the Beasts they fight, subject to all the same small quirks and traits that represent their last hold on humanity.

In their Legends, however, Heroes are quite different. A Hero's Legend is his relationship with the Primordial Dream. For the Heroes that hunt and kill Beasts, this manifests as a description of the Hero as a slayer of monsters. Such Heroic Legends tend to be far less varied than those of Beasts, but even two Heroes with the Legend of "Warrior" might fulfill it in different ways. While Beasts can draw strength of will from either their Legend or their Life, violent Heroes are far more restrained by their legendary selves.

A Hero's Life regains him 1 Willpower when he puts himself or his mission at significant risk to break with the narrative of the Hero and act in accordance with his more human self, but it can never allow him to regain more than 1 Willpower per scene. A Maternal Hero regains 1 Willpower when she stops to comfort one of her foe's victims rather than advancing on the Beast, and a Cautious Hero regains 1 Willpower when he backs out of a dangerous situation rather than pursuing his foe into a dramatic conflict. A Hero cannot regain Willpower from minor or low-risk acts that align with his Life.

A Hero's Legend regains him 1 Willpower per scene where he takes action to fulfill his nature as a Hero. A Hunter Hero regains 1 Willpower when he follows a new lead to track down a local Beast, and a Champion Hero regains 1 Willpower when she sends a Beast a challenge to one-on-one combat. A Hero's Legend completely refills his Willpower track whenever he puts himself at great risk to follow his story further. If the Hunter's lead requires him to break into a bank after hours, or the Champion enters a fight on unfamiliar terrain even knowing she's outmatched, the Hero fully refreshes his Willpower.

Integrity

Heroes have Integrity ratings. Integrity is explained in detail on p. 155, but as a reminder, it tracks a person's self-image, the strength of his psyche, and the health of his soul. Heroes can have any level of Integrity, but those that hunt Beasts tend toward low ratings (4 or less). The implications of this for the Storyteller to consider and for the chronicle are discussed in Chapter Seven (p.290).

Heroic Tracking

Heroes have an intuitive sense for finding disturbances in the Primordial Dream. As a result, they also have an affinity for

recognizing and tracking Beasts. Violent Heroes often conflate their instinctive sense of disruption in the Dream for skill at tracking down dangerous monsters, but that isn't the case; the most gentle and conscientious Beast can make ripples in the Primordial Dream if she goes too long without feeding, and the most violent and bloodthirsty of the Begotten can kill a dozen people a month and never disturb the Dream. The Hero, however, will sense the former before the latter.

In Chapter Three, several activities that Beasts perform **(including Under the Bed, p. 91; Inflicting Nightmares, p. 99)** can attract the attention of Heroes. In general, anything that disturbs the Primordial Dream attracts the attention of any Heroes in the region (the same city, or the same neighborhood in the case of large cities with multiple distinct boroughs). A more sedate or centered Hero might experience this as a series of troubling dreams and think no more of it. Other Heroes, though, interpret it as a call to arms. They venture out into the night, drawn inexorably toward the physical location of the source of the disturbance.

If the disturbance resulted from a Horror feeding on a person's nightmare, the Hero tracks the sensation to the dreamer. The same is true for Under the Bed; the Hero tracks the person upon whom the power was used, not the Beast using it. If it came from a Beast using Atavisms or Nightmares in a grandiose way (multiple exceptional successes in the same scene, using either type of power to kill a person, or anything else the Storyteller considers appropriate), the Hero tracks the disturbance to the scene of the powers' use.

This initial Heroic Tracking does not have or require a game system. A Hero notices the character if the circumstances indicate that one should. If the Storyteller doesn't want to include a Hero-related plotline just then, she can ignore the result or assume that the Hero that noticed the disturbance isn't interested or able to track the Beast (again, this is discussed further in Chapter Seven). If the Storyteller decides that the Hero *does* track the occurrence, the Hero begins an investigation into the Beast.

Much of this investigation occurs "off-screen," and therefore the Beast's player winds up determining what the Hero knows and discovers by what actions she takes with the character. The Storyteller should consider what the Beast has done, how public she has been with her powers, who knows about her or could identify her, what other witnesses have seen, and especially what impact her actions have on the Primordial Dream. Once the Hero has identified the Beast by name or physical description, or has seen the Beast in person (even from a distance), the Hero is no longer Tracking, but Stalking.

Heroic Stalking

Stalking is a much more intimate, dangerous activity than Tracking. The Hero devotes his time to learning about the Beast and setting up a confrontation. Some Heroes don't bother with research or investigation; they simply corner the Beast, draw weapons, and charge. Those Heroes don't tend to last very long, of course, since Beasts are potent combatants. The truly dangerous Heroes are the ones who try to time their battles to maximize their own advantages (more on this anon).

If a Beast is being Stalked, the Storyteller may roll the Hero's Wits + Investigation or Wits + Composure to determine if he can sense a Beast nearby, or if a Beast has activated a Nightmare or Atavism nearby within the last day, once per scene at the cost of one Willpower for the Hero. This ability does not manifest as a second sight or some other supernatural sense; instead, the Hero simply gains an unshakable conviction in the truth revealed to him. Some might see this as a revelation from God or some other mystical source, while others justify their new understanding as the result of their keen observational skills or the perfect subconscious application of inductive reasoning. Regardless of their beliefs, the resulting knowledge is the same from Hero to Hero:

Dramatic Failure: The Hero is convinced a Beast is present, but suffers from severe doubts about who it is; he believes he may have misidentified the Beast. This grants the Beast character a reprieve, during which she might be able to get the Hero off her trail (or simply kill him, depending on her predilections).

Failure: The Hero gains no information about Beast activity in the area.

Success: The Hero knows whether or not the Beast is currently present nearby, and whether a Beast has used a supernatural ability nearby within 24 hours.

Exceptional Success: The Hero also learns exactly how many Beasts are currently present, and can identify them as such on sight. This does not grant any particular ability to see through disguises or to find Beasts who are otherwise hidden.

Heroic Stalking Bonuses and Penalties

+1	for every Beast currently or recently present
+1–3	Beast has dots in the Advanced Fame Merit **(p. 115)**
+2	if any target Beast is at Satiety 3 or less
–1	if all target Beasts are at Satiety 7 or higher

Example: *Mrs. Winters, the Eshmaki Nemesis we met on in Chapter Three, has a problem. She let her Horror stay too hungry too long; as a result, it hunted down and fed upon Brent, the frat boy bully that Mrs. Winters once taught a brutal lesson. In fairness, Brent had kept his nose clean since that incident, but the Horror doesn't care. It's come to visit him a few times. In the waking world, Brent isn't sleeping well; he looks sallow and has bags under his eyes. In the Primordial Dream, though, these predations have a larger impact.*

In game terms, Mrs. Winters gained the Ravenous Condition and her Horror fed from Brent twice. The second time, Magda rolled an exceptional success on the Inflicting Nightmares action (p. 99), which indicates a Hero notices the activity. Having just resolved a plot point

involving one of the other players, Orson, the Storyteller, decides it's a good time to give Mrs. Winters something to worry about. He creates a Hero named Nathan Blix, a man who lives in the same town but grew up in the neighborhood that Mrs. Winters protects.

Orson decides that since Blix knows the area, he has no difficulty navigating to Brent's house. Blix and Brent chat, and Brent eventually winds up telling a mostly truthful version of what happened to him after Halloween (he leaves out the part where he snatched bags of candy away from children). Blix convinces him to give him a few pieces of the candy he had left over. Now Blix can trace the candy, bringing him closer to Mrs. Winters.

Eventually, Blix sees Mrs. Winters as she's sitting on her porch, knitting...and he knows. She's the monster. He wonders how he missed it before. That night, he goes home wondering if he has the strength to kill a monster when that monster looks like a sweet old lady. That night, though, one of the other characters in the group uses a Nightmare in the same general area, and Blix feels the reverberation (the player rolled an exceptional success). Blix wakes up with terrible purpose in his heart and fetches an ax out of the shed. He's now Stalking; Mrs. Winters had better watch out.

Anathema

In myths and legends, the Hero often triumphs by finding the monster's secret weakness or by tricking it into making some fatal mistake that ends in its demise. In these stories, every Beast is irreparably flawed in some way, just waiting for the Hero to discover how. When the Hero uses a monster's raging temper or vulnerable belly against it, he's only fulfilling the death-wish inherent to its very nature. This is the story that Heroes tell, and it gives them both courage and comfort in their fight.

Anathema are the banes of monsters, the secret weaknesses and inhuman urges that can allow even a weak mortal to bring low a great Beast. Rather than being an intrinsic part of who she is, however, an Anathema is a thorn in the side of a Beast that the Hero has placed there. Anathema draw monsters into the story that the Heroes want: a story about a monster's inevitable death and a Hero's triumph. Once placed, an Anathema burrows itself into a Beast's nature and tries to turn her into the monster that the Hero sees her as, whether she likes it or not.

Placing Anathema

Every Hero is capable of placing Anathema onto a Beast, though he is never exactly conscious of that power. To the Hero, placing an Anathema is discovering something that's always been there, with the revelation only further proving that he's destined to succeed in his fight.

To a Beast, Anathema are Tilts or Conditions that the Hero places in combat. While Heroes are always looking to draw Beasts towards their deaths, Beasts can usually defend themselves against Anathema without even having to think about it. When a Beast's Horror is content and restful, the Beast is too human for an Anathema to stick. If the Beast's Horror is active and starving, it can fend off Anathema without much conscious effort. A Beast whose is under the Ravenous, Starving, Gorged, or Slumbering Conditions cannot be targeted with Anathema.

Between starvation and satiety, however, lies a middle ground where a Beast has neither her most human nor her most monstrous self to keep her safe. When a Hero makes an attack against a Beast with the Sated Condition, he may choose to enhance the attack with an attempt to weaken his foe. The decision to enhance the attack is made before the Storyteller rolls for the Hero's attack and costs the Hero one Willpower. If the attack deals any damage to the Beast, she also falls under the effects of an Anathema, and the Hero may not recover that point of Willpower until that Anathema is gone or the Beast is dead.

The Hero who placed the Anathema becomes immediately aware of its exact nature and limitations, experiencing the knowledge as a sudden revelation about his opponent's true nature. Other Heroes may roll Wits + Empathy at any time while in the presence of a Beast in order to assess any Anathema under which she currently suffers. Success grants them the same knowledge as the original Hero, allowing them to take advantage of the monster's fatal flaw themselves.

Once an Anathema is placed, the targeted Beast also becomes immediately aware of it. To her, it feels like a sharp spike being driven between the scales of her Horror, or like a thick iron chain being draped around her neck and locked in place. The Anathema is a foreign, clinging thing, a constant presence that remains just uncomfortable enough to be impossible to forget. She knows exactly what the Anathema is and how it works, though this knowledge can do nothing to stop it from altering how she thinks and acts. A Beast has little difficulty in separating the things her Anathema makes her feel from her own thoughts and desires, but explaining to your broodmates that an Anathema made you do it can be another matter entirely. An Anathema leaves no physical or astral signs of its presence and is undetectable via any mundane means once placed.

The Nature of Anathema

While a Hero can only place an Anathema on a Sated Beast, the effects persist even if her Satiety rises or falls. Exactly how much an Anathema affects a Beast depends upon her current Satiety. A Beast who is Ravenous or Starving is protected by her monstrous nature: while her Horror remains active and alert, it can readily defend her against the foreign influence of the Anathema. Increasing Satiety lowers that guard, making the Condition's ill effects far harder to avoid. While being Gorged can prevent a Beast from being targeted by an Anathema in the first place, once one has its hooks into a Beast, her sleeping Horror can do nothing to fight back against its effects. A well-fed Beast is at her most vulnerable to the Condition until she manages to remove it. The exception to this is Beasts who have fed till their Horrors fall completely asleep. Beasts who are under the Slumbering Condition are immune to their Anathema's ill effects, though most would not consider this perk to be worth the problems associated with being separated from their Horrors.

- High Satiety effects occur when the Beast is Gorged.
- Middle Satiety effects occur when the Beast is Sated.
- Low Satiety effects occur when the Beast is Starving or

All Anathema are Persistent Conditions; once a Beast is marked, it's never easy to escape. As a Beast grows and changes, her potential weaknesses change as well. No Beast may suffer under more than a single Anathema at one time.

Example Anathema

Bane

Some Beasts theorize that vampires are only weak to fire and sunlight because some Hero managed to pin their predecessor with this Anathema in ancient times. A Beast suffering from a Bane is weak to a specific element or material that can be used as a weapon against him. The exact nature of the Bane varies, but it's never so common that acquiring an effective weapon to suit it is easy; generally, acquiring a Bane-weapon adds one to the Availability of a weapon. Wood, silver, and cold-forged iron are all common banes. As with all Anathema, Bane adapts itself to the nature of the Beast it targets, so a Beast whose Horror makes his home in a volcano is not likely to be stuck with a Bane of fire, nor would a dragon who hoards gems and precious metals be likely to develop a Bane for gold.

High Satiety: The Beast is exceptionally vulnerable to her Bane. Any attacks made against her using her Bane deal aggravated damage and are treated as armor piercing. If such attacks were already aggravated or armor piercing, increase the weapon rating by 2. If the Beast takes damage from her Bane, she suffers from the Stunned Tilt for one turn.

Middle Satiety: The Beast remains vulnerable, but can recover far more quickly from dangerous blows. She no longer suffers from the Stunned condition if hit by her Bane, but all other High Satiety effects still apply.

Low Satiety: The Beast's Bane becomes only a minor inconvenience when faced with her awakened Horror's immense power. The Bane deals lethal damage, rather than aggravated. All such attacks are still treated as armor piercing.

Beat: The Beast has her Bane used against her in combat.

Resolution: The Beast gains and then resolves the Ravenous Condition.

Entrancement

Heroes see Beasts as having monstrous and incomprehensible desires that only go to prove how strange and corrupt their minds are. Entrancement creates an unnatural longing in a Beast for some particular type of person or object. A Beast might be made to lose all reason in face of solid gold, or find herself unable to resist the allures of a virgin maiden. Collectors targeted by Entrancement often find themselves more attached than ever to the contents of their Hoard, their innate Hunger twisted by the Anathema into an obsession that clouds their minds and robs them of their will. When her obsession is present, a Beast's attention becomes fixated and she finds herself unable to tear herself away from the object of her anathemic lust. The Beast feels no need to do anything in particular with the thing she craves, merely to be in its presence for as long as possible and to ensure that it comes to no harm.

High Satiety: The Beast is completely in the throes of her Entrancement. When the object of her obsession is present, the Beast receives a –3 penalty to all rolls that do not involve examining the object, protecting it, or trying to acquire it. If the Beast is securely in possession of the object of her Entrancement, either by having it in her hands or by having it safely secured in a way that prevents any other party present from taking it, this penalty is reduced to 2 dice. She may take no actions to harm the object, and if it shows any signs of leaving or being taken away she must take immediate action to try and stop it.

Middle Satiety: The Beast regains some of her self-control, reducing the penalty when the object of her Entrancement is present to 2 dice, and the penalty when it's safely secured to 1 die. She may still not directly harm the object without provocation, unless it's something capable of choosing to attack the Beast (such as a human or an animal) and it takes aggressive action first. In such cases, the Beast may fight back, but must aim to incapacitate the object as quickly and painlessly as possible. The Beast must still do everything in her power to prevent the object from leaving her presence.

Low Satiety: The Beast's Horror is able to temper her obsession even further, reducing the penalty when the object is present to 1 die. When she has safely secured the object, her rolls no longer receive a penalty. She still cannot attack the object unprovoked, but may suppress this instinct for a cost of 1 Willpower per turn. While her obsession is suppressed, the Beast may act as normal and takes no penalties, and if the object is removed from the area (or hidden sufficiently well that she believes it has been removed) then it ceases to entrance her until it is once more in her presence.

Beat: Acquiring or protecting the object of her obsession causes the Beast significant harm.

Resolution: The Beast gains and then resolves the Ravenous Condition.

Phobia

This Anathema pins a Beast with an intense panic reaction to some particular and specific trigger. This is never something so common as to be completely unavoidable in day-to-day life, but neither is it so specific and difficult to acquire that most Heroes can't get their hands on it with a little work. A Namtaru might develop an intense fear of her own reflection, or a Beast with a spiritual bent might develop a Phobia of a particular religious text. The exact nature of the Phobia depends on the Beast targeted, and is never something that would obviously cripple her human life or her bestial nature: a Predator Beast

would not develop a Phobia of blood, and a Beast employed as a farmhand would not develop a Phobia for any of the animals she saw on a day-to-day basis.

High Satiety: When in the presence of her Phobia, the Beast is all but incapacitated by her terror. She takes a –3 modifier to all rolls that do not involve trying to escape from the Phobia; her Initiative modifier is always treated as 0, as her instinct is to freeze up in fear. These penalties persist for three turns after the Phobia is no longer present, as the Beast takes time to compose herself after the Anathema-induced panic.

Middle Satiety: As the Beast's Horror re-emerges, she regains some measure of control of herself in the presence of her Phobia. The roll penalties are reduced to –2, and she takes a –2 penalty to her total initiative. These penalties persist for one round after the Phobia is no longer present.

Low Satiety: Though still terrified, the Beast's Horror helps her turn her fear into rage. When in the presence of her Phobia, she takes a –2 modifier to all rolls that do not involve either trying to escape from it or trying to destroy it. Her Initiative is no longer penalized, and all penalties disappear as soon as the Phobia is no longer present.

Beat: The Beast is exposed to her Phobia.

Resolution: The Beast gains and then resolves the Ravenous Condition.

Rage

Heroes think of Beasts as nothing more than violent monsters, just waiting to be put down. This Anathema drags a Beast into that story, filling her mind with uncontrollable anger at the world around her. While a Beast suffers under Rage, her mind is clouded by vicious thoughts, hindering her ability to be anything other than the rabid animal from the Hero's story. Though she may still attempt to live her normal life, any conflict may bring all her anger welling back up to the surface. Rage doesn't require a trigger; it's always present once the Anathema takes hold.

High Satiety: The Beast sees nothing but red, and is barely functional outside of combat. She automatically fails all Social rolls save for Intimidation rolls. In combat, she must attack every turn unless she is incapable of reaching a valid target, in which case she must move to attempt to reach her next victim as quickly as she is able. The player may spend a point of Willpower to ignore the effects of Rage for one turn and allow the character to act freely, burying her rage temporarily when the need is great.

Middle Satiety: Though her anger is still strong, the Beast tempers it with cunning and guile. Her Social rolls receive a –3 modifier, except for Intimidation rolls. In combat, she applies a –3 penalty to any action other than an attack. The player may

spend 1 Willpower at any time for the character to ignore the effects of Rage until she next suffers damage, at which point her anger reasserts itself.

Low Satiety: The Horror is able to keep some of her Rage mostly in check. All the Beast's rolls, including Intimidation, receive a –1 modifier, as the Beast is neither quite able to be diplomatic nor safely able to be intimidating without unleashing all her pent-up anger. The combat penalties of the previous level are reduced to 1 die. The player may still spend a point of Willpower to ignore the effects of Rage until her character is next damaged. She may also spend a point of Willpower to ignore the effects of Rage for one scene in a social situation, though at the Storyteller's discretion a clear insult or provocation might cause her character's anger to resurface.

Beat: The Beast's anger causes her to lash out in a social situation or attack an obviously superior opponent, against her better judgment.

Resolution: The Beast gains and then resolves the Slumbering Condition.

Weak Spot

The Hero has discovered some small part of the Beast's body that is more susceptible to damage. The Beast suffering under this Anathema has a spot on her body that is particularly easy to harm. Regardless of all measures she might have in place to protect herself from attack, the Anathema does its best to keep her Weak Spot open and vulnerable.

High Satiety: The Beast's Weak Spot is a constant presence in her life. Any attacker who knows about it may choose to target it specifically and does not take the usual penalties associated with making a Specified Target attack (see p. 166), but with only a –1 penalty. If the attacker hits a Beast's Weak Spot, the damage of his attack becomes aggravated. The Beast cannot cover up her Weak Spot; no matter how hard she tries it's somehow always accessible. Any armor bonuses the Beast receives do not apply to attacks that target her Weak Spot.

Middle Satiety: The Beast is able to keep her Weak Spot better protected, though it still provides a serious flaw in her defenses. An attacker must specifically aim to target the Weak Spot and takes a –3 to his roll for the Specified Target attack, regardless of where the Weak Spot is on the Beast's body. If he hits successfully, he still converts damage to aggravated and negates the Beast's armor from affecting that attack.

Low Satiety: The Beast's Weak Spot still causes her aggravated damage when hit, but she's able to defend it as thoroughly as she might any other part of her body. An attacker still takes the –3 for making the Specified Target attack, but the Beast may benefit from armor as normal when hit.

Beat: The Beast has her Weak Spot hit in combat or it otherwise complicates her life.

Resolution: The Beast gains and then resolves the Slumbering Condition.

Make Your Own Anathema

The example Anathema here are intended to model a wide variety of weaknesses, and Storytellers should feel free to modify the flavor of each example to suit the exact needs of their story and characters. However, some Beasts might manifest Anathema that work very differently. Storytellers should feel free to experiment with making their own Anathema, using the same guidelines as creating a custom Condition with the added step of creating High, Middle, and Low Satiety penalties.

Heroes use Anathema to make Beasts feel weak and powerless against the story that the Heroes want. When designing your own Anathema, take care that you don't make your *players* feel the same way. Anathema are very powerful and long-lasting effects that can drastically change how a character acts; if an Anathema removes a Beast's ability to use certain powers, her player loses some of his ability to affect the story being told. While this sort of struggle can make for a great game and ultimately makes the moment in which the Beast breaks free of the Anathema and reclaims her full self into a moment of real triumph, always consider whether or not playing under the Anathema's influence will still be entertaining. When in doubt, err on the side of giving the players more control, or better yet ask them before the game begins how much a mind-influencing Anathema will affect their fun.

Since Anathema are Persistent Conditions, their resolutions should always be difficult to meet. Most of the Anathema listed here have resolution conditions of Satiety reaching either 0 or 10, and then resolving the resulting Condition (not coincidentally, killing a Hero resolves the Ravenous Condition). This isn't a requirement for all Anathema, but it's something every Beast can do that will complicate their lives in an interesting fashion. If you'd like to create your own resolution for an Anathema, make sure it follows similar principles.

Weaponbound

While most Anathema drive a thorn of weakness into a Beast's hide, Weaponbound externalizes that weakness into a single weapon that is empowered to kill the Beast to whom it is tied. Often this weapon is the Chosen Blade of the Hero who places this Anathema, but sometimes it's some other weapon of great fame or importance to the Beast. A famous sword kept in a nearby museum might suddenly become capable of living up to its legend, or a prototype gun being tested nearby might be bound to slay a Beast.

Though this Anathema is external to the Beast, it is still tied to her Horror and self. As normal, another Anathema may not be placed on a Beast suffering from Weaponbound.

High Satiety: Meeting her Weaponbound weapon in combat spells almost certain doom for a Beast whose Horror cannot help to defend her. Attacks made against the Beast with her Weaponbound weapon gain the rote action quality. The weapon inflicts its normal damage, plus an additional two points of aggravated damage (so a sword that inflicts 2L damage would inflict successes rolled + 2 in lethal damage, and then two points of aggravated damage as well).

Middle Satiety: As her Horror awakens, the Beast is better able to defend against her Anathema's power. Attacks made against the Beast with her Weaponbound weapon gain the 8-again quality, and deal an extra two levels of lethal damage.

Low Satiety: While still dangerous, a Beast whose Horror is active can face her Weaponbound weapon with far less fear. Attacks made against the Beast with her Weaponbound weapon gain the 9-again quality, and deal an extra two levels of lethal damage.

Beat: Someone attacks the Beast with her Weaponbound weapon.

Resolution: The Weaponbound weapon is destroyed.

Followers

The Hero doesn't have to fight alone. In fact, many Heroes don't. The old myths often painted the Hero as having a war band, a dedicated group of followers, or at least a servant along with him as he confronted the monster. Of course, very often these followers are simply written into the story so that the monster has someone to kill in order to demonstrate its power, leaving the Hero unscarred for the final confrontation.

Unfortunately, many modern Heroes have internalized this part of the narrative. Heroes might or might not fight alongside other Heroes, but they frequently find followers to help them in their battle. A Hero that wishes to amass followers can do so by accessing the Primordial Dream while he sleeps, reaching out into the minds of those sleeping within a few miles of him, and showing them his vision for the coming battle with the Beast. Ordinarily, this only results in a few people with some strange dreams that vanish with the first cup of coffee in the morning. If the region includes people who have seen the supernatural or been subject to a Horror inflicting a nightmare to fed, however, it triggers something deeper and more damaging.

Most people in the World of Darkness experience the supernatural and ignore it. They see something inexplicable and terrifying — a ghost shrieking in an abandoned house, a man changing into a wolf and running away, a woman growing razor-sharp silver wings and taking flight, or a vampire feeding in the corner booth of a dark club. The witnesses forget or make themselves forget. They look for ways to rationalize what they've seen. This doesn't make them weak or foolish — ignoring the supernatural is a survival mechanism.

The supernatural is dangerous, multi-faceted, and largely outside of human law and morality. *Some* people see the supernatural and feel called to combat or at least study what lurks in the dark, and these people become hunters (a la **Hunter: The Vigil**). These people are exceptional in their drive and bravery, however, and a good number of them wind up dead or inexorably changed by their fight.

Heroes are not hunters. They do not take up their battle against Beasts because of something that was done to them. They step into situations that they do not understand, that they have no context for, and make a gross assumption about what they've seen. They respond with violence out of misplaced outrage or, worse, a desire for adulation. The people they bring along are normal mortals who would rather simply shake off the experiences they had and go back to their lives; they do not share the Hero's bloody-mindedness or his gifts.

Systems

No dice rolls are required for a Hero to create or recruit followers; the decision on whether or not a Hero finds them and how successful he is in recruiting them is best left to the Storyteller and the needs of the chronicle. Followers do not, by default, have any special supernatural powers or qualities. When acting alongside a Hero, though, followers provide the Hero with the following benefits.

- Followers can act as discrete characters, each performing whatever tasks while "offscreen" that would reasonable for them to accomplish. If the Hero recruits police officers, civil servants, or politicians as followers, such characters can complicate a Beast's life very quickly without the Beast ever realizing why.
- In combat, a follower can attack as normal. Heroes might arm their followers and use them to create suppressive fire, or give everyone a bat and go after lone Beasts.
- Alternately, followers can act in support of the Hero. Each follower in a combat can do one of the following:

  -Add two dice to a Hero's attack pool

  -Add two to the Hero's Defense

  -Subtract one from a Beast's Defense

  -Take the full damage of any one attack meant for the Hero

  -If a follower dies or is incapacitated, the Hero receives a +3 modifier to his next action; this happens regardless of who kills the follower

Gifts

Heroes approach their quests in different ways. Some rely on brute strength; others use traps and tricks against their opponents; while still others learn to manipulate Anathema in new and dangerous ways. Heroic gifts are defense mechanisms that Heroes develop to stand against the monsters of the world; the differences amongst Heroes are a direct result of the variety amongst Beasts, as different abilities are required to combat different threats.

Champion's Endurance

When faced with monsters that can burn armies to the ground with a single breath, mere mortals cannot hope to get close enough to slay them. Some Heroes are able to survive even against these impossible odds, holding on through hardiness or sheer strength of will.

Heroes with Champion's Endurance gain armor 2/0 at all times when fighting a Beast. This bonus stacks with any other armor bonuses they have acquired.

Kinslayer

Though Beasts are the only creature that creates Heroes, some find themselves called to hunt down any and every creature that might call themselves kin to such monsters. Most such Heroes believe other supernatural creatures to be vile minions who serve Beast overlords, though an encounter with an ancient vampire or raging werewolf might go a long way to altering a Hero's perceptions of that hierarchy.

A Hero with Kinslayer may treat any supernatural creature with the Family Ties Condition as a Beast for the purposes of Heroic Tracking and gifts. The Hero does not need to be aware of this connection for Kinslayer to take effect; he may target any creature present and his gifts and tracking will function if they are under the appropriate Condition.

A Hero cannot place Anathema on a monster who is not a Beast, nor benefit from the monster's death by gaining a new gift.

Chosen Blade

Slaying a mighty monster takes an equally mighty weapon. The stories told of some blades rival even those of the Heroes who wield them. The truth behind those tales is that the Hero makes the weapon, imbuing it with a piece of her own legend to forge it into the perfect tool for her quest. Heroes created by Collectors often find this mystical weapon, curiously enough, in the Beast's very hoard.

This gift enhances any one weapon that a Hero owns, whether it's an ancient broadsword passed down through generations, an AK-47 she bought off the Internet last week, or a knife she found in the Beast's house. To the Hero, it becomes immediately obvious that this particular weapon is special. Some Heroes come to believe that their Chosen Blade is a weapon from myths and legends, which can lead to some uncomfortable confrontations when multiple Heroes wielding the great Excalibur are forced to fight together. Other Heroes justify the extraordinary nature of their Blades through other stories, such as the power of the Beasts it has killed, infusing it with incredible strength.

Whatever the story, the weapon adds 1 to the damage rating and removes 1 from its Initiative penalty. A Ranged weapon gains 10 feet to each of its ranges, while a Melee weapon reduces its Strength requirement by one.

A Hero whose Chosen Blade is lost or destroyed loses this gift and must slay another Beast to re-acquire it, earning a new heroic weapon.

Legendary Hunter

While all Heroes can sense the presence of nearby monsters, some of them have honed this ability even further, allowing them to pinpoint a Beast in almost any circumstance.

Heroes with Legendary Hunter receive a three-die bonus to all Heroic Stalking rolls and are able to achieve an exceptional success with only three successes. Such Heroes also gain a three-die bonus to any rolls used to find a Beast who is attempting to hide or disguise herself through mundane or supernatural means.

Loremaster

Though Heroes are usually men and women of action, some find strength against the darkness amid dusty books and hidden legends. Cunning Heroes consult ancient literature in order to discover the secret weaknesses of the monsters they could not otherwise defeat. Armed with the knowledge of that which is Anathema to their foes, the Heroes return to their prey to deal the fatal blow.

Once a Hero with Loremaster has encountered a particular Beast, he can place an Anathema on that Beast from a distance. A heroic doctor might learn how a Beast's secretly monstrous biology might be exploited, while a more supernaturally minded Hero might pour over musty old tombs in search of stories about how other such monsters were defeated in ages past. Of course, this "research" does not actually turn up information on a Beast's innate weaknesses, since Anathema are not innate; rather, the Hero creates an Anathema through what his findings tell him to be true.

Unfortunately for the Hero, once he begins creating an Anathema, his victim becomes aware of the attempt. The Beast gains no particular ability to track the Hero, but does learn that there's an attempt in process to place an Anathema on her from a distance. Exactly how she uses this knowledge is up to her, but if the Hero is killed before he completes his endeavor, the Anathema seed vanishes completely.

A Hero may begin to place an Anathema through Loremaster at any time, but if the target is not presently vulnerable to Anathema (that is, does not have the Sated Condition), the Hero knows immediately that his current efforts will be fruitless. If the Beast is currently vulnerable to Anathema, he successfully places an Anathema seed. Once the Storyteller completes the extended action, the Anathema applies even if the Beast has resolved the Sated Condition.

If the target Beast is already under an Anathema when the Hero begins his action, his attempt requires successes equal to the Beast's Lair, with no minimum. Success means the Hero learns the nature of the Beast's current Anathema. The Beast is still aware of this use of Loremaster, but of course has much less time to react.

An unfinished Anathema does not protect the Beast from having another Anathema placed on her. If the target Beast falls under a different Anathema in the middle of the Hero's attempt

to research one, the Loremaster Hero learns the nature of the Beast's current Anathema at the end of his action instead of placing a new one of his own.

Dice Pool: Varies based on how the Hero approaches the task; a crypozoologist might use Intelligence + Science, while an alchemist might use Intelligence + Occult

Action: Extended (one roll per day, successes required = Beast's Lair x 2, minimum 5)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Storyteller loses all accumulated successes; the Hero cannot attempt to use Loremaster on this particular Beast until he encounters it again and witnesses it engage in some supernatural activity.

Failure: The Hero must either take a Condition to continue or quit the attempt. If the Hero quits, he can resume this attempt after encountering the Beast again but loses half his accumulated successes.

Success: The Storyteller accumulates successes toward the total. If she reaches the required number of successes, the Hero places an Anathema on the Beast as described on p. 208.

Exceptional Success: The Storyteller can apply one of the exceptional success benefits as described on p. 158.

Open Gate

When a Beast has retreated back to her home to nurse her wounds after a great battle, some Heroes find a way to follow her back to her Lair and finish what they started. A Hero with Open Gate is capable of opening a doorway directly into the Lair of a Beast.

The Hero may attempt to open a Primordial Pathway into a Beast's Lair from one of two types of places: the location where a Beast formed one of her Chambers, or any location that a Beast has used within the past week to form a Pathway to one of her Chambers. The Hero treats these two types of locations the same; it's the echo of the Beast's Pathways that allows him to form his own, not the resonance between worlds that the Beast herself uses. Open Gate does not give the Hero any particular ability to sense where these connections exist; that information must be tracked down by other means. Any attempts to use Open Gate in an invalid location fail automatically.

Dice Pool: Wits + Resolve + Occult vs. the Beast's Resistance + Lair rating (if entering a shared Chamber, use the highest Lair rating)

Action: Instant

Cost: 1 Willpower

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Pathway does not open, and the Hero has damaged its potential connection to the Lair. The Hero may not attempt to open a Pathway from this location until a Beast has once again used it to connect to the Primordial Dream.

Rolling Dice for Storyteller Characters

Normally, the Storyteller wouldn't bother with an extended action for a Storyteller character; the players aren't around to influence the result, so it's better for the Storyteller to just decide the outcome as best serves the story. However, in the case of Loremaster, the Beast *does* have the chance to alter the outcome — she just needs to find and stop the Hero before the Storyteller reaches the required number of successes. The Beast's player can also apply the Spoor Merit to muddle the Hero's attempt **(p. 120)**. The Storyteller could also rule that the Hero doesn't work on Loremaster every day (Heroes have lives outside the quest, after all), giving the Beast a little time to conduct her own investigation.

In the meantime, though, the Storyteller just needs to keep track of the Hero's successes, perhaps describing the Beast's Horror getting restless as the Hero forces himself a little further into her Legend.

Failure: The Pathway does not open.

Success: The Pathway successfully opens and remains open for the Hero's Resolve in turns.

Exceptional Success: The Pathway successfully opens and lasts for the rest of the scene.

While open, the Pathway acts identically to one opened by a Beast, merging the external world and the Lair temporarily into one space (see p.97). A Hero with Open Gate must force his way through Burrows as usual, but if he succeeds, he may take along any mortal followers under the Swayed condition without them having to make the roll themselves.

A Hero may not use Open Gate to create Pathways between anywhere but the physical world and the Lair of a Beast, even if a Beast has recently opened a Pathway to another location. While inside the Lair, the Hero may attempt to leave by using Open Gate again. Successfully opening a Pathway from within a Chamber will always create a connection between the Chamber and either the physical location from which a Beast last accessed it, or the location where the Chamber was created if a Beast has not yet accessed it from elsewhere.

Real World

One of a Beast's most potent weapons is the ability to impose its Lair on the waking world. It does this by finding places that resonate with that Lair, and then synching that location an its Lair, metaphysically speaking. Some Heroes can interrupt that ability, removing a Lair Trait from an area.

Dice Pool: (Power Attribute) + Occult vs. Resolve + Lair

Action: Reflexive and contested

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Lair Trait is unaffected, and the Hero loses a point of Willpower from the effort.

Failure: The Lair Trait is unaffected, but the Hero can attempt to use this gift again next turn. The roll suffers a cumulative –1 modifier for each attempt, however.

Success: If the Storyteller rolls more successes than the Beast's player, the Hero can "shut off" one Lair Trait present in the area. If the scene takes place in the waking world, the gift can affect any type of applied Lair Trait (minor or major), but cannot affect a Lair Trait that is naturally present. If the scene takes place in a Beast's Lair, the gift can affect any Lair Trait. The Lair Trait no longer applies in the scene.

Exceptional Success: As above, and the Beast's Horror is cowed by the disruption to its Lair. The Beast suffers a –2 modifier on all Atavisms for the rest of the scene. If the scene takes place in the Beast's Lair, this modifier applies to *all* rolls.

Saint's Whisper

Even the bravest Hero understands that outright combat isn't always practical. When a Hero encounters a Beast in the middle of a crowded mall, or while surrounded by children, he might not be able to strike even if the Beast seems weak. A particularly righteous Hero, however, can engage a Beast without the need for blade or bow, chiding the creature verbally and drawing out the monster's secret weaknesses while her guard is down.

Heroes with Saint's Whisper gain the ability to place Anathema on vulnerable Beasts through conversing with them. To do so, a Hero must engage in a scene of meaningful social interaction with his opponent, which must include the Hero denouncing the Beast as evil or monstrous in some way. As the Hero does so, the Beast feels the Anathema creeping into her Horror, and faces two options: physically attack the Hero immediately (using a Nightmare does not count) and end the Hero's attempt, or be placed under the Anathema. A clever Hero will try to use Saint's Whisper in situations where the Beast cannot leave the conversation or lash out, such as approaching her at her workplace or in a public space with plenty of witnesses. Even if the Beast avoids the Anathema through violence, the consequences of her "outburst" may be problem enough.

As normal, the Hero learns exactly how the Anathema he has placed works, often justifying his new understanding of the Beast's secret weakness as something she's let slip during their conversation. Anathema placed using Saint's Whisper are identical to standard Anathema; a Beast may still only suffer one Anathema at a time.

Vanquisher's Strength

Some Beasts tower over those around them, with limbs like tree trunks and hides like granite. Such monsters are so tough that no weak mortal could ever hope to harm them. Heroes overcome such enemies by being stronger still, wielding the might of ten men with their every blow.

The Hero gains a permanent +1 modifier to any one of Brawl, Firearms, or Weaponry. When in conflict against a Beast, the Hero also treats his Strength score as two dots higher. This gift may be purchased a second time to stack this bonus.

Warrior's Speed

Even the largest Beasts are often exceptionally nimble, able to move with supernatural speeds across the battlefield or dart out of sight in the blink of an eye. Heroes face such deft opponents with great speed and cunning of their own, matching pace with their monstrous opponents.

When in conflict with a Beast, a Hero with Warrior's Speed treats his speed as 10 higher and may use the higher of his Dexterity or Wits to determine his Defense. At the beginning of a conflict, he may choose to forgo his own Initiative roll and instead treat his Initiative total as equal to that of the Beast with the highest Initiative total, after all supernatural bonuses and penalties are applied. Break the tie between the Hero and the Beast for first action as if the two had used identical Initiative enhancement powers and rolled identical Initiative enhancement results.

This gift may be purchased a second time. Once repurchased, the Hero may add an additional +5 to his Speed while in conflict with a Beast, and treat his Dexterity as 2 higher for all combat purposes when in conflict with a Beast, including for purposes of breaking Initiative ties.

Advancement

When a Hero is created as a recurring antagonist in a chronicle or is being built to face down a group of experienced Beasts, the Storyteller should hand him appropriate Attributes, Skills, and other assets as necessary to challenge the player characters. Heroes learn new Skills and Merits through practice and training. As Storyteller-controlled characters, they do not track Beats or gain Experiences.

Heroic gifts are never learned through practice. Instead, every time a Hero successfully kills a Beast, he immediately acquires a new gift. This new ability is usually related to the conflict won or the Beast slain, either strengthening the Hero against similar threats or reflecting an increase in the skills he demonstrated in battle.

When creating a Hero, the Storyteller should assign any gifts that she feels appropriate for the challenge the Hero embodies and then work out the history that led to him acquiring those gifts. There's no need to go into great detail, but a Hero with several gifts has always killed quite a few Beasts to get there and probably left some stories behind about how he hunts. If a Beast is killed by a Hero during play, the Hero should be given a new gift that feels appropriate to the Beast killed.

When a group of Heroes work together to take down a Beast, only the Hero who strikes the killing blow earns a new Gift. No other member of the group gains any benefit, regardless of how much they assisted in the conflict. Inexperienced Heroes might not understand this connection, but it doesn't take very

long before they start to connect the glory of the kill with an increase in strength and skill. Heroes who have formed groups will sometimes grant the right of the kill to the newest and thus weakest member of their group.

Heroes who already possess at least a dozen gifts sometimes fail to acquire a new one after a kill. Instead, their natural lifespan increases, sometimes by centuries at a time. It's very uncommon to encounter a Hero who has survived for more than a few years at best, but those who do manage victory after victory can become nearly immortal. There are stories regarding legendary Heroes from ancient tales who still roam the earth, killing every monster they meet. Some Beasts even suggest that these Heroes possess unusual gifts of great power, gifts gained from slaying impossibly powerful monsters or by studying the flow of history itself. Whether there's any truth to these stories is difficult to uncover, as any Beast who encounters such a Hero would be unlikely to escape with her life.

Retirement

The end of a Hero's career usually involves the Hero's death. He bites off more than he can chew, follows a Beast back into its Lair, runs afoul of the mundane authorities, or attacks a Beast's supernatural kin. Another option exists, though, and it's one that Beasts don't always consider because they don't see it happen often.

Sometimes, Heroes just *stop*. The urge to kill goes away. The Hero finds a fulfilling, normal, interesting life and stops defining himself by the monster he wants to kill. He abandons his elaborate conspiracies and sees the world—and himself—as they are: messy, complicated, and unfair, but manageable without risking life and limb in pursuit of a literal questing beast.

This endgame and what it means in terms of game mechanics is discussed in Chapter Seven.

Example Heroes

The Heroes described below can be dropped into your **Beast** chronicle to bedevil your players' characters, or just serve as inspiration for your own antagonists.

DESMOND OAKES

I stopped counting scars a long time ago.

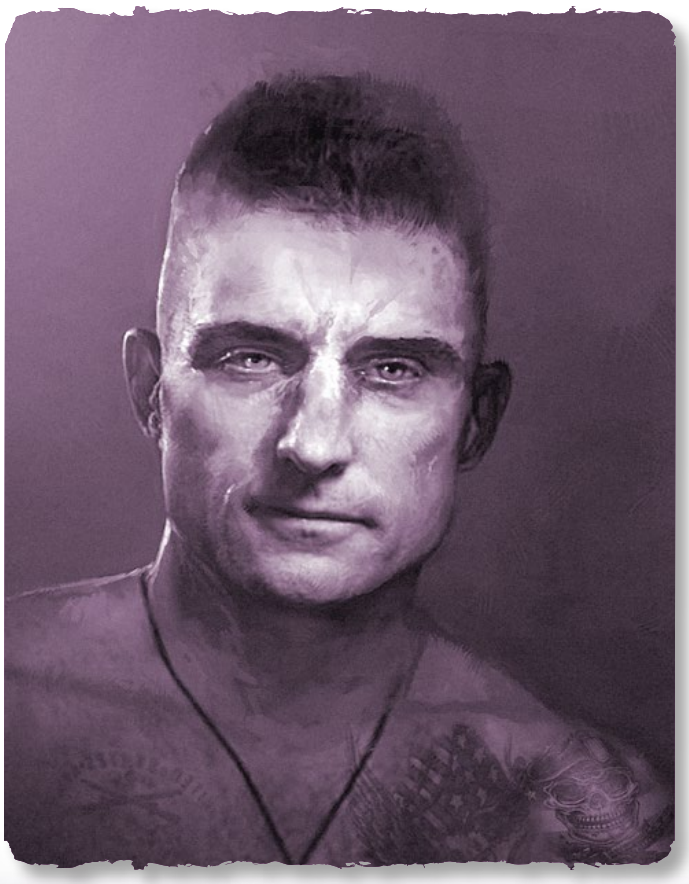
Background: Desmond Oakes retired from the Navy at age 43. They asked him to come back and be an instructor, but he turned them down. He wasn't sure what exactly he was going to do with his life, but he knew he was done taking orders from idiots. The former SEAL went to work for a friend's shipping/receiving company and quickly turned his leadership talents to making the company efficient and effective. It wasn't necessarily what he'd pictured doing with his life, but it was simple. He needed that.

The dreams complicated things. He'd wake up in the middle of the night: not frightened, but alert, aroused, and ready for combat. He'd always counted himself lucky that he didn't suffer the post-traumatic stress that many of his friends did, but he started to wonder if it just came on late. He felt drawn to the warehouse on the docks, and, in a daze, one day he followed that compulsion. He drove to the warehouse and found a homeless man had broken in and was sleeping in a disused closet. The man looked terrified, like he had just woken from his own nightmare.

Desmond spoke to him,and learned about the thing that slithered in from the water in the man's dreams, the thing that was a little like a salamander and a little like a lobster, but big as a forklift. He learned that the other homeless in the area knew about the creature, too; they'd seen it in their dreams. Desmond hunted it down, barely believing what he was doing, and found it. It looked like a person when he found it...but it wasn't. Desmond realized that by shooting it, he was making his life more complicated than he ever wanted it to be, but he didn't feel he could walk away. It was a *monster*, after all. He followed the monster disguised as a slim, 20-something man down to the docks near the beach. Before it could turn and see him, he shot it in the back six times. He threw its body into the surf, washed the blood from his hands in the salt water, and went home. He slept soundly that night.

A month later, the dreams called him to a different part of the city. This time, he didn't even try to resist.

That was 1998. Since then, Desmond has used his connections in the shipping industry to learn of other tales of monsters and hunted them down as well. He sees himself as a wandering warrior,



a silent, nameless hunter who can clear the darkness of the things that lurk therein. He recruited several other vets, men with combat experience, to follow him into battle, and he's spoken over more than a few graves. He wants to stop — at least, he tells himself he does. The truth of the matter is, though, that it feels good to have a purpose, a mission, and an enemy again.

Description: Desmond is a muscular man in his 50s. He has multiple tattoos on his arms and chest and keeps his military haircut. He wears pants with multiple pockets and tight-fighting shirts, and always carries some kind of weapon, be it a concealed pistol, a folding knife, or a collapsible baton.

Storytelling Notes: Desmond thinks of himself as a soldier. When he finds a Beast to target, he thinks of the act of hunting and killing it as his orders. He doesn't actually hear voices or even believe in a higher power, but it's comforting to him to think that some outside force approves of his crusade. His followers take orders from him in turn, and thus goes the chain of command. Desmond appreciates the simplicity.

Desmond's Legend is *Hunter*. He hunts and kills monsters because they *are* monsters. He has never engaged a Beast in conversation and has no idea of their pretensions of "family" and "lessons." They are horrific, predatory creatures — what more does he need to know? Learning that Beasts have a society, names, and feelings would probably shake Desmond's confidence greatly. For now, though, the greatest thrill of his life is getting his hunting band together, sharing a drink and saying a brief prayer, and then going on the hunt. Watching a monster fall to the ground as it dies of a perfectly placed gunshot is a close second. Maybe that's really the best part. Desmond hasn't really thought about it.

His Life is *Civilian*. Desmond wasn't exactly happy in his life as a shipper/receiver, but as a former military man, he finds a certain degree of comfort in tedium. He tells himself that he would like to go back to this life full-time, but it's a half-truth at best. He believes whole-heartedly that the world needs him to hunt down the creatures in the dark. Every time he considers stopping, another dream pulls him back into the night.

Desmond is a good antagonist to use if the brood is somewhat combat-capable, but willing to fight intelligently. His followers are few in number, but they're all accustomed to war and know how to handle weapons. Desmond himself is a highly skilled tactician. He does not, however, understand much of anything about the supernatural. This weakness gives him a kind of clarity (he doesn't get bogged down with nuance; a monster is a monster and therefore a target), but it does mean that if a Beast shows kindness, humanity, or even intelligence, it might throw Desmond off his guard.

Life: Civilian

Legend: Hunter

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 5 (7 vs Beasts), Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Computer 1, Crafts 2, Investigation (Background Checks) 2, Medicine 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (Krav Maga) 3, Drive 2, Firearms (Automatic Weapons) 3, Stealth 3, Survival 2, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken 2, Expression (Oration) 1, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 1, Streetwise 2

Merits: Contacts (Military) 1, Danger Sense, Fast Reflexes 3, Iron Skin 2, Inspiring, Killer Instinct 3, Multi-Lingual (Spanish, Arabic) 1, Relentless Assault 3, Small Unit Tactics

Gifts: Legendary Hunter, Vanquisher's Strength, Warrior's Speed

Health: 9

Willpower: 6

Size: 5

Speed: 13

Defense: 6

Initiative: 9

Integrity: 5

Armor: 2/0

Notes:

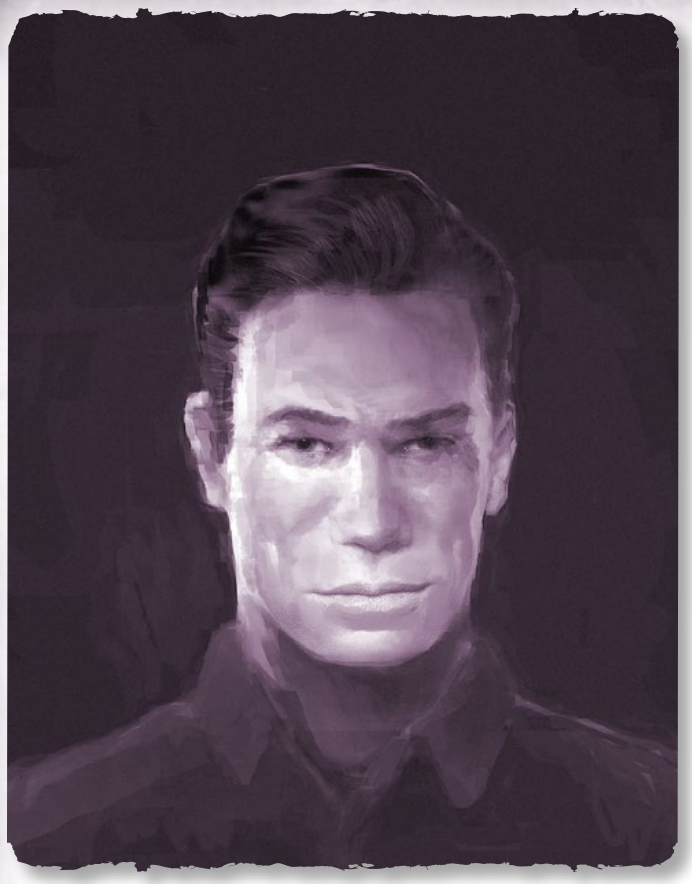
THADDEUS PEARSON

Never fear, milady.
I've come to kill this foul Beast!

Background: Thaddeus has spent his entire life blaming his problems on other people. Coming from a middle-class suburban home, he was told all through his childhood that he was special. Whenever the real world failed to reinforce this, he retreated into whatever fiction he could find that said that bookish kids like him would eventually inherit the earth. Thaddeus graduated from a good college with excellent grades and very few friends, and went right to work behind a desk at a mid-sized corporation's programming department.

Once it became clear to Thaddeus that he was destined to work a mediocre job for the rest of his life, the resentment started. He'd been promised so much more than this: vast riches, adoring fans, and a beautiful wife who would fawn over his genius. Instead he was living as the model of mediocrity. Everything that went wrong was a personal slight against him: the pub was out of fries because the waiter had it out for him, or his car wouldn't start because the mechanic who fixed it was clearly an idiot who'd resented Thaddeus's superior intellect.

Then one night, Thaddeus dreamed of...well, he's still not sure how to describe it. It had color, but no joy. It had breadth, but no depth. Featureless, surreal plain? No, it was too violent and loud. He wasn't sure what had happened, but he woke knowing that whatever it was, it happened at his office. He went to work the next morning excited for the first time in years — was something actually about to happen to him? Was this the call to action he'd been promised? Then he saw one



of his co-workers in a meeting, and he knew. It *was* a call, and she was the monster in the mountain cave.

He killed his former coworker (an Ugallu) two weeks later. It was pure luck, catching her unaware at the end of a long day before she had any idea he was a Hero. He lured her behind the building with a story about his car needing a jump, and then ran her through as she opened her hood. Her death filled him with a rush of power and left him more certain than ever of his calling. This was the life he'd been promised, full of action and certainty with great rewards at the end. All he had to do was kill every monster he could find, and everything would be exactly as he'd always imagined.

Description: Thaddeus is a tall, skinny man in his mid-30s, clean-shaven with pale skin and neatly cut hair. During office hours, he wears business casual polo shirts and slacks, and is completely unremarkable. While out hunting monsters, he wears a poorly fitted trenchcoat and a black trilby hat. Thaddeus considers himself a modern gentleman and speaks with an unnecessarily verbose vocabulary, dotted with "chivalric" language he's mostly picked up from fantasy movies and novels.

Storytelling Notes: Thaddeus can't accept that he's capable of making mistakes or that anything wrong with his life might be his fault. If he gives them no other credit, he's at least never one to underestimate the intellect of a Beast he's facing: surely a man of his great skill and mind would never be called to exterminate anything but the cleverest of monsters. He believes that all Beasts are aware of him and his quest; any action of theirs is part of a cunning and evil scheme. Thaddeus always attributes to malice what others might attribute to stupidity, personal interest, or just sheer coincidence.

Thaddeus craves the public recognition and adoration he feels he deserves for his heroic deeds, but has enough sense to know that admitting to what he's done will get him reported to the police by any normal person. His Life is *Professional*: despite everything that's happened to him, Thaddeus worries about losing his job or looking bad at work if anyone finds out what's going on. Still, if someone expresses interest in the sort of heroic archetype he feels he embodies, Thaddeus is inclined towards bragging.

Thaddeus's Legend is *Warrior*. He approaches problems with a sword in hand and little concern for anything but his black-and-white morality. Anyone who assumes him to be comically inept thanks to his delusions has made a dangerous mistake: Thaddeus is a murderer who believes he's doing the right thing, and he won't hesitate to use violence and torture to get what he wants. His Legend encourages him to seek out confrontation through direct combat rather than subtlety, and he has been practicing with a variety of weapons to make this approach easier. His first kill wasn't nearly glorious enough for Thaddeus's tastes, and he intends to rectify this with his second.

Life: Professional

Legend: Warrior

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3 (5 vs Beasts), Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Computer (Programming) 3, Investigation 3, Science 2

Physical Skills: Drive 1, Firearms 1, Larceny (Security Systems) 2, Weaponry (Swords) 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken 1, Persuasion 1, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Danger Sense, Defensive Combat (Weaponry), Encyclopedic Knowledge (Occult), Fleet of Foot 2, Patient, Resources 2

Gifts: Loremaster, Vanquisher's Strength

Health: 7

Willpower: 5

Size: 5

Speed: 12

Defense: 2 (6 with a sword)

Initiative: 4

Integrity: 3

Armor: 0

Notes: Thaddeus uses Intelligence + Academics for Loremaster, researching monsters in fiction for lessons he can apply to the real thing.

MARIAN JONES

It's filth like this that lets the devil in. Clean up your act or I'll clean it for you.

Background: Marian used to be a very nice woman. She came from a good family, got herself a good education, married young, and settled into a quiet suburban home to raise two kids. As a stay-at-home parent, she busied herself volunteering for her church in between managing her household and making sure her kids got to every practice and recital on time, just to keep herself busy. She had a large circle of friends; if she was a little vain about her appearance and a little frivolous with her husband's money, it never got in the way of her good works or got them into any serious debt. Life was a bit repetitive, but Marian was content with her happy, helpful little life.

Everything changed when her youngest child turned seventeen. He became distant and withdrawn, staying out late and keeping secrets from his parents. Marian tried every method in every parenting book she could get her hands on, but nothing seemed to help her get through to him again and find out what was wrong. Marian started having strange dreams with voices — or perhaps just *noise*, with no hint of language or comprehension — every night. She woke up knowing that something was going wrong out there in the city, in the dark places that she would never dare go. Finally, one morning she woke up in a cold sweat with a terrible revelation: the nightmare was coming from inside the house. She searched through every room, and in her son's basement apartment she found the truth: a woman lying in his bed, not breathing, but very much awake and aware.

Marian drove to a friend's house, and sat silently, not sleeping and barely eating, for a week. She loved her son, but she had found a living corpse in his room and she knew, *knew*, somehow that he was connected to her strange dreams and the disturbances she felt in the city. Finally, on the seventh morning, she realized the truth. Her son wasn't her son anymore. Someone, or something, had replaced him with the monster from her dreams. Underneath his black t-shirts and pale flesh were a hundred crawling centipedes with stinging mandibles and acidic flesh, just waiting to destroy her home and everything she held dear.

He had to die.

Marian's first attempt was rash and clumsy; in her defense, she didn't think he'd put up so much of a fight. He escaped, weeping and panicked, out the window and she was left with a broken arm and a lot of explaining to do. She burned her bridges by telling her husband the truth of what happened, then managed to withdraw their shared life's savings in cash and flee before he could have her arrested. Marian saw her Heroic duty through the lens of her faith: she had been sent on a mission from God to destroy the monsters of the world. Nothing else in her life mattered next to His purpose for her.

That all happened twenty years ago. Marian has been roaming the world ever since, tracking down every monster she can lay her hands on as she passes. Her cause has grown well past her son. She isn't sure if he's still alive, and she barely cares anymore. All she knows is her zeal, and the only way she can express it is by killing.

Description: Marian is in her early sixties, but well preserved for her age. Her blond hair is pale enough to disguise her grays, and she cuts it regularly to keep it out of the way. She shuns any form of makeup or jewelry, believing that such frivolities lead to temptation and corruption. When necessary, she's very good at mimicking the mannerisms of the sheltered housewife she used to be, all smiles and polite conversation. Dressed in a floral top and wide-brimmed hat, she looks like a grandmother out for a walk. When commanding other Heroes or hunting down a Beast herself, however, she dons an impressive array of military grade body armor and barely legal self-defense weapons. Her Chosen Blade is a vintage military-grade assault rifle, still stained with the blood of the first Beast it killed. Its size and conspicuous appearance, however, force her to carry a more conventional pistol instead whenever civilian attention would hurt the mission at hand.

Storytelling Notes: As an experienced Hero with multiple kills under her belt, Marian is a challenging opponent for a young group of Beasts. She travels with a retinue of followers and has multiple safehouses and contacts in various cities; one of her rules is that someone watches her while she sleeps and wakes her if she seems in distress. Despite her physical prowess, Marian has stayed alive for as long as she has by avoiding direct

combat whenever possible. She prefers to approach her targets when they're alone and already weakened, and often tips off other Heroes about a nearby Beast if she thinks it too risky to face herself. She always considers the bigger picture and will let one Beast go if she thinks he'll lead her to a brood.

Marian's Legend is *Zealot*: she is a Holy warrior and refuses to waver in her beliefs even in the face of overwhelming evidence. She considers all supernatural creatures to be roughly the same. Vampires, mages, changelings: if it's magic, then it's pure evil and deserves to be killed. Even mundane humans who spend too much time around monsters make her list if she's in a bad mood. Marian makes a direct connection between monsters and sinfulness, and views promiscuity, sexual deviancy, drug use, and just about any other activity that rubs her the wrong way as a first step towards becoming a tool of evil.

Her Life is *Peacemaker*. Despite her actions, some part of her is still the community-minded volunteer from her younger days who wants to see everyone cooperate and work together. It's this shred of team spirit that's helped Marian become so successful at organizing and directing other Heroes, and which makes her zealotry so dangerous.

When it comes to her son, some people assume that she's a grieving mother at heart who'll break down at the sight of her child's face and lose some measure of her conviction. They're quite wrong. Marian believes that the Beast her son became is the root of all evil, but he barely figures in to her quest anymore. She knows she'll probably never find him, so she focuses on the Beasts she *can* find, the embodiments of evil within reach. Her followers tell stories about her — she killed her son when he became possessed, she carries a crucifix blessed by St. Paul that could cure her son if she could find him, she let him escape out of love — but none of this is true. The truth is, she barely remembers his name. Everything she does, she does out of her own misplaced fervor.

Life: Peacemaker

Legend: Zealot

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Investigation 3, Medicine 1, Occult (Beasts) 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 1, Firearms (Rifles) 4, Stealth 2, Survival 1, Weaponry 2

Social Skills: Empathy (Lies) 2, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 3, Socialize 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Allies (Heroes) 3, Alternate Identity 1, Contacts (Police, Monster Hunters, Medical) 3, Resources 2, Small Unit Tactics 2

Gifts: Champion's Endurance, Chosen Blade, Legendary Hunter, Saint's Whisper, Warrior's Speed

Health: 8

Willpower: 6

Size: 5

Speed: 11 (21 versus Beasts)

Defense: 6 (7 versus Beasts)

Initiative: 7

Integrity: 2

Armor: 1/3 (2/4 versus Beasts)

Chosen Blade: Damage: 5L Range: 210/410/810 Clip: 5+1 Initiative: 2, Size: 3

SLEEPING BEAUTY

I'm not a ghost. I'm just dreaming.

Background: Heroes on the hunt have seen glimpses of a young warrior queen in their dreams, pointing the way to the Lair of their quarry. When they get to the creature's Lair, she's there, fighting beside them to vanquish the creature. She says she is sleeping somewhere in the real world and beseeches the Heroes she allies with to find her. To date, none of the Children or the Heroes who have encountered her can track her down.

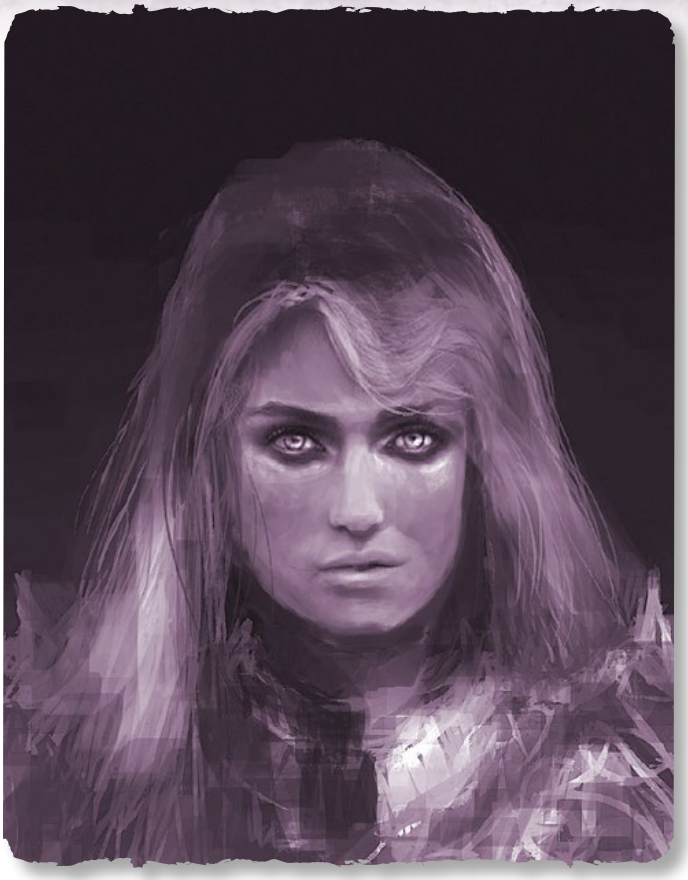
If they did, they would be surprised at what they see: a sickly teenage girl named Melanie, trapped in a coma for the past two years. Doctors and nurses regularly check her bedside, as do worried family members. Her mother spends the entire window of visiting hours sitting with her daughter, either knitting or working on crosswords to pass the time. Her father drops in when he can. They have no idea what caused their presumably healthy daughter to fall so ill, and the doctors are equally stumped.

Melanie fell into the coma after a Horror entered her dream to feed. Instead of cowering, she gave chase, following the monster right back to his Lair, where she killed him. The Lair collapsed. Melanie tried to make it back to her body, but something went horribly wrong. Her soul remains in the Primordial Dream, just out of reach.

Melanie has tried to follow other Horrors back to Lairs, but she can't quite manage to move quickly enough. She can, however, home in on disturbances to the Primordial Dream and speak to Heroes that sense them. Melanie acts as a muse to other Heroes, a guiding angel, but because of the abstract nature of their contact with the Primordial Dream, she can't do much more than point them in the direction of Beasts. That, however, has been enough to sustain her.

With each victory, Melanie grows stronger. In her hospital bed, she twitches in her sleep, her hands clenching into fists and unclenching. Her body shows remarkably few signs of atrophying despite the coma, and it gives her parents and doctors hope that one day they may see Melanie, their darling daughter, walk and smile again.

Description: In the physical world, Melanie is a gaunt, delicate slip of a girl with pale, dull, lifeless hair and glazed-over eyes. She rests in a hospital bed, wearing a thin hospital gown that does very little to protect against the elements. Then again, she doesn't need to worry about that.



In the Primordial Dream, her hair is a lustrous blonde mane and her eyes are a clear ice blue. Her armor gleams with light reflected from some unknown source.

Storytelling Notes: Melanie does not fully understand what has happened or how to free herself. She knows that her body is asleep somewhere, but doesn't know if she can get back to it or how. She is young and scared, and likely not aware of how long she has been separated from her body. Still, she's smart and determined, even if she assumes that any Hero she meets will help her get back to her body.

Melanie is a truly strange case. She should not, by rights, have been able to follow a Horror to its Lair, much less kill it. It is possible some outside force — another Beast, perhaps, or some other supernatural creature able to enter the Primordial Dream — used Melanie as a weapon and then left her adrift. Acting as a Hero provides her soul with the sustenance it needs to stop her drifting apart in the Dream, but if she were to return to her body, would she continue the fight? It's never crossed her mind. She just wants to go home.

Melanie breaks some of the assumptions about the Hero's role in **Beast**, because she's not a fanatical killer. She's not nearly as self-centered as most of the Heroes that go hunting Beasts. She sustains herself by hunting in the Primordial Dream, much like Beasts do. A brood of Beasts could, of course, end her threat by killing her...but they could also help her get back to her body. At that point, would she continue her hunt?

Melanie's Life is *Comatose*; since she is stuck in a coma, she can't do much else in the physical world. She's trapped between worlds and can't reach her body to fulfill her destiny as a Hero. If anyone who wishes to do her bodily harm finds her body, she has little to no recourse to defend herself.

Her Legend as a *Dreamer* stems from the way she *can* manifest her full potential and fight what she sees as the good fight. Dreams are where anyone can be who they want to be. It might be that Melanie, somehow, was able to realize and implement this fact in a much more martial manner than most dreamers. It's even possible that Melanie, should, by rights, have become a Beast, but is trapped and lost out of reach of her Horror. She is inextricably connected to the Primordial Dream, in any case, and was even before she was separated from her body.

Life: Comatose

Legend: Dreamer

Attributes: Power 5, Finesse 7, Resistance 6

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Computer 1, Investigation 2, Medicine 1, Occult (Primordial Dream) 5

Physical Skills: Athletics 1 (4 in dreams), Brawl 2 (5 in dreams), Stealth 1, Weaponry 5 (in dreams only)

Social Skills: Empathy (Finding Insecurities) 3, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Subterfuge (Putting On A Brave Face) 1

Merits: Area of Expertise (Primordial Dream), Danger Sense, Eidetic Memory, Indomitable, Trained Observer 3

Gifts: Real World, Saint's Whisper

Health: 11

Willpower: 11

Size: 5

Speed: 12

Defense: 9

Initiative: 13

Integrity: 3

Armor: n/a

Notes: Melanie uses spirit traits while in the Primordial Dream. They are considerably higher than they would otherwise be for a human's dream form **(see p. 99)**. The Storyteller is free to come up with any explanation for why that might be that works for her chronicle.

World of Darkness

The Children of the Dark Mother are not alone in the World of Darkness. Theirs is a strange and twisted family tree, with branches that stretch through realms both visible and invisible. The Dark Mother is more than the mother of Beasts; she is the mother of the first monsters to plague humanity

from the shadows. Those "first monsters" include Father Wolf, the first inhuman vampires, the monstrous precursors to the Gentry, and all of the other pre-human abominations that have slowly taken recognizable forms. Or so some Beasts believe.

It's a bold claim, and one that many scholars of the occult dispute. Certainly, on the surface a half-spirit wolfman and an immortal mummy seem to have little in common. In answer, Beasts point to the fact that human beings have an instinctive response to the supernatural. Sometimes it's very overt and supernatural, as with the Quiescence Curse that Supernal magic invokes, werewolves' Lunacy, or the aura of Disquiet that follows Prometheans. Other times it's more subtle: the so-called "hunter response," the fact that most people can't see the gears of the God-Machine, even the general "live and let live" attitude that people subconsciously develop. Either way, Beasts believe that points to common ancestry.

The Crossover Chronicle

Because they see the monstrous denizens of the World of Darkness as kin, Beasts are ideally suited for use in a crossover chronicle. Whether that's bringing a Beast into your **Vampire: The Requiem** chronicle or an Uratha into your **Beast** chronicle, whether you're looking for new allies or new antagonists, this section gives you the guidelines you'll need to use **Beast: The Primordial** with the other games in the **World of Darkness** line.

Mixed Troupe or Odd One Out

When approaching the crossover chronicle, the first decision you have to make as a Storyteller is whether the game will feature a mixed troupe (e.g. a vampire, two mages, and three Beasts), or whether the troupe will predominantly belong to one game line with a single exception (e.g. a brood of Beasts with a single vampire member or a Promethean throng with a Beast ally). Either approach has advantages and drawbacks: the mixed troupe allows players to create exactly the character they want, but it can be difficult to pull thematic coherence out of the conflicting drives and motivations of different character types. Odd-man-out chronicles benefit from a stronger thematic focus and the ability to use the "off" character as a "proud nail:" an element that, by standing in contrast to the rest of the story, highlights or underscores its themes. You have to take care, however, that you don't use your odd-one-out's themes only in the service of the rest of the troupe's characters — that robs the character of agency and makes for a less fun game.

Clash of Wills

Sometimes, two supernatural powers clearly oppose one another. If the normal systems for the powers fail to resolve this, such as when two vampires attempt to Dominate the same person or a werewolf's heightened senses try to pierce a changeling's Contract of Smoke, use a Clash of Wills to decide the victor.'

Supernatural Tolerance

Throughout this section, you'll see references to "Supernatural Tolerance." This is a catchall term for the various Traits, analogous to Lair, that measure raw supernatural power:

Creature Type	Supernatural Tolerance
Vampire	Blood Potency
Werewolf	Primal Urge
Mage	Gnosis
Promethean	Azoth
Changeling	Wyrd
Sin-Eater	Psyche
Mummy	Sekhem
Demon	Primum

All characters using conflicting powers enter a contested action. The dice pool for the Clash of Wills varies slightly from creature type to creature type, but always includes the character's Supernatural Tolerance Trait. Characters whose supernatural powers are rated by dot level (e.g. vampiric Disciplines, mage Arcana, changeling Contracts) add their rating in the highest-rated power used in the activation pool. Characters whose powers are based on a secondary Trait (e.g. werewolves' Renown or mummies' Pillars) add the power's relevant secondary Trait.

Beasts, lacking both dot-ranked powers and secondary Traits driving their powers, roll Lair + their highest Resistance Attribute.

Ties reroll until one player has accrued more success than all others. The effect invoked by that player's character wins out and resolves as usual, while all others fail. Victory of one power in a clash does not mean the immediate cancellation of the others, save in cases where only one power can possibly endure (such as competing mental control).

Characters may spend Willpower to bolster the contested roll, but only if they are physically present and aware that powers are clashing. Certain powers, such as those with exceptionally long durations, are more enduring in a clash. Day-long (or night-long) effects add one die to the clash roll, weeklong effects add two, month-long three; effects that would last a year or longer add four.

Example: *A werewolf, Kyle, and a Beast, Anika, have come into conflict. Kyle is attempting to use Feet of Mist (the Gift of Cunning Evasion) to escape Anika. However, Anika has the Needs Must Atavism, which hones her senses to preternatural levels and allows her to track damn near anything, thus forcing the two characters enter a Clash of Wills. Kyle has three dots of Cunning*

Renown and a Primal Urge of four, so his player will roll seven dice. Anika has five dots of Lair, and her highest Resistance Attribute is her Composure of four dots, for a total of nine dice. Since Anika has expended Satiety to invoke the most powerful effect of her Atavism, which allows her to track a target indefinitely, her player adds four additional dice to her pool, for a total of thirteen dice. Neither character can spend Willpower on the roll because Kyle isn't on the scene, and Anika has no way of knowing Kyle has masked his trail with spirit magic. Both players roll; Kyle's player gets three successes, while Anika's rolls an impressive five. Anika's Predatory Awareness thus wins out over Kyle's Feet of Mist, and Anika can track Kyle normally. To all other characters, Kyle's trail remains imperceptible.

Second Edition

As of the publication of **Beast: The Primordial**, four of the **World of Darkness** game lines have been updated to the Second Edition rules used in **Beast**: **Vampire: The Requiem**, **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, **Mage: The Awakening** and **Promethean: The Created**. In addition, **Demon: The Descent** is written with the second edition rules in mind, and **Hunter: The Vigil** features an abbreviated rules update in the sourcebook **Mortal Remains**. This section provides quick and dirty guidelines for running the first edition **World of Darkness** games with Second Edition rules. Consider any rules presented here superseded by the rules in a full Second Edition core rulebook.

Character Creation and Advancement

Purchasing the fifth dot of an Attribute, Skill, or Merit does not cost two points at character creation. All characters should likewise have two short-term and one long-term Aspirations, as described on p. 77.

In the second edition rules, Virtue and Vice are freeform, rather than chosen from a list. Moreover, just as they replace Integrity with a unique Trait, most supernatural beings have alternate Traits for Virtue and Vice. It's the Storyteller's call whether to come up with their own custom Virtue and Vice analogues for mummies, Sin-Eaters and the like or stick with the basic Traits.

Most Merits can be used as-is, but if a particular Merit has been updated to Second Edition rules, you should use that version instead. You can find common Merits in Chapter Three, or in the **World of Darkness Second Edition Rules Update**, available for free from *http://rpg.drivethrustuff.com/product/114078/World-of-Darkness-GodMachine-Rules-Update*.

Merits from the **World of Darkness Rulebook, First Edition** that are *not* included in either of those sources should not be chosen, as they are obsolete or subsumed into other Merits.

Finally, any Merit that grants multiple attacks per turn in combat needs to be changed. Replace any reference to multiple attacks with the following:

As long as your character has her Defense available to her and is not Dodging, any character coming into arm's reach takes 1B damage. This damage continues once per turn as long as the enemy stays within range and occurs on the enemy's turn. If you spend a point of Willpower, this damage becomes 2B until your next turn.

Breaking Points and Integrity Analogues

In the first edition rules, losing Morality (or its equivalent Trait, such as Humanity, Harmony, or Clarity) was a two-step process: first a degeneration roll, followed by a second roll to see if the character suffered a "derangement." For some traits, Second Edition replaces this with a single breaking point roll (some traits, such as Humanity in **Vampire**, use a system more similar to the original). Use the "hierarchy of sins" from your First Edition rulebook, but replace the degeneration rules with the following:

When a character experiences a breaking point, the player rolls Resolve + Composure with a modifier based on the character's Integrity analog rating:

Integrity Analog	Modifier
8–10	+2
7–6	+1
5–4	0
3–2	–1
1	–2

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character's worldview has been damaged, perhaps beyond repair. The character suffers from traumatic stress. Lose a dot of Integrity analog and choose from the following Conditions (or create a new one with Storyteller approval): Broken, Fugue, or Madness. Also, take a Beat.

Failure: The character's worldview has been shaken and he probably questions his sense of self, his ability to relate to people, his own moral worth, or his sanity. Lose a dot of Integrity analog and choose one of the following Conditions (or create a new one with Storyteller approval): Guilty, Shaken, or Spooked.

Success: The character has come through the breaking point intact. He might feel guilty or upset about what happened, but he can cope. Choose one of the following Conditions (or create a new one with Storyteller approval): Guilty, Shaken, or Spooked.

Derangements vs Conditions

The Conditions imposed by breaking point rolls are ideally suited to Integrity analogs that represent some intrinsic sense of self. Some game lines feature Integrity analogues that represent a more metaphysical balance and include specialized derangements to inflict on characters. If that's the case, feel free to turn those derangements into Conditions and use them instead.

Exceptional Success: The character somehow manages not only to survive the breaking point, but to also find meaning in it, to reaffirm his own self-worth, or to pass through fire and become tempered by it. The character takes a Beat and regains a point of Willpower.

Action Types and New Systems

Powers and rules that use extended actions still work as-is, but remember that the dice pool of the extended action dictates the maximum number of dice rolls allowed before the action fails. A failure on any given extended action roll imposes a Condition. See p. 158 for the full extended action rules.

Many supernatural powers influence their victims' minds, making them more pliable or more inclined to trust. Such powers can interact with the Social maneuvering rules (p. 161); as a rule of thumb, a successful use of a mind- or mood-altering power can either improve the target's reaction level by one step *or* remove one Door, whichever seems most fitting. Powers that make the victim attracted or receptive to their user improve reaction level, while those that make the victim more suggestible or reduce inhibitions typically remove Doors.

Combat

Combat follows the rules described in Chapter Four. Powers or equipment that grant armor or damage bonuses require a small tweak: reduce attack modifiers from First Edition sources by one and treat the new value as a weapon rating. Remember that all weapons inflict lethal damage in second edition combat. Ballistic armor ratings should likewise be reduced by one, but in compensation they reduce firearms damage from lethal to bashing.

Beasts in the World of Darkness

Beast: The Primordial is a first for the **World of Darkness**, in that it's specifically designed for crossover play. All of the game lines are designed with crossover *compatibility* in mind, but with its simplicity of systems, Kinship mechanics, and thematic links with the other game lines, **Beast** actively encourages it. Here, then, is advice on how to bring the Children of the Dark Mother out of their own private shadows and into the larger **World of Darkness**.

In any crossover game, a Beast's primary role should be to subvert, challenge, and otherwise change the narrative. That's not to say that Beasts should be hogging the spotlight or dragging the story off the rails to follow their own whims; rather, just as a straight **Beast** chronicle challenges the classic "hero slays the monster" narrative, the introduction of the Children into other chronicles should look at the themes and expectations of, for example, "a vampire story" and cast new light on them. Just as the best monsters of fable tell us something about ourselves, the best crossovers tell us something about our other monsters.

Vampire: The Requiem

With its themes of hunger, monstrosity, and the slow descent from human into something else, **Vampire** is perhaps the most natural fit for a crossover game with **Beast**. Kindred and Children behold a twisted mirror of themselves in each other. But where vampires struggle to hold onto their Humanity in the face of their unquenchable thirst, Beasts can only hope to embrace their place in the Primordial Dream.

Bring Beasts into your **Vampire** chronicle when you want to show what it looks like when a monster gives into its nature and truly recognizes its place in the world. Vampires sometimes speak of a semi-mythical state called Golconda, in which the vampire achieves transcendent balance between his human soul and his monstrous nature. A vampire seeking Golconda might see a Beast as a potential guru, whether the Beast is interested in serving as a bodhisattva or not. Whether the Children actually know anything about Golconda or how a vampire might achieve it is entirely up to the Storyteller, but the guidance of a Beast (especially one on the path to the Incarnate Inheritance) might be one step along the journey.

On the other hand, Beasts can serve as a cautionary tale: a monster at peace with itself is still a monster. Kindred struggling to keep their Humanity intact see in the Children an image of what they stand to become, and what they stand to lose.

A Beast might also serve as a way to draw a **Vampire** chronicle into the larger mysteries of the World of Darkness. Kindred society is perhaps the most closely tied to the physical, mundane world and the least connected to the esoteric metaphysics of game lines like **Mage** or **Werewolf**. The Children of the Dark Mother present an enticing mystery: close enough to the Kindred that they can move in similar circles, but strange enough to suggest a wider world. The Circle of the Crone and the Lancea et Sanctum, in particular, find Beasts intriguing: The Circle for their connection to the Dark Mother, in whom many see a reflection of the Crone, and the Sanctified for their embodiment of the fear of mankind.

As antagonists, Beasts are less likely to cross the path of the All-Night Society as rival predators than as unholy terrors who upset the Kindred applecart without even realizing it. Hungers are the primary motivator here: in particular, the Hunger for the Hoard and the Hunger for Power can drive a Beast into conflict with Kindred over mortal power bases and assets. A Beast as an antagonist comes in at right angles to Kindred thinking, pursuing her Hunger not to secure her position against rivals or to guarantee her own survival, but as an end unto itself. That sort of thinking can be difficult for the stagnant, paranoid mind of an elder vampire to understand, even if they do understand Hunger in other forms.

One possible pitfall of bringing Beasts into a **Vampire** chronicle is portraying the Children as "über-vampires." They share many thematic elements while simultaneously having few of the Kindred's weaknesses, which can lead to a feeling that Beasts are simply better. A certain sense of inferiority is good when the Beast is in an antagonistic role, but if the Beast is meant to be an ambiguous figure, or especially a player character, that attitude can kill a chronicle. Be aware of this, and be prepared

to introduce plotlines that challenge the Beast where she is weak just as often as you play to the weaknesses of her vampire kin.

Werewolf: The Forsaken

Creatures born of instinct, children of two worlds driven by an instinctual need to hunt, werewolves understand the Bestial mindset all too well. At the same time, they're largely ill-equipped to understand Beasts themselves: perhaps driven by the concept of Harmony, the Uratha tend to see the world in terms of the dichotomy between "flesh" and "spirit." While Beasts have a spiritual component to their existence, it's not the same spirituality as the Shadow. A werewolf pack first encountering a Beast might well mistake her for one of the Claimed — a human overwhelmed and transformed by a spirit from the Shadow — and react accordingly. It's an easy mistake to make, especially if the Beast is suffering from Hero-imposed weaknesses, which are easy to mistake for spirit bans or banes at first.

Family in the form of the pack is a strong theme running through **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, and one it shares with **Beast**. In an Uratha pack, a Beast finds the closest expression of Kinship outside her own kind. While a brood lacks the purity of purpose of the family she knows, a lone Uratha might find solace there. Individual characters in a crossover chronicle can build powerful stories about surrogate families and finding a place of acceptance.

Though they aren't connected to the Shadow in the same way werewolves are, Beasts cannot help but warp the world on the other side of the Gauntlet by their mere presence. In sating their Hungers, Beasts spawn innumerable spirits: things of greed and destruction, dominance and submission, and fear. Always fear. Just by existing, Beasts create ripples in the Shadow; as their Horrors run wild through the Primordial Dream, the nightmares they leave in their wake seem to follow no vector the Uratha understand. A pack's first encounter with a Beast is likely to be fraught with misunderstanding and violence; just as a Beast's Lair resembles some strange incursion from the Shadow, a pack's assault is easy to mistake for the arrival of a band of Heroes — at least until the fur and the claws come out.

Separated by the Gauntlet, Beasts and spirits have little direct interaction, but no discussion of a **Werewolf** crossover would be complete without addressing the denizens of the Shadow. Spirits hunger much as Beasts do, and they do find their way across the Gauntlet from time to time. It's rare, but not unheard of, for a Beast to take a spirit into her brood via Kinship bonds. The resulting relationship is less akin to the one between a pack and its totem than one between symbiotic species: the Beast feeds her Hungers, generating Essence that feeds the spirit, who uses its Numina and Influences to help the Beast feed her Hungers.

Forming a Kinship bond with a spirit or an Uratha sometimes creates a portal within the Beast's Lair that opens into the Shadow, though this is rare and usually happens only with spirits of high Rank or werewolves of high Primal Urge and low Harmony. The Shadow isn't as psychoactive as the Hedge (see below), but nevertheless it responds to the presence of the Children of the Dark Mother. While in the Shadow, Beasts have the Resonant Condition, relevant to both their Hunger and the Nightmare their Family represents. Spirits instinctively sense this potential source of Essence as described in **Werewolf: The Forsaken Second Edition**. Those with a similar nature are likely to seek the Beast out. Spirits *can* gorge on the Essence a Beast generates without harming her, but most spirits are of an "eat first and ask questions later" mindset. Assuming the spirit in question isn't trying to eat her, a Beast can resist attempts to feed on the Essence she creates with a Clash of Wills (see p. 222).

Mage: The Awakening

With its theme of magical detectives obsessively chasing the Mysteries of the World of Darkness, **Mage: The Awakening** can pose difficulties in pitching a crossover with other games. It's in mages' natures to seek answers to questions the other supernatural creatures wouldn't think of asking, and if the troupe isn't careful **Mage** can end up dominating the crossover by weight of exposition, reducing the other games until they fit into its large, complicated cosmology. Within the World of Darkness as a setting, other supernatural creatures' reactions to mages are overshadowed by their prying nature, too — mages are annoyances at best and existential terrors at worst.

From a Beast's perspective, mages are the one child in a family who went to college; she comes to family gatherings with her mind on experiences she can't share and vocabulary her kin can't understand. Her family feels threatened, and she feels alienated by their reaction. A Beast who takes the time to explore his Kinship with the Awakened finds they have more in common than they think — a shared fascination with primal symbolism, the human soul, and a burning ever-present hunger. A mage's addiction to Mystery is just as potent as a Beast's own Hunger, and both Beast and mage grow more powerful by experiencing the strange and uncanny — the Beast incorporating it into his Lair and the mage adding it to the symbolic knowledge making up her Gnosis.

Alone out of the beings Beasts claim kinship with, mages have a natural ability to enter the Primordial Dream. To mages, the land of Lairs is a rarely-explored deep region of the Temenos, reached by arriving at the Astral Realm of language and then journeying into the subconscious, animal instincts of humanity. Once a mage in astral form finds her way into a Lair, she can follow the Burrows like any other connection between Astral Realms.

Mages have an innate sense for the supernatural, and can be attracted to any stage in a Beast's activities from Devouring (which mages might even mistake for a Thyrsus Awakening at first) to Inheritance, which puts many mages in mind of Ascension. Despite the name "Beast" and the symbolism of great monsters being shared by the Supernal entities linked to the Thyrsus Path, iconic symbol-creatures of Life and Spirit, it's Mastigos mages who have the closest affinity for the Begotten. Mastigos Awaken to a nightmarish "Pandemonium," in which the inner fears and limitations of the soul are reflected, and they often have an interest in primal terrors. They're also the mages most often found exploring the Astral and getting caught up in Mysteries of the mind (such as the wave of nightmares caused by a rampaging soul) so are the most likely to come looking for a Beast. However, because of their affinity with fear, Mastigos mages are often resistant to a Beast's Nightmares.

Peaceful contact between Beast and mage often hinges on how far the Beast goes in sating its Hunger, and how the mage takes the story of the Dark Mother and an explanation of the Lair and soul. Friendly Mages use baffling terms like "Pandemonic Emanation Realm," tell the Children stories of the great primal "Aeons" in the far reaches of Astral Space — some of whom match certain descriptions of the Dark Mother — and make theories about the Dragon-like beings who supposedly helped the first mages to Awaken. Mastigos and Thyrsus can even use the presence of a Beast with a kinship bond as a symbol or "Yantra" in their spells. Hostile mages decide that Beasts are a reflection of the World's Fallen state, or claim that the Dark Mother is the Raptor, the Supernal personification or "Exarch" of humanity's fear of nature. They become terrible enemies, able to slip into the Lair and wreak havoc with their magic, like Heroes without the self-delusion or reliance on the Beast's own power. Worst of all are mages who steal the souls of victims for use in experiments or fuel for strange powers; a Beast's soul is a difficult but prestigious prize for so-called "Reapers." Due to Beast's connection to their Lair mages can't steal the soul of a Begotten just by casting a spell in the physical world. It requires as much ability with the Arcana as taking the soul of a mage, and can only be cast inside the Lair. Despite the risks, some Reapers who learn the existence of Beasts go on twisted safaris into the Primordial Pathways, convinced that they can reduce the Children of the Dark Mother to big game.

Promethean: The Created

If kinship describes a family relationship between monsters, then Prometheans are adopted children of the Dark Mother rather than sharing her direct bloodline. Originally the result of obsessive and inspired human attempts to create life, now most of the Created create their own "offspring" in turn, as part of the Pilgrimage these half-made monsters make, learning about humanity and refining their alchemical souls until at last they become fully human. From Beasts' perspective, Prometheans are struggling to join the herd that Beasts themselves left when they realized their true nature.

In a crossover game, **Promethean: The Created** showcases a side to Family that Beasts don't always consider — what "family" means to an orphan, and how an artificial being can hope to fit into the great family of humanity. Even the two beings' names for themselves, "Begotten" and "Created," show

the contrast between the two. Prometheans are constantly exploring and refining their lives, learning from their experiences in a similar thematic fashion to Beasts expanding their Lairs, and form close bonds with fellow Created as part of that. One step on the Pilgrimage no Promethean can avoid is to Create and loose another of their kind on the world. Beasts and Prometheans can learn a lot from one another about the nature and value of kinship; what it means to have offspring and how a character's companions reflect on her. Over the course of the Pilgrimage, most Prometheans follow several "Refinements," or approaches to becoming human. One of these, the Refinement of Silver, studies supernatural beings and how they differ from humanity in order to understand humanity itself, making them perfect counterparts to Beasts exploring their own Kinship to the Created. In the Primordial Dream, the foundation of human nightmares, Prometheans can learn what makes their aspirational species afraid and examine how those fears drive them.

The curse of the Created, however, is in humanity's reaction to them. Prometheans who stay in one place for too long and use their alchemical powers too much engender "Disquiet," which to Beasts all-too-closely resembles the creation of Heroes. Humans suffering from Disquiet treat the Promethean behind it with disgust or even attack him, driving him out of their communities. Just because Beasts hold themselves as predators of humanity, outside of it and preying upon it, doesn't mean they don't take pity on Prometheans for desperately wanting in and being rejected for their otherness. Their own experiences with Heroes make many Beasts who develop Kinship with Prometheans act aggressively protective toward their new friends, helped by the fact that the Begotten are immune to Disquiet's effects. For Beasts willing to exploit the Created, the disgust humans feel for Prometheans when under the influence of Disquiet can make an excellent source of inspiration for nightmares.

The shared constant threat of being seen as a monster, however, can also cause Prometheans and Beasts to turn on one another. In an antagonistic crossover, Prometheans might take Beasts' hunting as victimizing the people the Prometheans wish to become. Beasts in turn might react poorly to an especially monstrous Promethean, even without Disquiet amplifying the reaction, and regard them as cuckoos trying to force their way into the Dark Mother's nest. These Beasts make good antagonists for a **Promethean** chronicle, predators "gatekeeping" to prevent unwanted strays joining their prey.

The rare Prometheans called Centimani, or "Hundred Handed," are much more clearly monsters. Rejecting the Pilgrimage, these Created are focused on becoming the "best" or most evolved monsters they can be, spawning and controlling the misshapen "Pandoran" creatures that arise from failed attempts by humanity-seeking Prometheans to create more of their own kind. A Centimanus' rejection of humanity and attempt to embrace their inhuman nature finds resonance with Beasts' acknowledgment of their Horrors and the realization that deep down, they were never human.

Changeling: The Lost

Changelings are all too familiar with monster stories. Having spent their Durance in a realm fueled entirely by narrative dream-logic, they know the roles as surely as a thirty-year veteran of the stage knows Hamlet. In Arcadia, the hero always slays the monster. If the monster wins, well, obviously that was never the hero in the first place. They're not entirely sure how to react when a Beast refuses to follow the script.

From the Beasts' perspective, changelings are snatches of the oldest stories, sometimes rearranged or in a different key, but essentially unchanging. In every Ogre is the theme of the Anakim, in every Darkling a refrain of the Eshmaki. This a shallow, surface-level interpretation, of course, and one that Beasts are (or should be) wary of relying on. Yes, the Anakim and the Ogre share certain surface-level similarities, but the similarities end when any one *particular* Ogre is compared to a given Giant. Seeming and Family are what one makes of them, and this is a lesson that both Beasts and changelings can share.

The Gentry, for their part, see Beasts as curiosities: they're born of stories and their lives follow familiar mythic patterns, but they exist outside the Arcadian precepts of fate and time that bind the True Fae's existence. Theirs is a wary respect, the sort you might extend to a strange animal that might take your hand off at any moment. Some of the oldest parts of the Primordial Dream allegedly hide secret paths that lead to the courts of the Kindly Ones, and Fae hunters sometimes invite the Children of the Dark Mother to join them on their wild hunts.

In their rise to power and eventual Inheritance, Beasts highlight a common fear among changelings: that of becoming the very thing they hate and fear. Unlike a vampire's Golconda or a mage's Ascension, most changelings look on the prospect of apotheosis — of harnessing their Wyrd to become essentially True Fae themselves — as a fate worse than death. The fact that Beasts seem sanguine about becoming creatures of nightmarish predation makes them creatures to be feared. On the other hand, Beasts are some of the few beings the Gentry interact with on something like equal terms, and it's better to have a dragon inside the tent pissing out than outside pissing in. Freeholds in or near the territory of known, powerful Beasts sometimes propitiate the Beast with offerings to satisfy her Hunger, in the hopes that she will intercede on their behalf when the Gentry come calling.

Being creatures of the Primordial Dream, Beasts can warp the psychoactive landscape of the Hedge by their very presence, much as the Gentry or high-Wyrd changelings can. The Thorns around the Beast take on aspects reminiscent of her Family and Hunger: Around the Anakim distance and perspective are magnified and warped, as though in a funhouse mirror — others find themselves feeling like ants in a vast lawn, while the Anakim's silhouette is constantly visible as a vast, towering shadow. Around the Makara, the Hedge becomes a sucking mire, replete with hidden depths and sinkholes that can swallow the unwary traveler whole. Use the rules found in **Changeling: The Lost**, substituting the Beast's Lair for a

changeling's Wyrd where appropriate. High-Lair Beasts may also find their Atavisms leaking through into physical reality in the Hedge, even without Satiety expenditure. This is a purely cosmetic effect that doesn't impact the nature of her powers; the Horror calls and the dream answers.

Hunter: The Vigil

"If it bleeds, we can kill it," describes the typical hunter's view of Beasts. It's a simplistic, reductive attitude, one designed to insulate them from the idea that they might be killing a thinking, feeling being. In itself, that's not terribly unusual: any hunter who's gone after a vampire or a witch has faced the conundrum. The difference is that Beasts know the script: their arguments are less, "perhaps it is *you* who is truly the monster," than "what gives you the right to kill monsters?" For hunters used to self-justification and equivocation from their prey, that sort of reversal can prompt some soul-searching.

If confronting a Beast brings a hunter a moment of doubt, meeting a Hero is like looking into a mirror and realizing you don't much care for the person gazing out at you. While many hunters took up the Vigil in response to witnessing the depredations of some monster, and not a few become obsessed with their crusade, Heroes are something else. Even the most obsessive hunter is capable of (if not likely to) stepping back and examining her choices, of asking questions like "am I any better than the things I hunt?" and "at what point does victory come with too high a price?" Heroes aren't. Hunters also tend to become more extreme as they pursue the Vigil, slowly altering their moral code to allow them the latitude they need to kill monsters. Heroes (at least the ones that hunt and kill Beasts) *start* at this level of extremity.

It's not at all uncommon for hunters to thus mistake the Hero for some sort of slasher, albeit one who exclusively target the living embodiments of primordial nightmares. Hunters who have seen too many TV series about antiheroes and righteous serial killers sometimes see Heroes as potential allies, or at least useful tools. After all, Heroes possess abilities most hunters only dream of: rapid healing, an instinctive ability to track the enemy, and remarkable gifts of power and persuasion; why not steer them toward other prey? Life, however, is not a premium-cable drama, and such alliances invariably end in one of two ways: either the hunters turn on the Hero, aghast at her methods, or the entire cell becomes cancerous (a term many hunters use to describe a group of hunters that's become no better than the things it hunts) and has to be put down.

Hunters rarely make the jump from hunter to Hero, even when their Vigil crosses the path of a Beast. Few enough hunters are able to hypothesize why that is, but those who have studied the matter have some theories. The most prevalent, albeit unpleasant, is that hunters are genetically predisposed to ensure the long-term survival of the species: essentially, this theory (championed by Null Mysteriis) posits that certain people risk their own lives to protect others to varying degrees. Hunters and Heroes, then, aren't so much two sides of the same coin as two points on a spectrum. Hunters don't become Heroes because they've already had this response triggered. Others say it's absolutely possible, but only to hunters whose Integrity has been long eroded by the Vigil. The truth of the matter is that being a Hero, like being a Beast, requires an intrinsic connection to the Primordial Dream, but neither hunters nor Heroes usually figure that out. Either interpretation makes Heroes an ideal choice for an antagonist that highlights the razor edge that hunters often walk.

Of course, it's not all homicidal obsessions and shotguns in the dark. While it doesn't happen often, hunters do sometimes find common cause with the Dark Mother's Children. Whether it's out of recognition of a greater threat or for some other reason, sometimes the twain *do* meet. But where vampires and witches and their ilk share a common descent from the Dark Mother, hunters are by and large pure human. Even hunters with surgical augmentation, such as the Cheiron Group's Thaumatechnology, or induced psychic phenomena, like VASCU's telepathic agents, aren't inherently monstrous enough to count as anything but human. That largely bars them from forming Kinship bonds and fully joining a Brood — at least without drastic actions. Beasts tell stories of dream-quests and sacred hunts deep into the Primordial Dream that awaken just enough of a human's Bestial aspect to become Kin to Beasts. Hunters with Endowments stemming from their bloodline, like the Lucifuge, can form Kinship bonds without the ordeal — and more disturbingly, so can slashers, even if they were born as bog-standard normal humans.

Geist: The Sin-Eaters

When you get right down to it, at the root of all humanity's primal fears is one constant: death. The Dark Mother, then, can be seen as a primeval psychopomp figure — less a guide to the Underworld and more the terrifying apparition that snatches loved ones away without reason or warning. The Bound already mythologize the iconography of death, in the form of Horsemen, Deathlords, and the gods who populate their krewe mythos. In their typically syncretic way, the Bound find it easy to incorporate the Dark Mother into their cosmology. For people who have passed beyond the veil of death and returned, the fear of death loses its teeth.

Geist: The Sin-Eaters is about second chances, actions and consequences, and transitions. The Bound make excellent antagonists for a **Beast** chronicle when you want to showcase the Beast's deeds catching up to her, but throwing another Hero from her past at her doesn't quite fit. The Bound are intercessors for the dead. Even when a Beast's Hungers aren't directly fatal to humanity, they tend to leave collateral damage behind. A Sin-Eater showing up with a bevy of ghosts looking for payback makes for a formidable enemy.

Beasts are used to being objects of fear. Even when their Horrors are sated and their Nightmares remain furled, the Children are an ominous presence, a subconscious warning that "death is here." To meet someone for whom death no

longer holds terror can be variously intriguing, invigorating, or infuriating. The Bound often see their second chance at life as an opportunity to partake of the pleasures of the living world while they can. It's not a Hunger, necessarily, more an attitude of *carpe diem* borne of the knowledge of what lies beyond the veil, but that urge to indulge is something the Children can relate to.

While they have very different origins, the Bound and the Children find common ground in the unique dual nature of their souls. Both must struggle to reconcile their living, human identity with the monstrous Other, be it powerful ghost or primal Horror. In the Beast, a Sin-Eater sees the chance of reconciliation and union with her geist, a state beyond Synergy wherein life and death are in perfect balance. In the Bound, the Beast sees the representation of a kindred spirit: not an archetype of fear, but an archetype of death. And fear and death, after all, are two ticks of the same clock.

When one of the Bound forms a Kinship bond with a Child of the Dark Mother, her little corner of the Beast's Lair takes on an aspect of death reflecting her geist. Death is normally not present in the Primordial Dream. The *fear* of it is, and the grief that comes after, but true to the old clichés, the moment of death in the Dream is the moment you wake up, sweat-soaked and gasping. The presence of one of the Bound brings a new concept into the Lair, one that interacts strangely with astral space. Sometimes it creates an Avernian Gate, a doorway to the Underworld direct from the Dream. Sometimes that doorway allows shades from the deep, forgotten realms of the Great Below to crawl up into the Primordial Dream, where they infuse themselves with the essence of human nightmares.

Mummy: The Curse

The Arisen mummies of the World of Darkness hold themselves aloof from its other supernatural residents, resting in a death state until called back to life by their mortal servants, a threat to their person or property, or an alignment of the stars. Mummies believe themselves inherently superior to other beings, regard magical artifacts as their birthright (taking them from others by force if necessary) and to Beasts' eyes maintain a willful ignorance about the Dark Mothers' other Children. The Arisen simply don't care about other beings, only the all-powerful sense of purpose they feel whenever they return to life. Their own identities are lost beneath millennia of amnesia and servitude.

Beasts understand compulsions imposed on a human mind by external powers all too well. Those who feel the Hunger of Hoarding feel especial kinship to the Arisen when the mummies are on one of their frequent hunts for magical artifacts, which they feed to their masters in an unseen netherworld called Duat. Beasts who get to know unusually humane Arisen, forging kinship with the Deathless, find that they have more in common than that first obvious link. The Arisen are preoccupied by the human soul with its many parts and diverse properties, manifest animal-headed forms when their powers flare causing terror in mortal onlookers, and serve secretive masters called the Shan'iatu who are said to have had magical powers and the ability to take in the forms of great beasts.

The most potent kinship between the Arisen and Begotten, however, is in their similar but opposed effects on the human psyche. When Arisen first return from death, the energies within their desiccated bodies "leak" in a form mummies call Sybaris. While Sybaris puts many Beasts in mind of their own souls rampaging through the Primordial Dream, it has an unusual result when combined with a Beast soul's influence. Sybaris renders human beings under its shadow listless and despairing, ignoring the short-term and clinging to anything that might last beyond their lifetime. Beast Horrors find it difficult to hunt in a Sybaris-wracked population, as their victims simply surrender rather than feel terror.

From the Arisen point of view, Beasts are potential allies as long as the mummy can get past some initial misgivings. The artifacts mummies hoard and pay in tribute to their masters often have properties that warp the emotions of mortals; just as Sybaris prevents Beast Horrors from hunting, the fear spread by the Begotten can have unintentionally disastrous effects on what Arisen call "the lifeweb" of geomantically aligned emotional influences. Many Beasts put the Arisen in mind of certain enemies, as well — the chimerical animal-forms of Amhkata, the all-consuming Shuankhsen, and shadowed legends of Ammut the Devourer, a Beast-like monster from the religion of the Arisen's living days. Despite that, as long as a Beast poses no threat to their purpose, Arisen are happier dealing with the Begotten than many other supernatural beings. The Children of the Dark Mother typically have no use for the mummies' toys and hunger for more primal sustenance.

Demon: The Descent

The Unchained stand as a proud nail in the face of the Children of the Dark Mother. Beasts are fond of claiming kinship with all the things that lurk in the shadows of the World of Darkness, but no Mother ever birthed such things of metal and bone. Even the concept of the God-Machine — cold, alien, universal — sits at odds with the raw, base fear and hunger that is the core of the Dark Mother. Beasts don't *hate* the God-Machine, per se (or rather, they are no more likely to hate a vast, uncaring machine intelligence that grinds humanity into a bloody paste than anyone else), but they don't understand it or its servants. Depending on the Beast, their reaction to the God-Machine's presence might be to investigate it, try to destroy it, or just leave it the hell alone. Beasts have enough problems, after all.

Use **Demon: The Descent** in your **Beast** chronicles when you want to shake up the status quo and remind the Children that they don't have all the answers, or throw something at them that can hit them on their home turf. The God-Machine is *everywhere*, after all, and that means its gears occasionally invade the Primordial Dream, infesting humanity's nightmares with images of gears and wheels and protocols that would

make Kafka take pause. Demons themselves can serve as cautious allies or sources of information, but remember that demons rarely do anything that isn't at least partially in their own interests.

From the demons' perspective, Beasts are a potentially invaluable resource. With no connection to the God-Machine and no motive to help it, they're slightly more trustworthy than other demons (potential turncoats, all of them), humans (too easily bribed, coerced, or brainwashed), and the like. Still, the two beings are so fundamentally at odds that most alliances will never be more than tenuous.

Sibling Rivalries

Beasts are family, but family fights. Sometimes the fights are simple squabbles over feeding rights and territory, sometimes they erupt into all-out war as Beasts take sides in the affairs of other supernatural creatures or try to establish dominance over a region. The reasons for the initial fight can get lost in a flurry of blood and teeth, though, as the rivalry itself becomes the reason to fight. In some areas, Beasts divide themselves into factions whose ideologies have long since ceased to be relevant. They fight because they also have, and the Primordial Dream in the area reflects it.

Why Do Beasts Fight?

Individual Beasts might feud for any number of reasons. Some examples:

- **Conflict of Hungers:** A Ravager burns down a building containing an object a Collector was hoping to steal. A Predator injures a corrupt politician before he can stumble into the Nemesis' trap. A Tyrant chases down her target, only to find that another Beast's lesson has rendered him too fragile to endure her predations.

  Conflict of Hunger tends to be an easy misunderstanding to fix; just the kind of thing that happens when Beasts hunt in the same areas. If it happens more than once, however, it starts to look less like coincidence and more like deliberate action, and then it's not uncommon for one Beast to short-circuit another's hunts just to get back at him. Feuds escalate, Beasts get their broods involved, and in short order they're enemies.

- **Taking Up Another's Cause:** Most supernatural beings divide themselves up along ideological lines. The Forsaken battle the Pure. The Pentacle and the Diamond are in constant conflict. The various vampiric covenants of the Kindred don't always openly fight, but it depends on the region, and some level of conflict is common. Beasts don't always understand the nuances of these conflicts, and all sides can present their cases persuasively. One brood of Beasts might fall in with a motely of changeling privateers or loyalists, and believe they are ultimately helping the situation by getting changelings back to their Gentry masters. Another brood, then, meets with the local Courts and learns the truth, but that doesn't necessarily help them convince their siblings that they're on the wrongs side.

  Beasts pride themselves in being a fundamental part of the supernatural world, kith and kin to most, if not all, of the strange beings that lurk in the night. Even if that's true, though, that familial connection doesn't grant any special insight into the relative ideologies of these beings. And Beasts, like people, tend to lend more credence to whatever they learn first, even if later shown evidence that it's wrong.

- **The Hive:** The Chambers in a given region share a link, based on the local Apex, that forms them into the hive. Influence over the hive allows a Beast's Horror more mobility and freedom to hunt, and minimizes the risk of attracting Heroes due to repeated feeding in the same area. Of course, not everyone can be the Apex, and what one Apex does to the hive isn't optimal for every Beast. Beasts seeking to claim the Incarnate Inheritance benefit from shaping the local hive to be more in line with their Legends, and such Beasts tend to become tunnel-vision and bloody-minded about their plans. At the same time, they are also always powerful, and power attracts followers. Would-be Incarnates often have a brood (or several) answering to them, and two such beings in the same region can result in all-out war.

Cry Havoc

Conflict between Beasts sometimes flares up into a full-blown war, building up much like any human war does. Two people have an issue, and one brings in a friend. Not wanting to be outdone (or rolled over), the other participant brings two friends. The first man, seeing himself at a disadvantage, brings two *more* friends. As mentioned above, Beasts may come into conflict for any number of reasons. If each of these characters holds membership in a brood, then that draws each brood into it. Any allies each brood has are later pulled into the conflict, and thus it spreads like wildfire. Unlike smaller feuds or brawls, wars have wider-reaching effects in both the physical world and the Primordial Dream.

Monsters at War

When Beasts go to war with one another, authorities almost inevitably notice. They may not notice on any sort of wide-reaching scale, though. But certainly at least some law enforcement — be it a single cop or an attentive FBI office — will take note and perhaps act. They rarely know what they're up against, of course, but that doesn't mean that their involvement isn't dangerous. Increased police scrutiny makes feeding difficult, and brings attention from hunters and, probably, Heroes. This, in turn, makes the other supernatural beings in the area nervous and puts them under scrutiny.

Similarly, the Primordial Dream reacts to the war. It roils and shudders, spreading nightmares like an infection to nearby sleepers. Once the war starts, humans within a few blocks of the broods' homes start to suffer nightmares. If Beasts die, their Lairs vanish, and the sudden reverberation through the Primordial Dream makes the effect worse. In urban areas, the nightmares spread at a rate of a few blocks or a neighborhood at each benchmark. In rural areas, this spreads to a few miles.

Worse still, the participating Children take an even more direct hand in creating their own enemies. As the Primordial Dream shakes and trembles, the Beasts' Horrors get restless. Satiety loss become more frequent as stress means the Horrors burn more fuel (Beasts lose Satiety as though their Lair ratings were two higher). Their invasion of humanity's dreams becomes both more frequent and more intense. Where before a person might dream of being stranded in the water, miles from shore, now that water is roiling and nearly black. Twenty-foot high waves threaten to drown him every minute, and the wind is nearly strong enough to pull him bodily from the water. The swimming Beast beneath him is larger and yet harder to see, or he beats furiously at the bars of his cage as his hulking captor promises him a slow death in the cookpot.

For some reason that the Children don't fully understand, these dreams almost always give the dreamer an "out." A weapon of some sort finds its way to the dreamer, as if it *wants* him to use it. For the stranded swimmer, a piece of flotsam big enough to use as an impromptu raft has a rusty harpoon connected to it, tangled in rope. It sits easily in the hand and is well-balanced for throwing. When the dreamer grasps it, he gains a clarity of purpose, as though he knows he can kill or at least drive off the hunting Beast. The captive finds a bone in the corner of his cage, long enough to act as a knife or even a small sword. When the hungry giant attempts to cook his meal, he ends up stabbed in his single eye instead.

Some Beasts theorize that the Primordial Dream reflects their own conflict. Instead of tilting things to create victims to terrorize, it instead more often inspires them to fight back. Most, though, are less concerned with the reasons why, and pragmatically are more concerned with the fact that the constant turmoil in the Primordial Dream attracts Heroes.

Mechanically, if two or more broods of Beasts go to war (as defined by two or more altercations in the material world or the Primordial Dream within a month), the Lair ratings for all Beasts involved are considered two higher for purposes of determining inflicting nightmares only (p. 99). Once a week goes by with no conflict between the broods, or if the broods merge into one large brood with a shared Lair, this effect ends.

Sample Antagonists

Below are two Beasts suitable for use as antagonists in your chronicles. It's not unknown for feuding Beasts to set aside their conflicts against an external threat. Family first, after all.

Adrian King

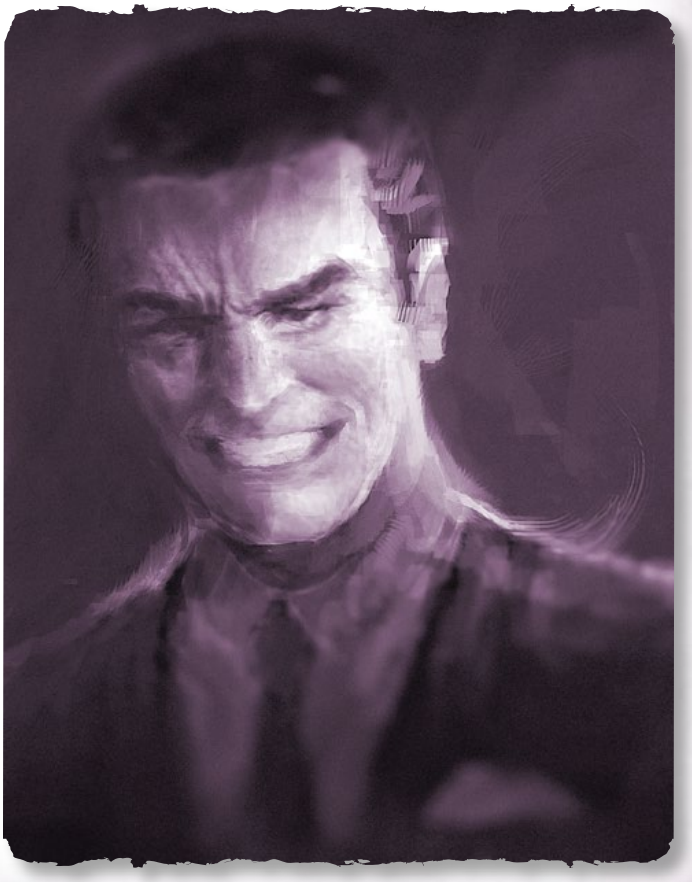
Please, stop your whining. Your company was dead in the water anyway. I did you a favor.

Background: For some, family is the most important thing in their lives. They'll go above and beyond for a family member, when they wouldn't even for a close friend. For others, family doesn't mean shit.

Adrian was an accident. He knows this because his parents often reminded him. Neither parent raised a hand to him. Instead, the scars left were emotional. His lack of importance was drilled into him with each backhanded insult, each noncommittal shrug of the shoulders. To his parents, he was a burden, holding them back from whatever they wanted to accomplish.

Others would have given in to depression, crime, or drugs. Not Adrian. Every insult only increased his drive to succeed, to lord it over his parents when he finally made it. At first, he didn't have a name for what he felt. And later, when he identified it as a need for dominance — not just over his parents, but over *everyone* — he no longer cared.

His Devouring drove home the point that for every predator, a stronger one sees it as prey. He swam, alone, beneath the surface in a body of water that seemed to have no discernable bottom. Sunlight barely reached where he was, providing him with just enough light to see. He kicked and



swam, but never seemed to get any closer to the surface. His lungs burned and he was sure he would drown.

The first bump took him by surprise, as he'd been fighting for the surface. Whatever bumped him was huge from the feel of it, but when Adrian turned to look, he saw nothing but the dark, murky water. After the second bump, he panicked, kicking with all his might for the surface.

Adrian still remembers the bite — the grating of gigantic teeth on his bones, the agony of shredded muscle, the cloud of blood. He screamed then, and the water filled his lungs, briny and suffocating. Even then he wouldn't give up, striking out, poking and slapping. His hands and feet only found more teeth set in a massive maw, ripping the flesh from the bone.

He should have passed out and died, but the water, and through it the monster, entered him and gave him new strength. The depths were no longer frightening and unknown.

The briny deep was home.

Description: Adrian doesn't just walk. He glides. He moves among his lesser peers like the shark he is. Every movement (and he rarely sits still for long) makes the little fish around him know exactly who's in charge. He's always dressed impeccably, usually preferring custom-tailored Italian suits. When he's not dressed for work, he's in the water. His estate boasts three different saltwater pools, each one interconnected to the others with tasteful landscaping.

Adrian keeps his salt-and-pepper hair cropped close. Gray eyes hold others in their piercing stare. He's built well, slightly more bulky than a swimmer, with a strong jaw. Those who get close to Adrian swear he smells faintly of the ocean. His voice is a smooth baritone.

Storytelling Hints: Adrian is a shark, both figuratively and literally. The epitome of the ruthless businessman, he asks for nothing. Whatever he can take simply becomes his. It's not the companies, or the private jets, or the expensive cars that he craves, though. It's the power those things give him. Others might assume that the globetrotting, cosmopolitan life that Adrian leads provides opportunities for complex and intricate adventures and their associated problems. If it weren't for his straightforward and cold manner that would probably be true. Instead, Adrian possesses very simple and direct desires.

He likes things neat and orderly and surrounds himself with people who are cold and efficient, just like him. Adrian's staff is comprised of the up-and-coming power elite, a collection of sharp minds he headhunted himself, with the help of his personal assistant, Faina Zhdanova. Like him, Faina is direct, cutting through the chaff and getting to the heart of the matter.

As an antagonist, Adrian makes a good Apex. His Currents Lair Trait becomes the Hive Trait, and he swims through the hive at night, searching for something he doesn't yet control.

Legend: Relentless
Life: Ordered
Family: Makara
Hunger: Power

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 6, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Investigation 1, Occult 1, Politics (Corporate) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics (Swimming) 4, Brawl (Bites) 3, Firearms 1

Social Skills: Intimidation (Political Threat) 4, Persuasion 3, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 4

Merits: Area of Expertise (Corporate), Contacts (Corporate, Law Enforcement, Legal) 3, Danger Sense, Danger Sense (Advanced), Direction Sense, Direction Sense (Advanced), Fast-Talking 5, Killer Instinct 3, Killer Instinct (Advanced) 2, Language (German, Japanese), Multilingual (French, Spanish), Resources 5, Retainer 4, Safe Place 3, Staff (Corporate Assistants, Driver, Legal Team) 3, Status (Corporate) 5, Taste

Atavisms: From the Shadows, Heart of the Ocean, Limb From Limb, Monster from the Deep, Relentless Hunter

Nightmares: Everything You Do Is Worthless, You Are Alone, You Cannot Run, You Must Obey

Lair: 6 (Currents, Darkness, Flooded, Maze, Swarm)

Health: 10

Willpower: 7

Satiety: 8

Size: 5

Speed: 11

Defense: 7

Initiative: 7

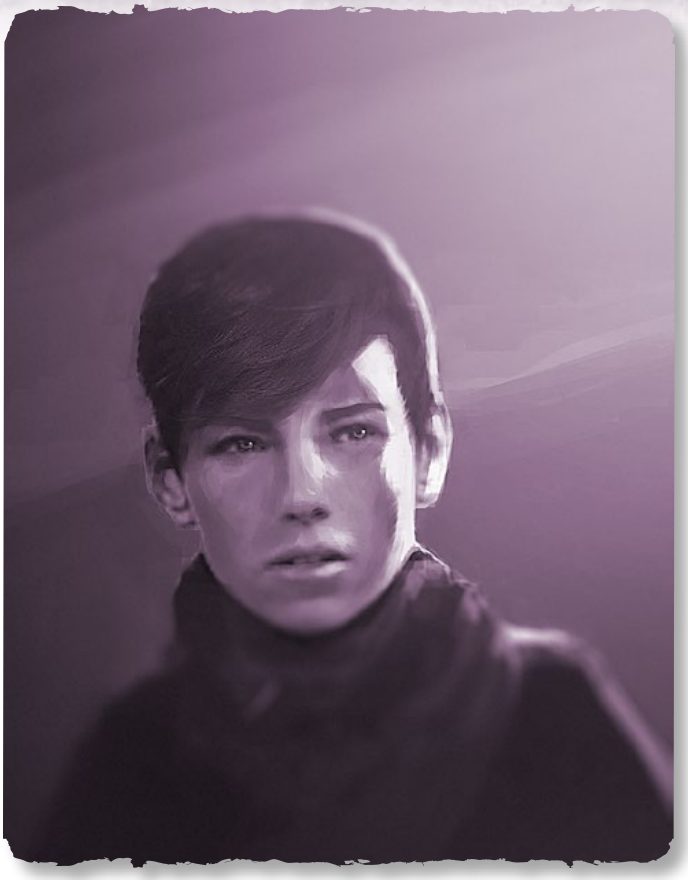
Armor: 0

Nancy

So you want to know who kidnapped your father, eh? I can find that out. What are you willing to pay?

Background: The girl who would become Nancy spent the bulk of her formative years being ignored. Pretty, but not pretty enough, grades good but not quite good enough for honor roll; that was Nancy. Or whatever her name was back then. She traded it away once for some juicy information, and no longer remembers it, or who she gave it to. Nancy only remembers bits and pieces of her younger life, before her Devouring.

That took place in the shadows, in the quiet, still places between full light and full dark. She remembers a skittering sound, and the feeling of cobwebs brushing against her face and arms, getting caught in her hair. She remembers running, but the webs got thicker and thicker no matter which way she ran. Soon everything she did entangled her further. Then the spiders were on her, crawling, biting, and then they were *in* her, pouring down her mouth, in her ears and nostrils. They



became one with her, her spiders, and once she accepted that, she felt what she calls the Web of the World.

The shared dreams of humanity are splayed out to her view. Nancy picks and chooses which thread to pull — a tiny little tug here, a hard yank there. She manipulates people and information as easily as breathing.

Description: Nancy deliberately dresses in drab, unassuming clothes. She wears bulky sweaters in cold weather and large, shapeless shirts in warmer weather. Nancy keeps her hair cut short, and in all ways attempts to appear androgynous. The more she can keep others guessing about any aspect of her life, the less they have as leverage against her.

When she speaks, it's in a quiet and deliberate voice. Nancy does not talk for the sake of talking. She's quite adept at using silence as a weapon or as a negotiation tool. She can't shake carrying the scent of old books with her, as she maintains a collection of references to numerous subjects.

Storytelling Hints: Nancy would be the manipulative fixer with an agenda, if it weren't for her Hunger. But what does she search for? What drives her to need? Secrets. Anyone's hidden information will do, but supernatural creatures have the juiciest mysteries of all. She seeks out not only her fellow Beasts, but also her supernatural Kin, ferreting out their secrets to fill her proverbial larder. It's possible, although unlikely, to force her to give up a piece of information in exchange for another (or possibly at the wrong end of applied violence). If the Begotten aren't comfortable with others knowing their secrets, their shadowy Kin are even less so. Nancy has on occasion narrowly escaped the claws of an enraged werewolf, or the impossibly strong fist of a rampaging Promethean. Nobody knows what Nancy will do with the mysteries she collects, but those who know of her are aware that she has enough information to cause a great deal of damage — not only for the Children, but for their Kin as well.

Nancy isn't likely to fight in a war between Beasts and other supernatural creatures, but she might well start one. Her obsessive need for secrets drives her into places that she isn't at all welcome, and she's not above redirecting blame onto other Beasts.

Legend: Cunning

Life: Unobtrusive

Family: Namtaru

Hunger: Hoard

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 5, Wits 5, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 5, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Computer 2, Investigation 4, Occult 3, Politics 3

Physical Skills: Firearms 2, Larceny 2, Stealth (Concealment) 4, Survival (Setting Traps) 3

Social Skills: Intimidation (Subtle Threats) 2, Streetwise (Rumors) 4, Subterfuge 4

Merits: Anonymity 3, Contacts (Criminal, Law Enforcement, Transportation) 3, Danger Sense, Danger Sense (Advanced), Eidetic Memory, Library (Academics) 3, Library (Occult) 3, Library (Politics) 2, Library (Science) 1, Patient, Resources 3, Safe Place 5

Atavisms: Basilisk's Touch, From the Shadows, Infestation, Shadowed Soul

Nightmares: All Your Teeth Are Falling Out, Behold, My True Form!, Bugs Everywhere, Fear is Contagious, You Can't Wake Up

Lair: 4 (Cramped, Engulfing, Poor Light, Swarm)

Health: 7

Willpower: 6

Satiety: 4

Size: 5

Speed: 10

Defense: 3

Initiative: 6

Armor: 0

Inheritance

After her Devouring, a Beast feels the call of her Lair. It's always there, tickling the back of her mind with a soft, siren call. Her Lair sings to her, always suggesting there is a larger Hunger to fulfill, a wider vista to witness.

The Devouring itself is a defining moment in a Beast's life. A new vista, the Primordial Dream, opens up before her. At that moment, she knows that her life has changed and she can no longer go back.

She can, however, go forward.

Beasts who hear the siren call of the Dark Mother echoing through the Primordial Dream can, in time, sing it back. Her Horror resonates with the Mother's, pushing past the flesh and the dream into something else, something new. Something far more than what she was.

The first path is known as the Retreat, and occurs when the Beast while separated from her soul. The Horror is now free to roam the Primordial Dream at its leisure. It becomes a living nightmare forever, existing only to indulge its never-ending Hunger. Such creatures are called *Unfettered* by other Beasts. The Unfettered exchanges the powers and vulnerabilities of a Beast and replaces them with those of an ephemeral entity.

Alternatively, the Beast may decide to undergo the Merger, where her Horror and her body combine into one. She destroys her Lair, bringing the Horror within her bodily and unleashing it from the constraints of the Primordial Dream. The Horror takes over the body, making the Beast a true monster on Earth.

The Beast can also realize the Retreat or the Merger through external interference. Unlike those states, to become the Beast Incarnate, the Begotten must choose to do so. Becoming the Beast Incarnate is a difficult process in which the grows her Legend to the point that it becomes a fixed part of the Primordial Dream. Once she becomes the Incarnate, she develops a *Myth* — a collection of abilities unique to the Beast, reinforcing the narrative she's constructed defining her place in the world. A Beast who finds this Inheritance makes a bold and declarative statement: that she is the highest and most powerful existence a Beast could hope to attain, short of returning to the Dark Mother herself. More zealous Beasts believe that in going this route, they achieve a sort of symbiosis with the Dark Mother. They say that the Dark Mother is not external, but exists within every part of her Children, body and soul. In short, the Beast believes she *is* the Dark Mother, or at least a significant representative thereof.

The Retreat — The Beast Unfettered

Sara fled panting through her Lair. She hadn't been prepared for a Hero to follow her here, into the Dream. She mentally cried out for her Horror, the Great Serpent, but it slept on. She was nothing but a normal woman now. Her only hope was to get away, *to come back at the problem another time.*

Endgames

All three forms of Inheritance are endings for a **Beast** character. A character who reaches the Incarnate Inheritance *might* be playable after achieving that state, but given the level of power it requires, it's much more likely that the chronicle is reaching the end point and the Inheritance is an epilogue.

The Retreat and the Merger are, therefore, somewhat tragic endings. The Retreat requires the Beast to die, while the Merger indicates that she gives up her humanity in order to become a true monster. These events can happen to **Beast** characters through a roll of the dice, but they can also be endings that the player chooses for her character.

The Incarnate Inheritance turns the character into a powerful, terrifying force in the World of Darkness, more force of nature or living legend than one of the Begotten. This ending isn't necessarily tragic, but it should have repercussions for any further chronicles your troupe chooses to run.

Another arrow punched into her shoulder, hard enough for her to stumble. She tried to raise her arm and found she couldn't.

She reached the Heart of her Lair. She saw the Serpent, curled in a tight ball, oblivious to her. She turned, ready to fight or reason with the silent man behind her. Another arrow hit her, square in the chest this time. Anything she was going to do to him was forgotten in the mind-numbing pain, and she fell to her knees.

True to form, the Hero swaggered into view. Sara's fear, her defensiveness at her Lair being violated, those were both gone, replaced by a burning hatred. She tried to claw her way to her feet, but the bastard nonchalantly nocked another arrow and let it fly.

Sara drew the last breath from her body, filled with regret and hate. The archer stepped forward, looking around the Heart, pulling a lighter from his pocket. He did not notice the Great Serpent's emerald eye flick open. He splashed fluid from a bottle around the Heart, never noticing the Serpent sliding into the shadows.

Sarah's Horror didn't care. The Heart could burn. It no longer needed the Lair. It slithered out behind the Hero, and when he turned to flee the burning Heart, he found he could not.

Living as a Beast is never safe. Heroes hunt the Begotten, even following them into the Primordial Dream. Their kin — ranging from vampires and werewolves to fae creatures and stitched-together men — lash out in fear and misunderstanding. Whether they seek it out or not, a Beast must be ready for violence.

Some aren't as prepared as they think. The Hero that the Beast was so sure he'd crush managed to place an Anathema on him and win the day. The "lone" werewolf who lived out by the old diner had friends. The normal-seeming man, who appeared to just be in the wrong place at the wrong time, instead proved to be made of crudely carved stone. His wrath was more than the Beast could handle. Regardless, death is not necessarily the end. It may be *an* end, but the Horror is not so easily set aside.

It can persist, living on in the Primordial Dream. Alternatively, the Beast can choose the Retreat. The call of the Dark Mother sings from deep in the Dream. Some of the Children answer, crooning back across the expanse.

Reasons for choosing the Retreat vary. One Beast might think — and not entirely incorrectly — that he'll be more powerful Unfettered. Another wants nothing more than to explore deeper into the Primordial Dream, and feels his body is an anchor, weighing him down.

One Beast living in a war-torn nation is sick and tired of her living conditions. She decides that her surroundings are insufficient for her needs and travels into the Primordial Dream. She remains there, ignoring the physical world entirely. This is all simply preparation to leave her body behind and exist solely as a spirit.

He was physically powerful. He knew it. His Lair was terrifying and extraordinarily defensible from invaders. Much to his surprise, a trio of Heroes found their way through the Dream. They overcame his Lair's dangers and killed him with an Anathema. He refused to let go, forcing his Horror out into the Primordial Dream, becoming Unfettered.

She always had a bit of wanderlust. Exploring the wild areas, looking over untamed vistas — nothing gave her as much of a thrill. After her Devouring, the Primordial Dream was just one more expanse to traverse. After years of exploring its corners, she thought she knew enough to be safe. She was wrong. As her body lay dying, her Horror pushed itself outward. It wasn't done exploring.

He was always tactically minded. He did his best to hide his Lair, to make it a jungle of traps and defenses against intruders. They came anyway. He fought them off, but the experience still rattled him. He decided that the best way to defend the Lair was that it be inaccessible to anyone else. He initiated his scorched earth policy, but only after experiencing the Retreat did he realize what he'd really gotten himself into.

THE UNFETTERED AND OTHER REALMS

In the search for the Dark Mother, some Unfettered are capable of leaving the Primordial Dream and entering other realms, such as the *Hisil* or the Underworld. Some rare Unfettered are even capable of finding a way into the Hedge.

Beasts in the know about some of their kin believe that the Unfettered can undergo yet another transformation. Stories abound, but always in the manner of "a friend of a friend told me." They say that the strange energies of these other realms bleed into the Unfettered, changing them in unforeseen ways. Rumors about in regards to the results of these explorations. For instance, a Unfettered who spends too much time in the Hedge is affected by that realm, becoming a sort of odd, ghostly hedgebeast. One stays in the Underworld too long, triggering an Old Law it never knew about, and remains trapped as a Kerberos. Or, even stranger, an Unfettered spends time in both the Shadow and the Underworld, morphing into something not too dissimilar from a geist.

Initiating the Retreat

Any Beast can undergo the Retreat, if they wish. Every Child who leaves her body behind has a different reason to do so. Unlike becoming Incarnate, the Retreat requires no minimum Lair rating.

To initiate the process, the Beast must die while separated from his Horror. The most common way for this to happen is if the Beast has the Slumbering Condition (p. 321), and then enters his Lair. Since he doesn't merge with his Horror as he usually would, death of the Beast's body leaves the Horror intact and Unfettered. If the Beast chooses to undergo the Retreat, from a game mechanic standpoint, the character needs to have Satiety 10, after which the Beast commits suicide.

Once the character has died, the player rolls to determine whether the Beast's Horror undergoes the Retreat.

Dice Pool: Power + Resistance

Action: Extended (5 successes per Chamber in the Lair; one turn per roll)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Beast dies, and the other Chambers in the Lair remain in place as a kind of grim tomb for the fallen character. Other travelers in the Primordial Dream might find their way here by accident.

Failure: The Beast dies and her Horror with it. The Lair collapses.

Success: The Beast's Horror leaves the Lair and begins its new existence as one of the Unfettered.

Exceptional Success: The player may choose one of the options on p. 158 or can have the Unfettered retain some of the Beast's memories and personality.

A Fleshless Body

As a being of ephemera, the Unfettered do not use the same rules as flesh-and-blood creatures. Instead, they use the simplified traits of Power, Finesse, and Resistance, similar to ghosts, spirits, angels and similar creatures (as described in Chapter Four).

Rank	Trait Limits	Attribute Dots	Maximum Essence	Numina
1	5 dots	5–8	10	1–3
2	7 dots	9–14	15	3–5
3	9 dots	15–25	20	5–7
4	12 dots	26–35	25	7–9
5	15 dots	36–45	50	9–11

Traits

The Unfettered figure their derived traits in the same way as other ephemeral creatures. In addition, they use the following rules:

Rank: An Unfettered begins with Rank equal to the Beast's Lair.

Legend/Life: The Unfettered still has her Legend, but not Life, and regains Willpower as normal. As the Unfettered don't need to sleep, they do not refresh Willpower through rest. She can, however, regain a Willpower point by indulging her Hunger. She does this in a manner similar to the "Inflicting Nightmares" section on p. 99, but her dice pool is Power + Rank – Composure instead.

Language: Unfettered do not speak or understand human languages, unless they retain some of their Beast's intellect. Even then, their ability to use language is remedial at best.

Satiety: Unfettered do not have a Satiety trait, as they embody their Hunger.

Ban and Bane: The Unfettered Beast's previous Hunger becomes her Ban, which is expressed as a compulsion. As the ephemeral embodiment of her Hunger, the Unfettered has no choice but to pursue it to the exclusion of all other concerns.

Her last existing Anathema, if she has one, becomes her Bane. In the case where the Unfettered has no former Anathema, her Bane becomes something related to the circumstances of her death.

Influences: As beings of fear and hunger, they tend to only have those two Influences. Any additional Influences should be tied to the Unfettered Beast's history and former Hunger.

New Numina and Manifestations

As ephemeral beings, Unfettered gain access to Numina and Manifestations mechanically identical to those available to spirits, angels, and ghosts.

Bane Sense

The Unfettered is largely immune to harm except from specific sources. One of those sources is her Bane, and her senses are attuned to detecting danger. She gains the Danger Sense (Advanced) Merit in relation to her Bane.

Invade Dream

The Unfettered can transfer her consciousness from the Primordial Dream into a specific person's dream with a Power + Finesse roll, contested by the dreamer's Composure + Supernatural Tolerance. Once inside the dream, the Unfettered takes over, turning the dream into a nightmare as appropriate to the Unfettered Beast's Hunger. The dreamer does not gain any Willpower from restful sleep.

Nightmare Apparition (Manifestation)

By spending a Willpower point, the Unfettered pushes his way back into the physical world. He appears in Twilight and can only be seen by those who can see into that state. The Unfettered cannot interact with the physical world, but can perceive his surroundings with clarity. Lurkers who Hunger to hoard knowledge find this ability useful for information gathering.

Nightmare Weaponry

The Storyteller spends 1 Willpower point for the Unfettered to manifest claws, fangs, horns, suckers, or other appropriate natural weaponry. The modification acts as a 1L weapon.

Realm Gateway (Manifestation)

The World of Darkness holds many spiritual realms. Some Lurkers have managed to find ways — either through the Dream, or in the physical realm — to enter these realms, exploring them for their own reasons. To do so, the Unfettered must find an appropriate point of ingress, such as a locus, Avernian gate, or dormant gate to the Hedge and spend a Willpower point. Each time this power is selected, it is keyed to a specific realm. It may be picked multiple times, once for each realm the Unfettered would like to access.

The Mourning Owl

Background: In life, the Mourning Owl was called Adrienne Cook. She knew misery from a young age. Her parents barely had the money to pay for extra clothes for her through school. College was certainly out of the question. Still, she tried her best to earn a scholarship in order to help her family. When that failed, she worked hard at a menial, minimum-wage job at a local convenience store. That wasn't good enough, either. College was just too expensive and out of her reach.

Then the dreams started. Falling. Always falling. The wind taking her terrified scream and ripping it from her lips. The ground rushing up to meet her until impossibly huge talons snatched her up. That was when she woke up, every time.

Eventually, she finally had the courage to look up, to see what held her in its grasp. A gigantic bird — it could have been an eagle, or a hawk. Adrienne wasn't so sure exactly, but it drew her in. She felt a connection with the creature. She woke up a Beast.

After a month, she began regretting her existence. Feeding her Hunger for Prey scared her, and she didn't have anyone else in the area to teach her about what she'd become. Trial and error and instinct only went so far, after all.

She did manage to connect with her Lair and spend some time there. She actually felt good while there for the most part. But she knew she had to return to the physical world. She had a job. A family.

Her fear and depression grew until even her Lair didn't hold the same comfort it once did. She hit upon a solution. If the Horror was what did this to her, then maybe if she could separate the two again, things would go back to normal. She entered her Lair, sharp knife in hand, and did the deed.

Tragically, Adrienne was so, so wrong about her theory. She died, but her Horror lives on as the Mourning Owl. It roams the Primordial Dream, stealing into the dreamscapes of others and fulfilling its Hunger. Hunt. Feed. Repeat.

Description: The Mourning Owl takes the vague shape of a hunting bird, gray and blurred. It swoops through the Dream, making no noise, searching for resonant dreams to invade and feed on. After it feeds, it allows itself a moment of rest and it perches, emitting a high, pained cry of mourning.

Storytelling Hints: The Mourning Owl wants nothing more than to feed. Denied its predatory impulse when Adrienne was alive, it swoops through dreams, picking people up and devouring them. And yet, it never quite gets away from the grief that follows it, no matter how far it flies.

Legend: Merciless
Rank: 2
Attributes: Power 5, Finesse 4, Resistance 4
Corpus: 8
Willpower: 8
Essence: 15
Initiative: 8
Defense: 4
Speed: 19
Size: 4
Influences: Hunger • , Grief •
Numina: Invade Dream, Nightmare Weaponry, Pathfinder
Manifestations: Gauntlet Breach, Nightmare Apparition, Twilight Form
Ban: Fulfill her Hunger for Prey
Bane: Tears

GREEDY SQUID

Background: Wayne Lyle had a relatively easy life. Naturally gifted and talented in both academia and sports in school, he was popular with teachers and his fellow students alike. While it was true that he was sometimes odd and off-putting, what others saw as his good points caused them to brush any eccentricities under the rug.

Wayne was plagued by a host of self-doubt, however, as well as by disturbing dreams. In those dreams, he was always in water of some sort. It always gave him the sensation of great depth, and he could never see any kind of coast to swim to. If that weren't frightening enough, he had the

sensation of not being alone — a sense that was confirmed in later dreams where he was pulled under by long tentacles. It didn't take long for him to confront and then accept the creature at the other end of those tentacles, and thus realize that he was a Beast himself.

Like everything else in his life, Wayne took to his new life with gusto. Unfortunately, he had only instinct to guide him and as such was unprepared when a Hero invaded his Lair. Sure in his ability to take down what he thought was just a regular person who'd found their way into the Dream somehow, Wayne leaped into battle. He was surprised when the spear pierced his chest and hurt even worse than he would have imagined it to. As his blood poured out onto the floor of his Lair, his Horror broke loose, ravaging the Hero on the spot and fleeing into the depths of the Dream to find things of dream-stuff to hoard.

Description: The Greedy Squid is huge, mostly transparent, and ever hungry. It glides through the Dream, looking for any bits of dream stuff it can to try and hoard. It never seems to hold onto those things for long, but that is ultimately alright; it's the act of hoarding that feeds its Hunger, not the accumulated stuff.

If someone could smell the creature, it would smell strongly of brine with a faint whiff of rot. It makes no sound as it travels the Dream. Others who've encountered the creature believe it to be incapable of uttering noise. Even so, it's an imposing creature, as it is gigantic, although it moves quickly for something with its bulk.

Storytelling Hints: Wayne was overconfident his entire life and it eventually caught up with him. His Horror, however, is more cautious, probing at situations before committing to a course of action. It sometimes misses out on fulfilling its Hunger by doing so, but has managed to survive this long. As such, this particular Unfettered will continue to exercise caution, remembering the events of its birth.

Legend: Gluttonous

Rank: 3

Attributes: Power 8, Finesse 8, Resistance 9

Corpus: 19

Willpower: 10

Essence: 20

Initiative: 17

Defense: 8

Speed: 26

Size: 10

Influences: Fear • • , Water •

Numina: Bane Sense, Drain, Innocuous, Invade Dream, Nightmare Weaponry (Tentacles), Pathfinder

Manifestations: Discorporate, Nightmare Apparition, Reaching, Realm Gateway (Shadow)

Ban: Fulfill his Hunger for the Hoard

Bane: A spear with fool's gold worked into the point

The Merger — The Beast Rampant

Eli stood, staring at the darkness, for a long time. The darkness stared back invitingly. Eli took a step, then another, slowly, as if a man in a dream. He supposed that was appropriate.

It was Mia's hand that stopped him. A Makara of incredible beauty, kin to the Sirens, she was also the only other member of Eli's brood who really understood him. He trembled, suddenly unsure if this was what he wanted to do.

"Is this how we say goodbye? With you walking into the darkness forever?" Mia's tone was curious, not judgmental.

Eli relaxed. "I wasn't going in. Not yet. I'm just...thinking about it." The tremble in his voice betrayed him.

Mia chuckled. "You know as well as I do that if you've come this far, you've already made your decision." Mia's voice became more serious. "I'll miss you. The others will, too, after they're done being mad and come to understand why you did it like this."

Eli nodded, and turned to take one last look at Mia. She smiled, then gestured toward the darkness. With a shy, fleeting smile, Eli turned and walked into the gloom. Mia watched as long as she could, until her broodmates' calls brought her back inside.

In the creeping darkness, Eli cast off his skin. He pulled out his teeth, and ripped off his fingers at the first knuckle. His Horror saw the holes he had made, and filled them – fangs, claws, and coarse black fur grew in.

Eli – what had *been Eli – sniffed the air. It was time to hunt.*

The Begotten have one foot squarely in the physical word and the other in the Primordial Dream. Most prize their ability to move from one to the other, spending time both in the flesh and in the Lair.

For some, though, the physical world's pull is hard to resist. Over time, they draw the Horror into their bodies, becoming wholly monstrous. This integration of body and Horror is imperfect, however. The Horror's power, made manifest through a Beast's Lair, is more at home in the Primordial Dream, where it can spread and express itself according to the Beast's desires. Being trapped within the Beast's body in the physical world constrains the Horror. On one hand, the Beast's Horror still empowers him, giving him continued access to her Nightmares and Atavisms. On the other, his Horror bends inward, twisting his body and crippling his mind. He becomes a monster in truth, chasing his Hunger in its most basic sense even as it acts as a source of power.

In the Dream

When a Beast undergoes the Merger, her Lair breaks down, Chamber by Chamber. This is a relatively quick process, but not so fast as to trap anyone remaining within. How each Chamber breaks down remains in line with that Chamber's environment, as indicated by its Lair Traits. A Chamber with the Trait of

Flooded may dry up and crack apart, while a Foggy Chamber clears up before dissipating back into the Primordial Dream.

As the Lair breaks apart, any Primordial Pathways connecting it to the physical world likewise collapse and wither away. As the Lair and the Pathways collapse, the Horror travels to the Beast's body, filling the Child with its potency.

In the Flesh

The Horror "fills" the Beast's body, pushing anything it feels is unnecessary out of the way. In the end, the Begotten is no longer the person she was. Instead, she is truly a monster, a ravenous creature that exists only to sate its Hunger. Her previous personality is gone. While she is still cunning, particularly as she finds ways to feed, higher brain functions are lost to her. She exists now to spread fear and eat, and little else. In game terms, she loses her Life, embracing only her Legend.

Still, undergoing the Merger provides some benefits to the Beast. As her Horror infuses her flesh directly, she becomes faster, stronger, and more resilient. She may also find that she has an effect on the world around her as it subtly warps to suit her nature. She may also find that, as like attracts like, creatures of similar proclivities may take up residence near her.

Effects of the Merger

The Rampant are not capable of using Nightmares; the Horror is too primal and animalistic to manipulate fear this way. They are capable of using Atavisms, however.

For each dot of Lair a Beast possesses, the player may select a benefit. This represents the changes the Horror has wrought upon the body to make it more compatible with the Horror's desires. After the Merger, the Beast becomes Rampant — she no longer has a Lair to call home.

- **Armor:** The character gains armor 2/0. For two dots of Lair, this point of Armor is effective against firearms as well (2/2).
- **Body Warp:** The Horror changes the body to better suit its goals. The character's body changes color like a chameleon. She grows extra limbs, or a non-venomous tail, or becomes strikingly beautiful, luring victims close before pouncing. Regardless of the cosmetic change to the body, mechanically Body Warp adds to particular Skill rolls. The aforementioned color-changing would add to Stealth, extra limbs to Brawl, the tail to Athletics, and the beauty to Persuasion. This bonus is equal to half the Beast's Lair, rounded up.
- **Increased Attribute:** Select an Attribute and increase it by 1. This is not subject to the normal trait limit as imposed by the character's Lair. Normally, the Horror increases Physical Attributes, so as to hunt and feed more easily, but they don't have to be. These Attributes should, however, reflect the Lair's prior Traits. A Crushing Lair adds to Strength, for instance, while a Lair with the Blazing Light Trait adds to Wits.
- **Increased Awareness:** While in her territory, the Beast is harder to surprise and finds fulfilling her Hunger much easier. Add one die to any rolls made to avoid surprise or to find a source to sate Hunger.

The character may take any of the above benefits multiple times, increasing their benefits each time, or acquiring new modifications.

Once Merged, the Beast's Hunger becomes more intense than it was. The character loses 1 point of Satiety every 24 hours. The Beast also cannot take sustenance from more nuanced expressions of her Hunger. Before, a Tyrant might have taken Satiety from buying out a rival businessman or scaring a bouncer into letting her drunk broodmates stay in a bar. Now, as one of the Rampant, she is reduced to overt, physical displays of her superiority. This means that Rampant Predators are highly dangerous, as the basest expression of their Hunger is to hunt down and eat living things. Since Rampant Beasts are no longer player-controlled characters, the Storyteller doesn't need to bother with figuring out Satiety potential or rolling to feed. They still have Satiety Conditions, but at Satiety 10, the Rampant simply sleeps for 24 hours and awakens at Satiety 9, Gorged.

Further, the Beast has an effect on the area around her den. The landscape subtly warps over time, reflecting the Horror's nature. The neighborhood around the den of a Namtaru becomes slightly more grotesque, the architecture looming over passersby. The water near a Makara's home is murkier and harder for non-Beasts to navigate. An Eshmaki's forest is filled with grasping shadows.

Apart from, or perhaps because of, the warping effect, other supernatural creatures are sometimes attracted to the Beast's territory. The Eshmaki's forest may attract werewolves of the Hunters in Darkness tribe. Nosferatu vampires may start hanging around the Namtaru's neighborhood. The Awakened might become enamored of any area with strange sights and sounds, thinking they have a Mystery to chase.

By undergoing the Merger, the Beast is further removed from humanity. While she can still communicate with others to some small extent, it's only because of the connection the Horror had with the Beast's previous personality. She cannot use speech (apart from mimicking a few words) or language to communicate, and sees others in terms of "food" or "threat."

Pard

<A low, quiet growl from the shadows>

Background: Eli Howard grew up knowing what it was like to be poor. He never knew his father; as his mother worked two jobs trying to make ends meet, he barely knew her, either. An only child, he was also very familiar with being alone. As he grew older, Eli explored the neighborhood, finding shortcuts, hidden places, and pathways between them. Other than the elderly who'd lived there their entire lives, nobody knew the area like Eli.

His relationships with other children were strained. They all had both parents and did things with them — vacations,

outings, father-son fishing trips. Eli never managed to connect with them, which further pushed him away from people.

As soon as he grew old enough, he got a job at a local warehouse in order to help with the bills around the house. Even so, his help came too late for his mother, who managed to work herself into an early grave. Eli was left to his own devices. Rather than bounce around the foster care system, he struck out on his own.

Roughly a month later, he started having the dreams. A large presence, felt but never seen, stalked him through the night. He'd be traveling through a forest, or high grass, and the foliage would rustle and shake as though some sort of beast was slinking through it. Every time, Eli would run, trying this time to shake his pursuer. It wasn't until Eli somehow realized that each dream was set in the same area he'd just been through that day and that he was the shadowy creature that he went through his Devouring.

Eli tried to reconcile the physical world and the Dream, but it never quite clicked for him. The physical, for him, was real and knowable. The depths of the Primordial Dream were esoteric and unknowable. After much thought in regards to the consequences, as well as what it would mean to his brood, Eli pulled his Horror into his body, destroying his Lair in the process. He walked into the darkness and made it a part of him forever. Locals know that a monster stalks the night, and they refer to it as "the Pard" (an archaic term for "leopard").

Description: Onlookers rarely see Pard, at least not for long. Usually it's only as a glimpse out of the corner of an eye, or the vaguest hint of a body shape. Likewise, he rarely makes a sound, either from his footfalls or by speaking. Even when he does manage to say something, it's with no more volume than a loud whisper.

The Pard's body is somewhat feline in shape, covered black fur and sporting long, narrow fangs and thick ebon claws. He runs on four legs, but is capable of walking upright for short periods when necessary.

Storytelling Hints: Eli's life provided him with a profound sense of bitterness. He saw how difficult things were for him and his mother, and how the rest of society so often looked down on those who weren't as well off. After his Devouring, this grew into disdain for humanity and helped push him into his decision to undergo the Merger. Now he only sates his Hunger by punishing the rich — ruining their lives in some physical manner. A dog goes missing, or better yet, a child. A new car is destroyed in the night. A carefully tended garden is found torn apart in the morning, their underpaid gardener bleeding and traumatized. To others it may seem somewhat petty, but the Pard is far beyond considering the morality of his decisions at this point. He just wants to punish.

Legend: Relentless

Family: Eshmaki

Hunger: Punishment

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Investigation 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Stealth (Concealment) 5, Survival (Foraging) 3

Social Skills: Intimidation 2, Streetwise 3

Merits: Danger Sense, Danger Sense (Advanced), Direction Sense, Double-Jointed, Fast Reflexes 3, Fast Reflexes (Advanced), Safe Place 5, Spoor 5

Atavisms: From the Shadows, Limb From Limb, Relentless Hunter

Health: 9

Willpower: 5

Satiety: 4

Size: 5

Speed: 12

Defense: 6

Initiative: 9

Armor: 0

Notes: Eli has the benefits of **Body Warp** (for a bonus to Stealth), **Increased Awareness** twice (for a +2 bonus on appropriate rolls) and **Increased Attribute** (Dexterity).

STARLESS

The ground ties you down, keeps your eyes lowered. Here, I'm powerful. Here, I'm free.

Background: Miranda grew up on the reservation, feeling constrained the entire time. She wasn't confined to the area — on the contrary, she'd gone to town with her parents (or alone, when she was older) many times. Still, something she couldn't put her finger on made her feel restrained and hemmed in the entire time she was home.

It wasn't her Makah background, either. That she was proud of, and it drove her to study law when she was old enough, in an effort to make things better for her people. In college, though, she realized it didn't really matter *where* she was. She still felt she wasn't fully free. By that point, she'd gotten very skilled at pushing that feeling to the back of her mind and concentrating on the task at hand, however.

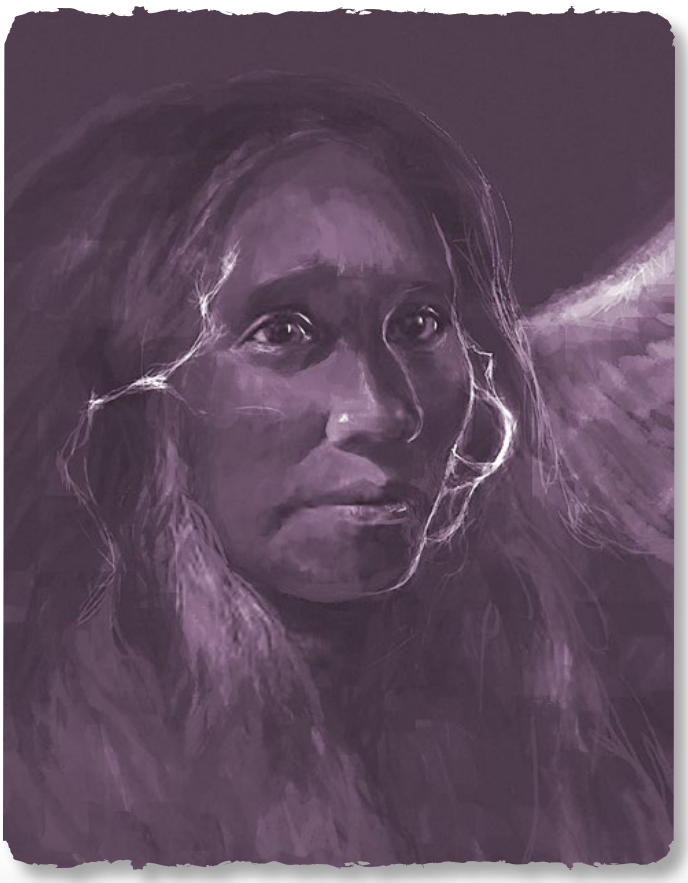
The dreams started a few months before she planned on taking the bar exam. She'd wake in the middle of the night remembering little else other than the earth-shattering thunder and a sensation of falling. She started taking sleeping pills in an attempt to not remember her dreams and just sleep through them, but to no avail. It took her several months to make enough sense of her dreams to realize that the monster with the raking talons made of lightning was her.

After her Devouring, Miranda exalted in the new power she'd attained. She went back and finished school, passed the bar, and began practicing law. Opponents in the courtroom backed down before the onslaught of her arguments and the force of her personality. She became known for pressing cases others had given up on. She also became known, or rather, resented, for what they called "Miranda's superiority complex."

Miranda continually pushed herself, working on more cases then she should have, not taking vacation, working long hours. Complete burnout was the inevitable result, and Miranda shut down almost her entire life. She then ultimately decided that she'd had enough, and that Merging with her Horror was a way out. If anything was left of Miranda, it would regret the decision made in haste. But now she is only Starless.

Description: Prior to the Merger, Miranda was a woman of obvious Native American descent. Now, her skin is a shimmering, dark blue. A pair of wings unfold from her back, and electricity arcs across her skin on occasion. She smells faintly of ozone and fresh rain. When she speaks, her voice booms and crashes like the midst of a thunderstorm.

Storytelling Hints: Miranda has become a protector of sorts over the reservation she used to call home. It's almost ironic that she now feels tied to a place that she used to resent for "confining" her. Still, she is fiercely protective of her extended family on the reservation, and is not content solely with defeating any intruders who would harm her charges. Instead, she must overcome them, beating them down until they acknowledge her superiority. She has lost the ability to discern a true threat from a minor one, which means anyone other than residents of the reservation might see the sky darken.



Legend: Judgmental

Family: Ugallu

Hunger: Power

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 5, Manipulation 4, Composure 4

Mental Skills: None

Physical Skills: Athletics (Flight) 4, Brawl 6

Social Skills: Expression 2, Intimidation (Intense Presence) 3

Merits: Direction Sense, Direction Sense (Advanced), Direction Sense (Epic), Fast Reflexes 2, Safe Place 3

Atavisms: Looming Presence, Needs Must, Siren's Treacherous Song, Storm-Lashed, Wings of the Raptor

Health: 8

Willpower: 8

Satiety: 3

Size: 5

Speed: 11

Defense: 7

Initiative: 9

Armor: 0

Notes: Miranda benefits from **Body Warp** (lightning effects that add to Intimidation rolls, and wings that add to Athletics rolls), **Increased Attribute** (Dexterity twice), and **Increased Awareness** (twice).

The Beast Incarnate

Nobody ever thinks much of insects, the creepy-crawlies that pervade everything, crawling and scuttling underfoot. But they're everywhere: one of the most, if not the *most, populous creatures on the planet.*

Tyler knew all about where insects went, and more importantly, what they saw. He knew, for instance, that a group of so-called "Heroes" were delving into his Lair, a dark and twisting cave system. They hadn't paid attention to the miniscule creatures scrabbling across the rock walls. Tyler would feel sorry for them, but he wasn't sure he had the capacity for that any longer. Besides, they were invading his territory. They should know what they were in for.

The Heroes had just wormed their way through a tight crevasse into a slightly larger chamber when Tyler turned the lights out. Yells of anger and surprise turned into screams of anguish as the insects swarmed their victims. Tyler joined in himself, gleefully punishing those who'd dared to intrude upon his ground.

As the last Hero died, Tyler stepped upon the path back to the physical world. As he did, he felt his Horror come with him, tying to him in a more perfect symbiosis. He gasped at the sheer pleasure of it all, of every sense in his body moving to new heights. It felt wonderful. It felt powerful.

It felt like coming home all over again. Tyler tried to weep, but all that fell from his eyes were the bugs.

From the moment of Devouring, a Beast's Hunger drives her. It's her constant companion, a gnawing, persistent force. For some, it pushes for more than simple satiation. To be full, to be contented — these things aren't enough. The Horror and the Hunger push at the boundaries with a desire to become even more fully realized in the flesh. Further, a Beast's Lair is a measure of her control and sovereignty over a portion of the Primordial Dream. The Lair resonates with her most intimate nature, reflected through her Family and Hunger. A Beast of sufficient power can become more than she was. She can push forward, drawing the Horror more fully into herself, crossing the final threshold keeping her from her birthright. She can become the Beast Incarnate.

This is not an easy task. Most of the Begotten who attempt it fail. Those who succeed discover a new level of understanding and power, over and above their less "evolved" brethren. In order to achieve Incarnation, first the Beast needs power. Only Begotten with a certain connection with the Primordial Dream and their own Lairs can attempt to become the Beast Incarnate. (In game terms, only a character with a Lair trait of 8 or higher may attempt this process.)

Secondly, the Beast needs to solidify her Legend. She can do this in any number of ways, but the end result must be demonstrative and terrifying. Some possibilities follow:

Subvert the Hero

In the usual story, a Hero believes himself the central character. The Beast is a simple creature, with easily discernable goals and desires. It is only there for the Hero to kill. Obviously, the tale is about the "good guy," the upstanding, handsome, *proper* protagonist. The creature, as the outcast, serves only to validate the Hero's existence.

Instead, the Beast reminds the Hero whose story it *really* is. By controlling the meeting from the beginning, whether through sheer power, cunning manipulation of the events leading to the meeting, or taking advantage of openings in an instant, the Beast makes the would-be Hero insignificant in a world he wants to control. In so doing, the Beast shows that she's the better creature, the one who deserves to live — the Apex.

Mechanically, the Beast has to engage in combat with a Hero, but on the Begotten's terms. This could be an ambush, a carefully crafted lure to draw the Hero into the Lair, or a systematic removal of the Hero's support system. What is important is that the Beast controls the fight from the outset, manipulating events in her favor to win. In the end, the Hero must not have inflicted any lethal damage to the Beast whatsoever. Bashing damage doesn't penalize the process — only lasting injury brings the Begotten down to the Hero's level. Furthermore, the Hero can't have placed an Anathema on the Beast at any point in the confrontation.

Should the Beast make the Hero utterly and completely irrelevant, reinforcing that her life, her story is far more important, she can reform her Horror. She draws it out of the Primordial Dream and takes it inside her. Unlike the Merger, in which the portion within the Beast that is still the most human is eliminated, finding the Apex means that the body and Horror exist harmoniously. The Beast's Life is subsumed, however; she is no longer the person that she once was, and she no longer feels anything for her human — or supernatural — family. The Beast Incarnate is a walking, living nightmare; its goals are inscrutable and horrible.

Control the Hive

The hive isn't just a loose collection of Chambers in a city. It's the bond of the people who live in that region, their experiences with the supernatural, their collected dreams and nightmares. The hive isn't simple to understand or manipulate, but doing so is possible; a Beast who wishes to be the Incarnate can take over a hive and establish herself as the ruler of the area.

The first step in doing so is becoming the Apex of the hive, but any Beast approaching Lair 8 probably has already reached that status. Still, if she hasn't, she needs to figure out who or what the Apex is and wrest control away. She can do that by interacting with the people of the region, insinuating herself into their dreams and creating Chambers by terrifying them (whether or not she intends to add them to her Lair). Alternatively, she can simply kill the existing Apex and claim his position.

From there, she must search out the Lairs connected to the hive and visit the Horrors within. Beasts can't normally sate their Hunger on other Beasts, but a Beast attempting to become the Incarnate must do something similar. She must, if not sate, then demonstrate her Hunger. A Collector steals something from the Lairs in her hive, while a Tyrant cows the Horrors of the resident Beasts. Needless to say, this can result in retaliation from other broods, and so Beasts attempting to build their Legends this way often attempt to find allies first, sometimes by finding dreamers to Devour and sometimes by recruiting or subverting exist broods. Some would-be Incarnates, though, feel they are powerful enough to take on any challengers. Some of them are right.

Spawn Legend

Perhaps the most complicated method of building a Legend, but at the same time the most straightforward to understand, is to make a new one centered around the Beast. This requires something extremely dangerous, however — the Beast must expose what she truly is to the mortal world, at least on a small scale, and let stories of her Horror take root. This method was much easier in previous eras when the human population was spread thin and travel was difficult. A Hero from another area might hear the stories and come to kill the Beast, but by the time he could track her down, she was already established as the Incarnate.

In modern times, though, spawning a Legend means that the Beast feeds her Horror in a large, grandiose, and probably violent manner. She sows fear in a way that captures the area's imagination and colors the Primordial Dream for years to come. She becomes the monster of legend, the thing that people refuse to name lest they attract its attention, the creature that haunts the nightmares of a whole city. If she can manage it and not let the Legend be subverted by Heroes or other Beasts, she becomes the Beast Incarnate.

Success: The Myth

Once she becomes the Beast Incarnate, the character goes beyond her story and legend. She establishes her Myth, a metaphysical framework that supports the Beast she's become. It is her story writ large: the tale that will survive far beyond her death. The Myth provides a structure for the Begotten's strength, acting as both buffer and filter so that the Beast might control it. Through her Myth, she improves some of her current abilities and gains new ones. These abilities include:

Adopt the Beast-Shape: The Begotten may physically transform into what her Horror reflects. She can call upon her Horror, letting it shift her body into a new, more powerful shape. In her bestial form, she may use one ability from the following list per dot of Lair she possesses, though she is not required to do so. Some Beasts find perfection with fewer abilities and never bother to grow this aspect of their Myth further.

- **Flight:** The Beast gains true flight. His wings stretch from his back with a wingspan equal to his height (or length). He may fly at twice his Speed and carry items (or creatures) he can grasp as though his Strength were two lower.
- **Impenetrable Skin:** The Beast gains armor equal to her Lair dots against all attacks not from her Anathema.
- **Legendary Size:** When transformed, the Beast gains Size equal to her Lair dots.
- **Multiple Appendages:** Like the kraken or the hydra, the Beast possesses the use of more limbs than normal. When selected, the Beast grows an additional two appendages — necks/heads, arms, or legs. If this ability is used to grow extra heads, they exist on the end of long, sinuous necks. Further, any attack aimed at a head causes decapitation. If the Beast also has the Uncanny Healing ability, he may regrow the head in (10 – Lair) turns. For heads or arms, if they are used to attack, each additional limb reduces an enemy's Defense by 1 as he struggles to protect himself from so many angles at once. Lastly, if the Beast grows extra legs, his Speed increases by his Lair dots, and he gains a +4 to rolls to avoid being knocked down. This ability may be taken more than once.
- **Noxious Poison:** Whether by bite, venomous tail, or caustic breath, the Beast may deliver a poison to his enemies. This ability inflicts the Poisoned Tilt, and the venom is considered grave.
- **One with the Shadows:** The Beast adds her dots in Lair in successes to any Stealth rolls.
- **Petrifying Gaze:** Like the legendary Medusa, the Beast turns unlucky victims to stone with a glance. Anyone meeting the Beast's eyes has only seconds to turn away (Wits + Composure vs. the Beast's Presence + Lair) or be turned to stone. Victims who are manipulated into looking into the Beast's eyes voluntarily suffer the effects automatically.
- **Piercing Sight:** Even the complete absence of light isn't enough to hide secrets from this Beast. She may see clearly regardless of light levels. If the darkness is supernaturally created (from a mage's spell, for example), use a Clash of Wills (p. 222).
- **Splinter:** Like the kraken, the Beast can easily tear apart inanimate objects she can grasp. Successful attacks against such targets ignore Durability and inflict damage to the item's Structure equal to the Beast's Lair dots.
- **Superior Atavism:** The Beast is particularly skilled with one of his Atavisms, benefitting from increased control and puissance. Once per chapter, the Beast may invoke the Satiety Expenditure version of the Atavism without actually spending a Satiety point. This power affects only one Atavism (chosen when this power is selected), but may be purchased multiple times, modifying a different Atavism in each instance.

- **Terrible Mien:** Onlookers flee in terror from the Beast's presence. Add her Lair in successes on any Intimidation rolls.
- **Titanic Onslaught:** The Beast adds her Lair to her Strength Attribute.
- **Uncanny Speed:** Quick as lightning, the Beast strikes faster than foes can react. Her Lair dots are added as a bonus to her Initiative.
- **Unnatural Healing:** The Beast heals all lethal and bashing damage each turn, unless inflicted by his Anathema.

No More Heroes: Heroes might still seek the Beast out, but they cannot place Anathema on her and the Hero's power of Heroic Tracking is of no use. The Beast Incarnate can remove the Hero's gifts, granting him clarity and showing him exactly who he is in the scheme of things — an interloper, an intruder in a story that was never his. With a simple touch, the Beast shows the Hero that, no matter how terrifying the nightmare, it's not his place to end it.

Master of Pathways: The Beast can enter the Primordial Dream no matter where she is. She travels through the material world and the Primordial Pathways as she wills.

Satiety: The Beast Incarnate must still feed, but never loses control of her Horror. It can venture through nightmares, feeding carefully, or it can take larger meals if it wishes to put in the effort. The Beast Incarnate never becomes Ravenous or falls to Slumber; if it falls to Satiety 0, it remains Starving. If it rises to Satiety 10, it remains Gorged.

Legend/Life: The Beast replaces its Legend and Life traits with one combined trait called Myth. This trait isn't an adjective, as Legend and Life are, but rather a title for the character, summing up the transformation of the Beast into an iconic nightmare. It can regain Willpower through this trait in the same way a Beast can through its Legend.

Destabilization: The Legend can't live forever, at least not unchanged. The Incarnate Beast must keep ironclad control over its own Myth, or else abandon it and its power. If something happens that destabilizes such a Beast's Myth, the Beast loses the powers associated with its Inheritance and gains a significant weakness: Anyone, whether Beast, Hero, human or otherwise, can place Anathema on it. The former Incarnate retains its abilities as a Beast (which, given the strength of its Lair, are formidable), but it is possible to kill the Beast Incarnate.

Using the Beast Incarnate

Once a Beast has Incarnated, it isn't really a Beast anymore. It has developed a Myth beyond what most of the Begotten can ever hope to achieve and wanders between the waking world and the Primordial Dream, cementing that Myth further.

In a **Beast** chronicle, Incarnate Beasts *can* be used as straight-up antagonists, but this is a disservice to them (and to the players, given their raw power). Instead, consider the following:

- **Bodhisattva:** The Beast Incarnate knows Atavisms and Nightmares that no normal Beast could ever achieve. It can "deactivate" a Hero, or perhaps grant a Rampant or Unfettered Beast a new lease on life. The rules don't apply to the Incarnate; they make their own rules. If the characters need to accomplish something that is impossible for other Beasts, perhaps they can track down one of these monsters?
- **Paths Uncharted:** A Beast Incarnate can enter the Primordial Dream whenever it wants. It stands to reason, then, that such a character might be able to enter the furthest reaches of the Shadow, the Hedge, or the Underworld. A brood of Beasts (or some of their cousins) might need to reach a realm that they normally cannot access. What price might an Incarnate Beast demand for its services?
- **Growing Legend:** Typhon, in Greek mythology, was the last son of Gaia. He fathered many of the world's greatest monsters with his mate, Echidna (whom many Beasts feel is one aspect of the Dark Mother, as it happens). He fought the gods by tearing up mountains and hurling them, and he was eventually imprisoned beneath Mount Etna where he remains, belching forth fire and smoke. This legend isn't wholly flattering to Typhon — after all, he did *lose* the fight with Zeus — but then again, he survived and remains a symbol of power and fear forever. This might be what the Incarnate are after: everlasting fame, an "end" to their Myth that establishes them as immortal, untouchable, and terrifying, *forever*. A Beast Incarnate might very well seek to use younger Beasts in her Myth, in whatever capacity they might fit.

Shen-Lung

Run little rabbit, run. The chase makes your flesh taste that much sweeter.

Background: Shen-lung was not always this Beast's name. He started life as Chen Ling, a son of a librarian and a grocer. Life was not awful for young Ling. For the most part, he lived life normally, as any other kid, with the same problems and successes. The only pressure he had was academic, as his parents both aggressively pushed him to succeed in his studies. He dutifully dove into his schooling, striving to make his family proud.

His sense of obligation to his family was strong, but it didn't completely mask his resentment. While he applied himself in school, he was much more at home in the forest, in the places where the light and shadow mixed and played. He was always adept at moving quickly and quietly and eventually taught himself to hunt. Chen Ling found that stalking and killing prey came naturally to him.

The dreams always began the same way: Ling Chen alone in the forest, stalking his prey. In some dreams it was a rabbit; in others, a deer. Eventually, he realized that something else was hunting *him*. He never saw it or even heard it, but he knew

something was in the underbrush. The shadows didn't lengthen on their own. The forest didn't naturally seem more dangerous and bloodthirsty. No, he was convinced there was a reason, and after a month or so of this recurring dream, Ling-Shen finally found enough strength to find out what it was.

Forcing his way through the grasping branches, he found a dragon, ink-black and sinuous. Somehow he knew he only found the creature because it desired it so. They took stock of each other, the man and the dragon, in a moment that took an eternity. In the end, they found a kindred spirit in one another, one who delights in the thrill of the hunt.

He took on the name of Shen-Lung, an imperial dragon of the rain and storms from Chinese mythology. The newly named Beast tried to find his own way in the world, eventually finding other Children. He even met other creatures that he felt were kin. Despite his dragonish nature, these creatures — werewolves — also took part in the hunt. Shen-Lung found common ground with the wolves, drawing upon their ferocity in combat.

Somehow, it wasn't enough. He felt that he could do, he could *be*, so much more. He pushed further and further into his nature, expanding his Lair and strengthening his Horror. He and his shapechanger friends expanded their territory throughout the land. Shen-Lung found other Beasts. He tracked down the most powerful of them, an immense spider-like creature, and issued a challenge to her — relinquish her position and seal off her Lair from the hive, or die. She refused; on the next full moon, she found herself the quarry of the wolf pack and its dragon. Shen-Lung became the Apex and claimed dominion over the region's Primordial Dream. In so doing, his body and Horror merged. Feeling the power coursing through his body, complete with the new sensory information it brought with it, Shen-Lung finally mastered the serenity of the hunt.

Description: Normally, Shen-Lung looks like a slight man of Chinese descent. He walks with quiet purpose, each foot placed deliberately and carefully. When he calls upon his dragon form, his scales are a deep blue that is almost black. Wet to the touch, his body occasionally coruscates with electricity. His wings are normally kept tight to his body, but if he needs to soar, he may do so. Shen-Lung prefers to do so at night when he's nearly impossible to make out against the sky, but won't hesitate to do so at any time if required.

Storytelling Hints: By drawing his Horror (and its Hunger) into his body like he has, Shen-Lung is the consummate hunter. In fact, lesser prey — animals and humans — are far beneath him at this point. He deliberately seeks out supernatural prey; the stronger the better. Paradoxically, Shen-Lung prefers to hunt either his Begotten kin or werewolves (enemies of his pack). Perhaps he feels there is something yet beyond his present state, a place he will get to by hunting extremely dangerous prey. Perhaps it's so much simpler, though, and he wants nothing more than to fulfill his ravenous Hunger.

The key to destabilizing Shen-Lung's myth might be in his werewolf friends. They have enemies and responsibilities beyond pleasing him. If they were called away or killed, Shen-Lung might become vulnerable. Likewise, his human parents still live somewhere in China, and they might hold the key to his lost humanity.

Myth: The Dragon-God of Storms

Family: Eshmaki

Hunger: Prey

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 6, Stamina 8

Social Attributes: Presence 6, Manipulation 3, Composure 5

Mental Skills: Academics 3, Computer 2, Medicine 2, Occult 3, Science 3

Physical Skills: Athletics (Flying) 4, Brawl (Natural Weapons) 4, Stealth (Stalking) 7, Survival 5, Weaponry 3

Social Skills: Animal Ken 3, Intimidation 3

Merits: Direction Sense, Direction Sense (Advanced), Direction Sense (Epic), Fast Reflexes 3, Fast Reflexes (Advanced), Killer Instinct 3, Killer Instinct (Advanced), Spoor 5, Trained Observer 3

Atavisms: Dragonfire, From the Shadows, Limb From Limb, Needs Must, Relentless Hunter, Shadowed Soul

Nightmares: Fear Is Contagious, Run Away, They Are All Around You, You Are Not Alone, You Cannot Run, You Will Never Rest, Your Rage Consumes You

Lair: 8 (Crosswinds, Electrified, Jagged, Sealed Exits, Undergrowth, Thunderous)

Health: 13 (20)

Willpower: 9

Satiety: 3

Size: 5 (13)

Speed: 15 (17 in dragon form)

Defense: 8

Initiative: 11 (18 using Uncanny Speed)

Armor: 7

Beast-Shapes: Flight, Impenetrable Skin, Legendary Size, Noxious Poison, Piercing Sight, Terrible Mien, Uncanny Speed

BOLESLAV, THE GIANT KING

You've broken the rules.
For that, you pay the price.

Background: From a young age, Boleslav was a vindictive, cruel child. The other children in his neighborhood avoided him. Without peers to victimize, he moved on to animals. As he got older, he found ways to terrorize adults.

Very few people avoid the consequences of their actions for long. So it was with Boleslav, who was eventually caught terrorizing a neighbor. As it turned out, the neighbor had shown Boleslav up the previous night in the bar, calling him out on a lie. This didn't sit well with Boleslav at all, who savagely beat the poor man. As his victim lay bleeding into the dirt, many others stood and chased Boleslav from the town, sending him fleeing into the mountains.

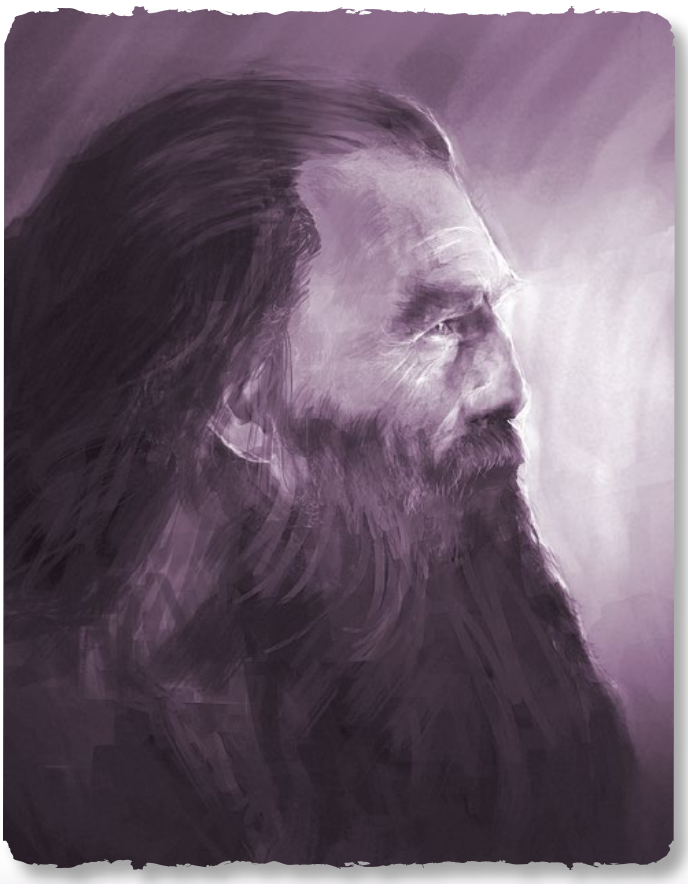
While there, he dreamed that he was being chased by a gigantic creature of stone. For the first time in his life, Boleslav knew true fear. He ran, but no matter how far or how fast he fled, the creature was behind him, relentless in its pursuit. Finally falling to the ground from exhaustion, Boleslav tried to fight back as the creature caught him up in one massive hand. His punches, which could break a man's cheek with one blow, were like those of an infant against his captor. The cold hand of helplessness wound its way around his heart. In an instant, Boleslav saw himself as the villagers and the stone colossus as him.

For most, this would be a revelation toward greater sympathy to others. Not so for Boleslav. Instead, he realized just how much more powerful he could be; he could finally get back at those who'd wronged him throughout his life. He awoke with a new soul as a Beast.

As Boleslav learned what he could now do, his sense of superiority was only reinforced. He spent years in the mountains, traveling from village to village and exacting punishment for various infractions to satisfy his Hunger. Eventually, he returned to his home village. He promptly killed the town leaders, inserting himself as the sole and unchallenged leader. Boleslav's first order of business was to create a set of esoteric rules and laws that would be difficult for most to untangle. In this way, he had numerous people to punish each day. His typical punishment was an immediate public whipping.

Confining his citizens to the town and punishing them for infractions of increasingly confusing laws was bad enough. Compounded by his nightly terror sprees through their dreams, however, he inevitably attracted Heroes, who decided to take matters into their own hands and slay the obvious monster in their midst. It was hopeless, though; all of the Heroes' righteous fury was for naught. Their weapons were ineffective; their plans rendered useless. The crude and unintelligent beast they thought they were slaying proved to be far more smart and cunning than they'd given him credit for. After the surviving Heroes made it through several traps and pitfalls to Boleslav's den, not a single one managed even a scratch. Boleslav ripped the remaining men to pieces with his bare hands. Their remains litter his den to this day.

After that incident, Boleslav's hold on his town has tightened. He's found that he has control over the very land itself and can even witness the people within it. Obviously, this doesn't bode well for the inhabitants, who suffer under Boleslav's depredations every single day. Sooner or later, they hope, someone will remove the monster from power.



Description: Boleslav does not speak. His voice comes in two volumes — a bellow or a low, threatening growl. He is an immense, bearded man who strides around his small town with a whip wrapped around his shoulder. When he takes on the form of his Horror, he grows to immense height and is capable of picking up a full-grown man with one hand. In either form, he smells distinctly of wet rock and earth.

Storytelling Hints: Ultimately, Boleslav is exceptionally self-serving. Most Beasts are to some extent in order to fulfill their Hunger, but the self-styled "Giant King" goes beyond the pale. No slight is too small or petty to meet with punishment. Conversely, spectacularly egregious breaches require more inventive sanctions, and Boleslav has become very inventive indeed. To him, he is epitomizing the meaning of his name — "large glory." To the inhabitants of the lonely village he controls in Eastern Europe, he is a vicious despot and a monster. They wish for someone to come to free them, but as the years wear on, the villagers lose hope. Boleslav might retreat into the mountain and become a cautionary tale, or he might someday raze the village and move on, depending on what the outside world holds for him.

Boleslav is a very powerful Beast with a fairly limited sphere of influence. His village is secluded from the modern world in many ways — no Internet, very little communication with the outside world. One visitor from a larger city might be enough to destabilize his hold on his Myth and send his kingdom into ruin.

Myth: The Giant-King

Family: Anakim

Hunger: Punishment

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 5

Physical Attributes: Strength 8, Dexterity 3, Stamina 7

Social Attributes: Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 5

Mental Skills: Crafts (Jury-Rig) 3, Investigation 2, Medicine 1, Occult 2

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (Brute Force) 6, Survival 4, Weaponry (Blunt Objects) 5

Social Skills: Intimidation (Huge Size) 7

Merits: Demolisher 3, Demolisher (Advanced), Eidetic Memory, Fist of Nightmares, Giant, Giant (Advanced), Heavy Weapons Style 5, Iron Skin, Iron Skin (Advanced) 2, Iron Skin (Epic), Relentless Assault 3, Safe Place 3, Status (Village) 5

Atavisms: Cyclopean Strength, Limb From Limb, Looming Presence, Mimir's Wisdom, Titanic Blow

Nightmares: Everything You Do Is Worthless, Fear is Contagious, They Are All Around You, You Are Alone, You Can't Wake Up, You Deserve This

Lair: 8 (Cramped, Disruption, Echoing, Poor Light, Slick, Stench)

Health: 13 (20)

Willpower: 8

Satiety: 7

Size: 6 (13 when adopting the beast-shape)

Speed: 17

Defense: 6

Initiative: 8

Armor: 7 (from Impenetrable Skin)

Beast-Shapes: Impenetrable Skin, Legendary Size, Splinter, Superior Atavism (Cyclopean Strength), Terrible Mien, Titanic Onslaught, Unnatural Healing

HERO

The first hit came out of nowhere. Ben had barely entered his living room when something slammed into him from behind the door, sending him sprawling over the sofa. He landed hard, off-balance and hurting. Nothing had really so much as scratched him since his Homecoming, and yet he could feel blood running down one side of his face and his side felt like it was on fire.

"About fucking time," said a familiar voice. Ben rolled on his side and blinked up at the shape above him, but even when his eyes focused his shock didn't go away. Ryan. The skinny kid was holding something hooked and almost as tall as he was, raised above his head to strike. "I've been waiting for this for weeks!"

"Ryan, you need to run the fuck away right now," Ben caught Ryan's wide, manic eyes and tried to send the Nightmare to him, but the skinny kid just laughed in his face and slammed the hook down, ripping into Ben's shoulder. He screamed and grabbed at the metal but it burned his hands just to touch it.

"Metal from a sunken ship's anchor," Ryan said with a look of great satisfaction, digging the hook in deeper. He looked down at Ben with pride and fished a necklace out from under his shirt, held it up for him to see. "Same deal here. I know how your kind work! I saw your tricks up close, remember?"

"Fuck you!" Nightmares might be off the table, but that wasn't all he had to offer. Ben pushed back the pain and grabbed Ryan's ankle, managing to snag it with one hand at the cost of digging the hook in even more. One hand was all he needed, though, and Ben felt his Soul's strength surge through him, snapping Ryan's ankle with a sharp cracking sound. Ryan fell backwards onto the couch, pulling the hook free in the process, and Ben dragged himself to his feet.

"Back!" Ryan shouted, holding up the necklace. Ben staggered backward as if he'd been punched, still not quite believing what was happening. James had warned him about this, but this was just unreal.

"Ben!" Noel burst through the doorway, sizing the scene up and heading straight for Ryan. "Bad call, fucker." Noel growled, hands hooking into claws as he advanced.

"Back!" Ryan shouted again, shoving at the advancing vampire.

"Oh, honey," Noel said, almost apologetic, and tore out the boy's throat out with a casual swipe of his hand. Ryan's mouth fell open, but whatever words he had were lost in a gurgle as his blood streamed down his chest, turning his shirt black in the dim light. Noel hardly broke stride as he went to his boyfriend. "What happened? Baby, you're hurt!"

"I'll be fine," Ben managed, gritting his teeth. He put his arm around Noel and the vampire took his weight effortlessly. "We have to get out of here. Now."

"Yeah, but we should probably clean up-"

"No," Ben said, and his tone made Noel meet his gaze. "*We* need to *leave*. The three of us. Right now." He was starting to feel faint, but fortunately Noel caught his meaning, and carried him out of the house without another word, leaving Ryan behind, entombed in the mausoleum of Ben's old life.

TALES OF THE DARK MOTHER

MALCOLM

No one visits the greenhouse at night. Very few visit it during the day to begin with; with severe municipal budget cuts, the park staff can't afford to keep it maintained, deterring all but the most die-hard armchair horticulturalists, who marvel at the "anonymous" donations of rare varietals I bring here. I take care of my plants and they take care of me. The greenery here does not directly obey me like it does in the place I call home, but it doesn't have to.

At night, even amorous teenagers and others looking for private dark corners stay away. The brave ones who do visit the greenhouse at night never stick around for long, and their nightmares taste like candy.

Tonight, I'm sprawled out in the thick patch of mayapples in the back corner. The little blossoms that hide beneath their giant leaves have just begun to open. Only children bother to look underneath the leaves, and even then, only when they know the flowers are there. I normally don't spend time in this patch, but tonight, it called to me, and the plants and the very earth cradle me, much like it did at my second birth. The leaves sway and brush my skin in a gentle caress, and the stems seem to move of their own accord, stroking my hair from my face. I know I am not alone in my verdant refuge, but the presence swallows me, my doubts, and those lingering fears that keep me all too human. For now, I am my Mother's son, and nothing more. A deep soul-rumbling purr reverberates in my chest.

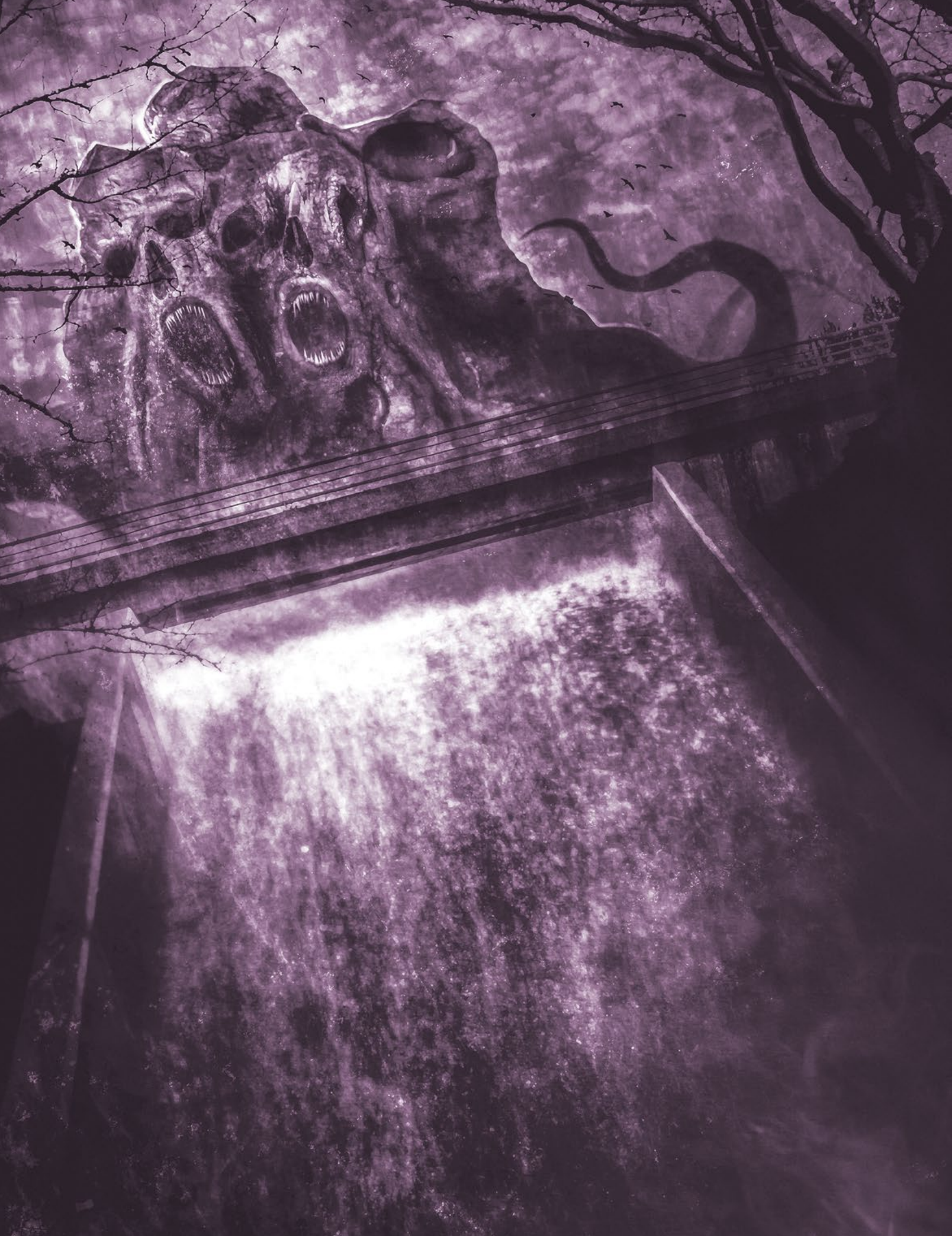
"...the fuck was that?"

I can feel the adrenaline shoot through my body, tensing my muscles. Anger not my own turns that purr into a growl that I only just keep contained. I lie still as the scent of sweat and fear not my own travels straight to my nose. A glittering spray of broken glass lays inches from my feet, defiled by bootprints. Bright sweeps of light cross the leaves erratically.

"Never mind that!" another voice hisses. "Let's just get the stuff and get out of here."

The footsteps thump and crunch through, getting slightly fainter as these two fools mutter to each other and shatter pots in their search. Their own noises disguise the rustle of leaves as I rise from the mayapples. My footfalls are nowhere near as heavy; I know just where and how to step to follow them. I feel larger, fuller, and so much than the skin, muscle, and bone that contains me. When I bear down upon these intruders, it is not just me, but this all-encompassing presence that fills my chest that demands to know who dares disturb our place and our moment.

The scent of fresh meat and offal fills the greenhouse as I return to my bed of mayapples. I sink my bloodied fingers into the dirt, and the blossoms open just for me. They close again when I leave at dawn.



Chapter Six
Beasts of the World

Beasts aren't born in vacuums. They grow up in human homes, hunt in human cities, and feed on human nightmares. Those nightmares are the weight of countless cultures, just as much as the monsters who haunt them. Every nation has its legends, after all, just as every small town has its campfire tales. Gather 'round.

The Darkness in the Trees

The full moon rises over an endless expanse of pines. We've spent the last three days going around in circles through this forest without running into any signs of civilization. The cell phones are dead, not that they had any signal before they died. The only breaks from the monotony of our journey have been the occasional glimpses we've had of a shadow dogging our steps, growing closer with each passing day. We'd stop for the night if we weren't afraid it would catch us in the darkness.

God damn, I hate New Jersey.

Although the popular conception of New Jersey consists largely of urban sprawl, the immense wilderness of the Pine Barrens stretches across nearly a quarter of the state. True, the edges have been nibbled away by strip centers and suburbs, and almost half a million people live here (a tiny fraction of New Jersey's population), but vast areas of largely untouched forest remain, protected by federal law, an ocean of trees less than two hours drive from the asphalt and steel heart of Manhattan.

Innumerable pitch pines rise up out of sandy soil too poor to support most crops, which is what kept the area largely unsettled for centuries. Large swampy areas make the pine forests seem downright visitor-friendly by comparison. Forest fires, both natural and man-made are frequent, a cycle of destruction and renewal. Along with the carnivorous plants and the blueberries, a unique breed of people has managed to carve out a life here, the Pineys. These are the people who have managed to eke a living for centuries out of a region deemed unfit for settlement by most, descendants of hunters, bandits, moonshiners, but most of all survivors.

> I saw the world I had walked since my birth and I understood how fragile it was, that the reality I knew was a thin layer of icing on a great dark birthday cake writhing with grubs and nightmares and hunger.
>
> —Neil Gaiman, *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*

History

During the 18th and 19th centuries the Pine Barrens were a major center of American iron production, bog iron deposited by waters bubbling up from the depths of the earth. The industry, if not the iron-rich waters, dried up, leaving abandoned foundries and villages in its wake. This pattern was repeated with a number of industries, littering the region with failed settlements. In 1978 the federal government created the 1.1 million acre New Jersey Pinelands National Reserve in order to protect the Pine Barrens and its vast aquifer from development.

Beasts have lurked in the Pines for centuries, from Collectors and Predators among bandits such as the 18th century Pine Robbers, to Tyrants and Ravagers accelerating the boom and bust cycles of the various ghost towns. At present, however, the area offers little to tempt most Hungers, the unregulated

small towns at the heart of the east coast calmed significantly by the modern era. The pines, though, remain.

And then there's the Devil.

The most famous denizen of the Pines, the Jersey Devil is firmly entrenched in popular culture, even appearing as the mascot of New Jersey's professional hockey team. The most common legend about the Devil purports that it is the son of Mother Leeds, an 18th century Pine Barrens resident who cursed the child to be a devil after finding herself pregnant for the 13th time. Locals describe it with varying features, commonly wings, hooves, and a horse's head. In any case, whatever the Devil's true nature and origin, Beasts in the Pines ought to keep their eyes out for any shadows in the trees. It wouldn't do to miss meeting such a famous cousin.

Story Hooks

A short drive from a number of major cities, the Pine Barrens could well draw any number of Beasts to poke around its isolate areas. They might come to investigate the reports of the willow-the-wisp-like apparitions known as the Pine Lights and whether they are ghosts, spirits, omens of the area's frequent fires, or simply swamp gas. They might also be drawn by the persistent rumors that somewhere deep in Pines lies a ghost town not visited by the tourists or marked on any maps. Some Pineys tell tales of finding it crumbling and covered in huge, strangely colored sundews. Of course, given its extreme notoriety, the obvious target of inquiry for most is the Jersey Devil. Having evaded capture or explanation for generations, it must be inhumanly crafty, dangerous, or something far stranger than a mere horse-headed flying humanoid. In any event, Beasts wandering around the Pine Barrens are much more likely to run into Edna the Strangler than the Devil.

Edna is an Eshmaki who retreated to the isolation of the Pine Barrens decades ago after undergoing Merger. Once the youngest daughter of a wealthy Delaware family, her Hunger for Punishment led her to destroy everyone close to her. Systematically murdering all of her friends and family drove her to the bestial state of Merger and the only slightly less-bestial state of New Jersey. In the manner of her famous predecessor in the wilds around Thebes, she stalks the Pines searching for victims unable to answer her questions. A skeletal figure creeping through the Pines, she is likely the source of many purported Devil sightings, as anyone who gets a good enough look to tell the difference is unlikely to be in a state to report it (or anything else).

Beasts searching for the Devil may well find that they've been tracking Edna instead. Beasts may also seek out Edna for knowledge. She knows more about the Pine Barrens than any living creature, including the final resting place of a significant proportion of those who have gone missing in the Pines and lord knows what other tidbits picked up during a decades of riddling and strangling in the World of Darkness. Whether she greets Beasts as long-lost kin or with a riddle once they find her depends largely on whim. She gets so few visitors, after all. She may have to do something about that. Setting herself up on a road and cutting a town off from the rest of the world would be perfectly in keeping with the tradition...and the Pine Barrens has so many appropriately lonely roads.

(As a point of interest, **World of Darkness: Urban Legends** presents a different take on the Jersey Devil, but there's no reason that book's version and Edna couldn't co-exist.)

Blood on the Border

Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, is a city of industry with 1.5 million residents and hundreds of maquiladoras pumping out goods for the vast market of the United States just across the Rio Bravo (called Rio Grande by the gringos). A city of dark mystery, with thousands disappeared and killed by unknown assailants. A city of smuggling, with unbelievable quantities of narcotics flowing north toward that same vast market. A city of violence, temporarily quiescent as the government abandons its war on the cartels and the victors lick their wounds. A city that ebbs and flows with the twin tides of hope and despair.

Juárez holds both promise and danger for Beasts as well. On the one hand, it seems to offer a vast smorgasbord of opportunities to satisfy their Hungers with little chance of being caught. The city is rife with property crime, providing many opportunities for Collectors and the other Hungers to find ample victims among the workers in the maquiladoras and migrants heading north. But powerful predators, from drug cartels to vampire cabals, have already staked claims to this hunting ground, and a pair of twin Heroes are turning the tables on Beasts lured to the city.

How It Happened

Although the area around Ciudad Juárez has been inhabited for thousands of years by bands of hunter-gatherers and later by corn-growing agriculturalists, the history of the city itself began in 1659, when Mission Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe was established by the Franciscan order to proselytize to the local native population. From this mission, which still stands in the city, a small community grew on the trade route from Santa Fe to Chihuahua. Aside from a few ambiguous petroglyphs, the first evidence of Beasts in Paso del Norte as Juárez was then known dates from this era. A written account of a Spanish brood headed toward Santa Fe to investigate reports of vampires among the Pueblo peoples mentions passing through the town in 1678. The Pueblo Revolt of 1680 then sent colonial and pro-Spanish Indian refugees flooding into the outpost.

Paso del Norte passed through the Mexican War of Independence of the early 19th century relatively unscathed, but shifts in the river had a lasting impact, putting several local communities on the north side of the Rio Bravo's new course. The Texas Revolution too had little effect on Juárez, despite the new Republic's claim of the Rio Bravo as its southern border. It

was not until the Mexican-American War that Paso del Norte was separated from the outlying communities on the north bank of the river that would eventually birth its American twin, El Paso.

In 1888 the city was renamed in honor of President Benito Juárez, whose army had passed through the city during his campaign against the Mexican Empire under French-born Emperor Maximillian (a complicated subject, Mexican history). The city played host to a summit between Mexican President Pofirio Diaz and American President William Howard Taft in 1909. A would-be assassin with a concealed pistol was arrested within a few feet of the presidents. Reports that the assassin was connected with one of the broods contesting control of the Chazimal are probably spurious.

Further shifts in the river over the course of decades had left hundreds of acres known as the Chamizal under uncertain national jurisdiction. In the absence of clear national authority, the area became a haven for criminal activity. In addition to mundane criminal gangs, several broods battled for control over the area until the international dispute was finally settled in 1963.

The second half of the 20th century saw the emergence of both the maquiladoras and drug cartels, fueled by America's twin thirsts for consumer goods and narcotics. The two combined horribly in the 1990s and 2000s when thousands, many workers in the maquiladoras, died and disappeared as cartel violence escalated and lawlessness reigned supreme. The Juárez and Sinaloa Cartels battled for control over the lucrative path north for their drugs, while the military battled both. For a time, Juárez had the highest official murder rate in the world.

This very public conflict, however, masked a much stranger war. For decades, most of Ciudad Juárez was the territory of a group of werewolves known as Los Señores de Frontera, the Lords of the Border. They grew rich and fat, like ticks on the city's relative prosperity. With the rise of narcotics trafficking, the group of werewolf packs called Las Sombras began to accumulate wealth and influence by skillfully moving people and contraband across the border. Los Señores were unwilling to release their hold on the city and the newcomers were unwilling to limit their expansion in deference to the existing packs. Exacerbating the feud, Los Señores were "Pure" and Las Sombras were "Forsaken," two sides of a larger lycanthrope feud largely opaque to outsiders. Thus began a conflict every bit as bitter as a more mundane cartel war. It raged first in the shadows, then increasingly in the open. Finally, a few years ago, the smugglers seized the upper hand with a series of car-bombings that destroyed the leadership of the Lords. With their rivals effectively decapitated, Las Sombras power spread was checked only by the need to escape the notice of mundane cartels and law enforcement. In the last year, however, the remnants of Los Señores have regrouped. War is returning to Juárez.

A development of particular interests to Beasts has arisen only in the last few years: the appearance of Los Gemelos, the Twins. Reputedly a pair of identical twins, their existence was first rumored after a half-dozen Beasts from various broods were killed over the course of a year. The murders, seemingly unrelated, had the hallmarks of typical cartel killings. They were at first thought to simply be part of the rising tide of violence affecting the city as a whole, but after witnesses reported a pair of men leaving the last two body dumps, Juarense Beasts began to suspect a pair of Heroes. Although no more Beasts have been found executed, Los Gemelos have obtained an almost mythic status, blamed for any Beast who drops out of sight in the city or even more minor instances of bad luck.

Places

Mission Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe

The seed from which the grand, grubby flower of Ciudad Juárez has sprouted, the Mission has stood at the heart of the city for over three and a half centuries. Although overshadowed by the mid-1950s cathedral that stands next to it, it still holds a great deal importance to the city and its people. It is rumored among the stranger residents of the city that the Mission serves as a sort of taproot for Juárez, giving it life, anchoring it in the dusty earth of North Mexico. No one is quite sure what that would mean if something bad were to happen to it, but no one particularly wishes to find out first hand.

Bridge of the Americas

The only free crossing from Juárez into El Paso, four separate bridges straddle the sluggish, muddy Rio Bravo. Tens of thousands of cars, trucks, and pedestrians pass each way every day. People cross for shopping, for work, for school, for fun, and for darker reasons. It is a liminal space, neither quite America nor quite Mexico, despite the signs saying otherwise. People crossing from each side should expect the possibility of a stop for a thorough search. It is an inconvenience at the best of times and quite possibly a deadly delay when, say, attempting to outrun a Hero across the bridges at 3 AM.

Arroyo Lobo

A long, low, rut in the earth, hardly worthy of the term arroyo (creek), Arroyo Lobo lays in a barren stretch of land outside of Juárez. The occasional rainstorm might send a small torrent of brown water rushing down its course toward larger creeks and eventually the Rio Bravo, but most of the year it is barely recognizable as a ditch. Its only remarkable feature is the regular sightings of the endangered red wolf in the area, though local wisdom tends to hold this to be overblown reports of coyotes. Those who have the slightest knowledge of the werewolf packs of Juárez, however, know better. For whatever reason, the arroyo seems to be a center of their activity at certain points in the lunar cycle. Given their preoccupation with territory and rather fierce disposition even in matters not touching upon their peculiar tribal beliefs, most people with even the slightest hint of what goes on there stay well away from this desolate little ditch. Of course, Beasts aren't particularly known for keeping their noses out of places they're not welcome.

Cantina Amarilla

A small bar located in one of the city's *colonias* (slums or shanty towns), Cantina Amarilla is a small cinder block building between an abandoned storefront and a discount nail salon, painted what can only be charitably called yellow, faded by the sun and obscured by dust. The beer is only barely cool and the snacks are inedible, but this hole in the wall serves as a meeting ground for Beasts. Claimed by none of the local broods or anything else for that matter, the couple of filthy booths at the back of the bar have seen information traded and territorial disputes discussed for at least a decade.

Brothers & Sisters

Julio the Coyote

He's not a literal coyote, of course, just one player among the booming people-smuggling industry across the US-Mexico border. True, the young coyote is paler and more feral looking than most, but most migrants don't pick their guides based on personal appearance. And yes, moving parties only at night is a bit unusual, but makes a great deal of sense when evading the Border Patrol. The fact that many of his charges arrive at their destinations weak, pale, or not at all is only to be expected in such a difficult journey. Unaffiliated with any larger smuggling concern, Julio is concerned mainly with filling his pockets with money and his belly with blood. Though Beasts are unlikely to need to avail themselves of his services, Julio has contacts throughout the city for whom he has moved people and stranger things across the border.

In **Requiem** terms, Julio is an unaligned Gangrel.

Isabella Rodriguez

Plenty of people collect cars. Isabella the Giant just happens to collect cars owned by other people, and doesn't like to pay for them. One of a large number of carjackers in Juárez, Isabella distinguishes herself from her peers by targeting cars based not on the price they will fetch in the city's chop shops, but instead on aesthetic appeal. It's also fairly unusual for a middle-aged mother of three to be pulling strangers out of cars to steal them. Nonetheless, she has rows of pilfered vehicles parked on an empty stretch of dirt surrounded by cheap fencing somewhere off of an isolate road outside of the city nonetheless.

Las Sombras

Literally translated as "The Shadows," this group of loosely affiliated werewolf packs patrols territory across Ciudad Juárez. This is not to say, however, that those areas are under exclusive werewolf control. Even werewolves don't want to piss off the cartels. Instead they operate on a much lower level, using their ability to step sideways into the Shadow (and occasionally more mundane methods) to smuggle drugs into the United States and guns back into Juárez. The cartels don't ask many questions

as long as their deliveries are made on time, an arrangement which suits the wolves just fine. Explaining that one routinely takes packets of drugs through a twisted conceptual otherworld is not an explanation that would fill the *narcotrafficantes* with confidence.

Generally, the packs operate as something halfway between smugglers and street gangs, making their money moving product and controlling a physical territory in the city. While there are certainly occasional scraps between the packs over business, territory, and things only comprehensible to werewolves, they will coordinate a response against outside threats. Me against my brother, me and my brother against my cousin, me and my cousin against the three-headed man-eating chupacabra killing people on the edge of town.

In **Forsaken** terms, Las Sombras are a loose confederation of packs, composed mainly of Iron Masters and Bone Shadows.

Threats

Los Gemelos

The biggest threat to any Beasts in Ciudad Juárez, the Twins are a particularly crafty pair of Heroes named Hector and Ulysse Garcia. Brutal mid-level cartel players, they are experienced with violence and wield a great deal of influence, but this is not what makes them particularly dangerous to the Beasts of Juárez. No, what makes Hector and Ulysse so dangerous is that they've figured out how to game the narrative. They've learned since the first Beast they slew took Ulysse's eye in the struggle. They no longer try to confront Beasts in their Lairs, but instead attack Beasts in locations that they can control. They hold stakes in a number of night clubs and other businesses around the city where the employees are well trained to spot prey for their bosses, acting as passive traps, even luring in Beasts from El Paso. If the twins find evidence of a Beast outside of these controlled environments, they will cautiously investigate and learn as much about a Beast and her Hunger before using that information to lure her to a prepared kill site. Los Gemelos are an existential threat to the Beasts of Juárez and anyone else who crosses them.

Los Senores de Frontera

The Lords of the Border sounds rather grandiose for a handful of werewolves, the mid- and low-level survivors of their disastrous war with the wolves, but they are sticklers for tradition. Yet for all their pretensions to feudal nobility, they are now little more than a street gang with fangs. Los Señores have only a small fraction of their previous numbers, the barest shadow of their previous influence in civic affairs, and a few poor scraps of their previous territories. Yet, like the cut-off arm of a starfish, they continue on trying to regrow. They hold on to what they have left with all the fierceness of a cornered rat, lashing out at anyone that threatens their remaining territory, and are making preparations to renew their conflict with Las Sombras.

In **Forsaken** terms Los Señores are an Ivory Claw pack, formed from the remnants of several previous packs.

El Buitre

No one quite knows who or what is leaving freshly de-fleshed skeletons in the desert outside of Juárez, but theories about. Most agree on a name, El Buitre ("the Vulture"), after the way the corpses are picked clean, as if by a carrion bird. Some say that it's a deranged anatomist, conducting human (and possibly inhuman) vivisections and leaving the remains of his or her work so that the public too may decode its secrets. Others believe that a disease is spreading throughout the city, driving some of its sufferers into the desert where they bloom into gray flowers of flesh before liquefying. Then the rumors fly that clouds of carrion beetles stalk the desert at night looking for prey. Finally, and perhaps strangest of all, people in the *colonias* whisper that the skeletons are the leavings of ancient Aztec witches who survived as flayed skin and flesh, flensing their victims, burning the flesh as an offering to their gods, and taking the new skeletons for themselves so they might walk the streets of Juárez.

Hooks

A Friend in Need

A Beast, friendly with the player's brood, has gone missing. In a striking deviation from their usual modus operandi (but an occurrence not at all unusual for Juárez), Los Gemelos have contacted the brood, claiming to have kidnapped the missing Beast and demanding a ransom in cash. The ransom is significantly more than the brood has on hand and they are given only 48 hours to come up with the money and exchange it for their friend. They are likewise warned that any attempt to contact their friend through his Lair will result in his execution. Will they try to track down the Twins and rescue their friend? Will they go along with the exchange? If so, how will they put together the ransom? Is it a trap and are they willing to try anyway? Are these kidnappers even the Twins?

Development

Mission Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe is in peril. A developer had decided that it would make the perfect site for his next project and has managed to grease all the right palms to get ahold of the property and the permits necessary to demolish the mission. Given the rumors about the connection between the mission and the city this is naturally concerning to the player's brood as a catastrophe befalling the city is unlikely to spell good things for them. Do they stop the development by subtle bureaucratic intrigue, a naked show of force, or something more convoluted. Once the development is stopped was it the property market driving this scheme, or something more sinister (like a grand revenge plot by the Lords of the Border to pull the city down around the ears of their enemies)?

Border Crossing

A player's character needs to smuggle someone north across the river without disclosing their nature. This person may be a desperate mundane friend or relative without the time or

ability to procure a so-called "laser visa" or a client willing to pay for the trip north with information, artifacts, or cold hard cash. The brood could, of course, simply stuff the person in the trunk of their car and drive across one of the bridges, but every year the Border Patrol gets better at picking out those that try. They could hire a mundane coyote for the trip, but they are notoriously unreliable. They could try to make a wilderness crossing themselves, but that again requires playing cat and mouse with the Border Patrol and in a much less comfortable environment. Finally, they might hire Las Sombras or Julio to take them across, but that risks more exposure to the strange and they're likely to want more than simple cash in payment.

Dia de los Muertos

As it does every year, the Day of the Dead has come to Ciudad Juárez and it isn't just a time for sugar skulls, *ofrendas*, and festive *caleveras*. The dead walk freely for the next two days and Beasts are more likely than most to attract ghosts. Who comes to the players' characters and what do they do? Do old dead friends come and beg for help finishing the tasks they have left undone? Do vanquished enemies return from beyond the grave and seek revenge upon the Beasts and those they love? Do the Beasts strike a bargain with the strange ghost/spirit/human Sin Eaters to assist them with wrangling whatever unquiet dead trouble the brood? Do dead family and loved ones return simply to celebrate the holiday? Whatever the ghosts and the player's brood are doing, they'd better do it before dawn on November 3rd when the holiday ends, or else wait an entire year.

Songs of a Dying Sea

Out past the salt flats the water of the Salton Sea laps gently against the shore. The sun beats down on decades-old abandoned trailers and machinery corroding under a coating of salt and mud. Dead fish, the victims of lethal algae blooms, float to the surface of the water and rot. A tiny desert community clings to life amid the ghosts of past vacations. When night falls and the only sound is the lapping of the water, something stalks its dreams.

Bombay Beach doesn't have much to it anymore, just a handful of homes on the west side of the Salton Sea, a large salt lake in southwest California. It isn't even an incorporated city, just a name on the sign of the now closed local restaurant and less than 300 souls huddled on the shore of the lake in the lowest community in the country. As the Sea feeds on agricultural runoff and Mexican sewer outflow, it slowly increases in salinity, killing all but the hardiest species of fish. The current government scheme to rescue the Sea will create a horseshoe lake, leaving the center dry.

History

The history of the Salton Sea, and by extension Bombay Beach, begins long before the arrival of man in the Americas. A vast, shallow sea covered the region, depositing the salt that is its namesake. Millions of years later, a lake in the Salton Sink followed a seemingly endless cycle of death and rebirth, filling and drying with changing rainfall. In time, men and women came to what would be the Imperial Valley, first the Native Americans from the north, then the Spanish from the south, and finally American settlers, pouring in from the East. The basin was dead and dry by the time the settlers arrived, but they built a town called Salton and mined the area for salt.

In 1905, flood waters from the Colorado River ran down an irrigation canal and through a dyke and ultimately into the Salton Sink. For two years the Colorado River poured into the basin, creating the lake now known as the Salton Sea and burying the town of Salton beneath its waters. Farmers across the Imperial Valley Stories still tell stories about the great flood and the 80-foot high waterfall. More rarely, they tell a tale that places the blame for the flooding squarely on the shoulders of the California Development Company engineers, claiming that the head gates of the canal were sabotaged to drown something found at the bottom of a salt mine.

Intermittent flooding in the area continued until the construction of one of the great engineering wonders of the modern age, the Hoover Dam, tamed the mighty Colorado River. Gone were the great wild rushes of floodwaters, replaced by the controlled flow of man-made drainage. In the 1950s there were efforts to develop the Salton Sea as a resort destination; towns sprung up around the lake, including Bombay Beach.

Story Hooks

Beneath the picturesque ruins and smooth water, however, lies something much less pleasant than the congenial exercise in entropy those occasional tourists photograph for their desktop backgrounds. Something stirs ever so softly beneath the increasingly salty Salton Sea. That something calls to the residents of the small community of Bombay Beach in their dreams. Visitors too, those few who stop off at the seaside campsite to sleep, may have these dreams. It might even fill the dreams of the strange men in black suits or black-eyed children who show up occasionally when lights streak across the sky. Whoever dreams of it finds their sleep filled with impressions of great dark shapes floating and a sense of impending doom; some of them have even decided to act on their dreams.

Perhaps it's whatever lies at the bottom of the salt mine from the old tales, stirring as it senses the possibility of freedom from its prison. Under the current plan, large areas of the lake could be gone by 2035. If the mine lays underneath one of those areas, an ancient evil could be freed by the best of intentions and sweep straight into the arms of disciples prepared by decades of dreams. Aquatically inclined Beasts might try to dive down to the mine and confront the evil while it's still relatively powerless; landlubbers will have to be more creative.

Perhaps it's the ghost of the ancient shallow sea, living one of a long series of half-lives, brought on by thousands of years of the lake disappearing and reappearing on the ancient sea's bed.

A vast and mighty entity now bottled up in a mere endorheic lake. Maybe it can sense the end of a cycle, the plans to shrink the Salton Sea to a horseshoe, leaving it with an even more constrained existence. Like a fox cornered by hounds, it seeks any means of escape, anything to prevent it from returning to the dry basin, as it has so many times before. The small fleshy creatures living on its shores, touching upon its dreams, might provide just such an escape. Of course there's a good chance that these creatures will not do well with an ocean distributed throughout their minds, but the desperate, half-sleeping ghost of an ancient sea is willing to take that risk.

These problems, of course, lie sometime in the future. The more immediate issue is the worrying reaction of the residents of Bombay Beach to the otherworldly entity brushing up against their unconscious minds. Though most of the residents little stock in their strange dreams, as the rest of us do, a few have begun interpreting them as signs and visions. They have come together, discussed them, and have come to the conclusion that something below the Salton Sea is powerful, trapped, and needs their assistance. They hope that if they help it, they will be repaid in kind. So far their assistance has largely been limited to driving boats out into the center of the lake and doing some chanting in bathrobes. Last week they spilt the blood of a goat into the Sea at the height of their ceremony. It had no effect, so perhaps a larger sacrifice is needed.

The Slate Wiped Clean

A thriving city rises up from the swamps and salt and sand dunes of South Australia. Teeming masses go about their daily business without fear of predators lurking in the shadows, at least aside from the venomous snakes. No unnatural tentacles snake in and out of the city's institutions, crushing any attempt at improvement; the only corruption in the city, though certainly not absent, is entirely human. By the standards of the World of Darkness, it's damn near a utopia: a city without monsters. For the Children, it's damn near a nightmare, a post-apocalyptic landscape wiped clean by an unknown force. Even Beasts fear bigger monsters.

Adelaide, the capital of the state of South Australia, is a city of 1.3 million people situated on the south coast of Australia. The city runs in a broad strip from north to south with the Gulf of St. Vincent to the West and the Adelaide Hills to the east. The city, as is typical for one of its size, is thoroughly surrounded by suburbs. Nearly a third of its population is immigrants, comprising robust ethnic communities in the city and suburbs. All in all, it presents the image of a pleasant coastal regional capital.

History

Adelaide was founded in 1836 and laid out the next year as a capital for the new province of South Australia, in an area known to the Aboriginal Kauma people as Male Red Kangaroo Rock. Unusually for Australia, its early residents were not convicts from Britain, but instead immigrants attracted to the new community.

The letters of a Melbourne brood based in the 1850s, now found in the collection of Arthur's Sons, a brood of the same city, show one side of a correspondence between the brood and an associate named Jim Dalton who moved to Adelaide. Before stopping abruptly, the letters note the complete absence of any supernatural creatures among the population of the city and the minutiae of the life of a Beast in 19th century Australia. Further letters from a pair of brood members dispatched to investigate his disappearance show the search proved to be fruitless.

Ted Derby, a Namtaru passing through Adelaide on his way to fight in Gallipoli during the Great War, recorded his impressions of the city in his diary. He wrote of a nest of vampires entrenched in the city, preying primarily on sailors and soldiers passing through the port. When he returned three years later via the same city, sans his left foot, he found neither hide nor hair of the vampires. After spending a couple weeks searching the city, during which he was only able to determine that they had all vanished at about the same time, Derby gave up his inquiry and returned home.

Finally, in the 1980s, a brood out of Perth flew in to investigate the continuing rumors that Adelaide was fundamentally inimical to supernatural existence. They kept in regular touch with friends in Perth by phone. They managed to track down a single cousin in the area, a werewolf trucker who occasionally passed through the area. He told them that he had known a pack in the city that had disappeared only a few months before. Investigation of the residence of one of the disappeared found the house abandoned and in disarray. A single word was gouged, as if by a large claw, into the drywall of its bathroom: BUNYIP. The calls from Adelaide stopped soon after.

Story Hooks

An entire city lies apparently empty of supernatural residents. This anomaly alone would provide a tempting mystery to a brood of curious Beasts. They might hear of it from the rumors that have spread across the country and beyond. They may have a friend who traveled to the city and went silent. They might even arrive ignorant of the state of affairs and have to recognize the city's emptiness and find the reason for it before they too end up cleansed.

The key to the nature of the threat can be found in the last message of the pack in the '80s, "Bunyip." It seems a bit strange at first, a mythical outback water beast haunting Adelaide and periodically removing any trespassers within its territory. The true situation is much stranger. The legends of the Bunyip put it at billabongs, rivers, and swamps across Australia, but it's not the water that Bunyips emerge from, it's the reflections. Naturally, the most common reflective surfaces in pre-contact Australia were bodies of water.

The legends also provide some insight into the form of the Bunyip. Reports give the creatures varying features. This

is because no two of the creatures are precisely alike, pulling their malformed bodies together on the fly as they enter our world. They stare out from our mirrors and windows, surveying their territory and watching for interlopers until particular astronomical alignments allow them to swarm out and pull the interlopers back into their realm.

The notes of previous investigators may provide guidance. The brood from the '80s kept detailed audio recordings of their interviews and discussions. They still lie in the not-so-safe-room the brood left behind, hidden in a warehouse, including the tape left running as the mirror shimmered and death emerged. In the early nineties, a cabal of mages posted detailed calculations that could predict the dates of Bunyip sightings based on a number of astronomical factors to an obscure BBS. What does the Brood do with all this information? Do they contrive to be out of town on the appropriate dates and do circumstances force them to stay? Do they attempt to take the fight to the Bunyip, pushing back through the temporarily permeable membranes of reflections, even knowing the danger of confronting a creature in its lair? Do they simply decide to leave the city and its unpleasant inhabitants behind?

A City at the Edge of the World

Cape Town is teeming multicultural metropolis on the African coast, a vacation destination for thousands from across the globe, twenty years free of South Africa's brutal Apartheid regime. Yet that promise is not delivered to all. Vast slums exist on the edges of town. Crime runs rampant across the city. Political corruption is met not with outrage, but with apathy. The city may have shed its racist past, but new problems pile upon the old. Nearly 4 million people live here, perched on the shore of the South Atlantic and the future.

Cultures have been mixing in Cape Town for over three centuries, as have their secrets and mythologies. The result is one of the more unusual supernatural landscapes in the world. The nightmares of Holland, Africa, and England all clash together in a tempest through which the city's Beasts stalk. Secret societies of enlightenment-era Europe fuse with tribal mystical traditions, and multicultural millions lie waiting to sate the Hungers of Beasts.

How It Happened

Evidence speaks of a human presence on the Cape Peninsula going back millennia, but Cape Town's Western history begins in 1652 when the Dutch East India Company, or VOC, sent employees to set up a way station for ships passing between Europe and the company's holdings in the East Indies. Several years later, the colony began construction on Castle of Good Hope, now the oldest surviving building in South Africa.

During this time period a number of European Beasts and cousins passed through Cape Town on their way to points east and west, recording brief descriptions of the outpost. Although no such records from their counterparts among the native Khoisan peoples survive, we know that the two groups eventually melded into the hybrid cultures we see today. Eventually the VOC went bankrupt under the weight of pervasive corruption. Soon after, the British captured Cape Town from the Dutch, cementing their hold in 1806. Sometime around this upheaval, the Cape Town Consilium, the body presiding over most Cape Town mages to this day, coalesced from European and African mages living in the area.

Starting in 1836, ten thousand Afrikaaner farming families, known as Boers, headed northeast from the Cape Colony in a journey known as the Great Trek. British conflicts with them and their descendants known as the Boer Wars broke out in 1880 and 1899. After their defeat in the second war, the Boers were annexed into the British Cape Colony. Tensions in Cape Town during the build up to the Second Boer War ran so deep that a brood of Afrikaaner Beasts tore a British Eshmaki limb from limb in broad daylight in an incident still whispered from brood to brood to this day.

Shortly after the turn of the century, a radical modernist movement began to spread among the younger mages of the Cape. Since its inception, seats on the Cape Town Consilium had been filled by unanimous agreement of the current members. Given that the Consilium acted as a ruling body, this did not sit well with many mages experienced in more democratic systems of government. Although it never boiled over into outright civil war, the low-grade conflict between the reformers and those in power smoldered for decades.

Conversely, in wider South Africa, the current ran against a more democratic society in 1948 with the election of the National Party. It was they who instituted the policy of apartheid, which split all of South Africa into white, coloured (the term coloured refers to the predominant ethnic group in Cape Town and the rest of the Western Cape, a largely Afrikaans-speaking people of European and African ancestry), black, and Indian components and segregated almost all aspects of everyday life, displacing millions. Within two decades, coloured South Africans were completely stripped of the right to vote (blacks and Indians had never been able to). These measures met with widespread resistance from non-whites; the white minority government responded with even more repressive measures, spurring violent resistance. This climate of distrust, violence, and fear was a double-edged sword for Beasts of the time. Although it created more easy victims for their Hungers, it also created a climate in which they were more likely to lash back, not to mention making the everyday course of life much more difficult for non-white Beasts.

The apartheid regime fell through negotiations and cooperation. Nelson Mandela, a man who was once imprisoned on Robben Island in Cape Town's own Table Bay, was now the father of a new, multicultural, tolerant nation. It was too good to last for long, though. Lifting South Africans out of repression didn't lift all of them out of poverty. The HIV infection rate skyrocketed, creating a healthcare crisis of proportions unseen in modern history.

Crime also blossomed in the new Cape Town, standing in stark contrast to the booming development of the tourist

trade. Gang violence helped make the city one of the most dangerous on the entire continent, especially in the poor townships remaining as a lasting legacy of apartheid. In response, groups like People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD) formed to protest the killings. Unfortunately, PAGAD slid into vigilantism and murder itself, and finally transformed into something resembling a terrorist group with ties to radical Islam, associated with the bombings of targets representative of western influence, like Planet Hollywood. Several vampires took advantage of the chaos to lay deaths at the feet of the gangs or vigilantes, though at least one burned alive in her haven after PAGAD set fire to the house of a gangster next door.

A light did flare briefly at the turn of the millennium, though few were in a position to see it. After decades of agitation for change, the Cape Town Consilium finally relented and mages joined their sleeping brothers and sisters in having at least an approximation of a democratic government. Several reformers won seats on the Consilium in the first elections.

The crises of the past few decades have calmed somewhat. The revolutionaries both strange and mundane have held onto their positions, and, though the newfound power has corrupted some of them, at least they're somewhat stable. The broods across the city and townships that arose during the brutal repression of apartheid and the heady days of freedom that followed its end have begun to age. No one knows quite where the city or country is headed in the next few decades, but change is inevitable and that means opportunities for Beasts who can think on their feet.

Places

Cape Flats

As apartheid entered its most oppressive stage, the South African government began to push coloured residents out of the central and western areas of Cape Town and into this flat, sandy area to the Southeast. Some were placed in hastily-put-up housing units in the townships here, while others had to build their own after it became illegal to reside in their former homes. Black South Africans, illegally outside of their "Bantu Homelands," also built their shantytowns here on this desolate sheet of sand. Although the racist policies of the former government are gone, the Flats, as they are known locally, remain. Cape Town simply does not have enough housing for all of its citizens, and so, twenty years after the African National Congress pledged to provide homes for all of those in need, the shanties of the Flats remain. The poor and dispossessed are prime pickings for Hungers, but Beasts already have already claimed some of the townships as territory.

Devil's Peak

A name like Devil's Peak (or *Duiwelspiek* in the original Afrikaans) would seem to make a place a bit too obvious for anything really strange to be going on, but sometimes obvious is good advertising. Those demented, desperate, or drunk enough to want to try their hand at a Faustian bargain still flock to this mountain backdrop of the city, seeking to do as well as the legendary Capetonian who beat the Devil at pipe smoking. Where the marks congregate, the Unchained follow, seeking suckers to sign their souls and everything else away in pacts. Given the tension between Beasts and the Unchained, they would do well to keep away from the mountain unless they're looking for trouble.

The Port of Cape Town

Catering to ocean-going vessels was Cape Town's *raison d'etre* from its foundation. Though it has certainly sprouted and diversified in the intervening centuries, its port still sees a huge volume of traffic. From fresh fruit to fresh-caught fish, from tankers to tourists, nearly everything moves through Cape Town's bustling seaport. Cape Town Beasts know this is Ed Hendricks' territory and if they want something from docks, it's probably best to ask Ed, both for his expertise and common courtesy.

The Cape Town Consilium Chamber

Located in a basement in the Central Business District, much older than the block of office flats that lies above it, the precise whereabouts of the chamber is a closely guarded secret. In this chamber, hearings are held, bargains struck, and edicts handed down. This is the smoke-filled back room to end all smoke-filled back rooms. To be given access to it, Beasts would have to be dealing with the mages of Cape Town at the very highest level. For anyone to break in would mean tracking down its location, tearing through the toughest mystical protections, and dealing with a number of extremely pissed-off senior mages.

Brothers & Sisters

Cape Town Consilium

Nearly a century of struggle to get a seat at the table and it's only taken a decade for the new mages on the Cape Town Consilium to become everything they were fighting against: ossified, scheming, and power-hungry. The current Consilium still meets in the same chambers as the previous Consilium, runs its meetings according to the same rules, even has a significant proportion of the same members. Already new young Turks are clamoring for greater access to arcane libraries, mystical laboratories, and new avenues of research, while the old revolutionaries want to be able to enjoy the fruits of their struggle. In essence, the Consilium remains what it has always been, a hidebound group of senior mages largely unwilling to acquiesce to popular desires.

Rupert Mlilo

Rupert is twice a refugee, once from his homeland of Zimbabwe and again from the clutches of a terrifying creature

beyond a maze of thorns, who twisted and warped him into a small bent shell of his former self. Both times he has lost himself in the Cape Flats, scratching out a living repairing items picked out of trash piles and dumpsters. Beasts are likely to find him tinkering in the shack of reclaimed refuse that serves as his storefront, keeping a wary eye on the passers-by. If they can get him talking, they may find him a surprisingly good source of information on all sorts of things going on in his little corner of Cape Town. Crippling fear is an excellent motivation for keeping an eye out for anything the least bit unusual.

In **Changeling: The Lost** terms, Rupert is an Autumn Court Wizened.

Ed Hendricks

Ed Hendricks has roots in the sea. His people have been working at the Port of Cape Town for as long as anyone can remember. The natives in his family tree were probably gathering shellfish in Table Bay a thousand years before his Dutch ancestors caught sight of the Cape of Good Hope, and that's why no one is better than this Makara to help get anything in or out of Cape Town via boat. From guns, to artifacts, to coffin-shaped crates that absolutely must not be opened during the day, he's done it all. True, the occasional choice item goes missing in transit, but that's the risk of dealing with a hungry Beast. The rate is still lower than his competitors.

Jane Randall

Jane is a British-descended insurance analyst working on the 28th floor of the MetLife Building. From the window of her office ,she can see the City Bowl and its residents splayed out below her like a giant ant colony, which suits the Ugallu Predator quite well. She can watch her future prey from her perch like a hawk from a telephone pole, seeing them go about their daily business. When night comes, the access to the roof she's finagled from maintenance allows her to take flight from one of the highest points in the city.

Threats

The Muti Men

Less an organization than a group of loosely affiliated individuals in the same line of work, these hunters, witches, crooks, and con men are a danger to anyone they believe they can work into their medicines. If albino bone sells for exorbitant prices, just think what genuine powdered Griffin will go for. The actual efficacy of a particular practitioner's muti medicine makes very little difference to the poor fellow who's been partitioned and parceled off to some desperate soul looking for an HIV cure, or jerk buying a virility charm. Wise Beasts should watch their backs; the Muti Men could be anyone from an old granny living in a tin shack in an outlying township to those creepy suits from that pharmaceutical multinational operating out of that skyscraper downtown.

Theo Vanderberg

Many vampires have seen their societies changed unrecognizably over the years, but that change usually takes centuries. Theo Vanderberg has seen that change occur much more rapidly. A police officer dying in 1980 in a white minority-ruled, apartheid South Africa, he rapidly found himself thrust into the new, multicultural South Africa; for him, the experience has been far from pleasant. Robbed of the privileges he felt due to him by the color of his skin, his carefully developed network of influence was thrown into disarray by the fundamental societal changes; Vanderberg became a fossil not two decades after his death. His losses have made him bitter, violent, and have crystallized his racism in a way rare among the dead. Openly hostile to non-whites, even other vampires, any Beasts who do not share his views are likely to make an instant enemy upon crossing his path.

In **Requiem** terms, Vanderberg is an unaligned Venture.

Fate's Bastards

An end result of the apartheid government's use of the Cape Flats as a dumping ground for inconvenient non-white communities, the Bastards consist of Beasts formerly of a half-dozen neighborhoods in central and west Cape Town. Thrust together by vast, impersonal forces, they formed the largest brood in the Cape Town area rather than fighting among themselves. Their territory covers a significant number of the townships in the Flats, but they are aging. On the one hand, this further roots them in their community as respected elders, making them harder for any scrappy young band of misfits to dislodge socially. On the other hand, they aren't as spry in a fight as they used to be.

Hooks

Where is My Mummy?

One of Ed Hendricks' special shipments has gone horribly wrong and he needs the players' brood's help. A crane dropped the shipping container in which he'd stowed an ancient sarcophagus bound for Chile. The occupant of the sarcophagus took offense at the rough handling and now Ed has three dead stevedores and mummy loose somewhere on the docks. He needs the brood to help him track down the mummy, subdue or reason with it, and send it on its way to the New World. If they can manage that, they have the Cape's foremost smuggler at their beck and call.

At Sixes and Sevens

The Sixth Municipal District of Cape Town stood for nearly a century before the apartheid government declared that the predominantly coloured area was a dangerous slum that led to interracial mixing, designated it a whites-only area, bulldozed most of the buildings, and relocated its residents to the Cape Flats. After the land grab, facilities for the current

Cape Peninsula University of Technology were built on some of the land. This is a problem, as when a small fragment of the murdered neighborhood decided to return, an isolated corner of the campus disappeared. It's a university holiday, so only a terrified pair of janitors has noticed that a trio of houses, complete with residents, now occupies two thirds of the campus maintenance plant. What are the houses? Why are they back? And if District Six's former residents were all relocated, who or what is living in those houses?

Vigilance

A local Hero is coming after the brood. A bit brighter than the average nut job with a sharpened hoe, she has decided that the best way to go about this is to tar the brood with false (or perhaps true) accusations of crimes and let Cape Town's history of vigilante justice do her work for her. Can the brood prove their innocence to a pitchfork-and-torch-wielding mob before it puts burning tires around their necks? Even if they can, what will they do about the lasting rumors of everything from murder and child abuse to petty theft?

Bad Medicine

A player's Beast comes across a disturbing find at a local market, a tanned and dried severed hand meant for use as muti. The still visible tattoo on the back marks it as belonging to a friend gone missing a few weeks ago. If the players' brood wants vengeance, they'll have to work their way back up a supply chain leading through the darkest underbelly of Cape Town, all the way to one of the infamous Muti Men.

Fractured Philly

Once the heart of the nation, now only the heart of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia endures. Gentrification adds yet another layer to the strata of the city, atop the declining rust-belt metropolis, the thriving industrial city, and the colonial hub. Different cities coexist, not just vertically, but also side by side, as neighborhoods new and old grow and shrink, abide and reinvent themselves. A million and a half residents tread the asphalt and concrete of this section of the East Coast urban sprawl, some more aware of the history underneath and around them than others.

If the mundane inhabitants of Philadelphia live in a city divided into neighborhoods, its supernatural citizens live and die by their territories. Beasts, werewolves, vampires, and even stranger things all contest the choicest bits of real estate and influence. No grasp is so firm that a group can reckon its position unassailable, and no territory is so bountiful that its holder can put all thoughts of expansion, all fantasies of owning that greener grass next door completely out of mind. It's the city of brotherly love, not neighborly love. It's not just the neighbors

that a Beast has to worry about in Philly, but also the damn hunters. They, or those like them, have been a part of the city's fabric for centuries. Some hold and contest territories, others just stick their noses into someone else's business at the most inopportune moments, but most are a major inconvenience one way or another.

How It Happened

The land for the colony of Pennsylvania was given to William Penn to settle a debt the English crown owed to his father. Despite this relatively seedy origin, Penn conceived of the colony as the home of a religiously tolerant society. A fairly popular notion, this helped spur the growth of Penn's capital, Philadelphia, founded in 1682, attracting Catholics, Jews, Quakers, and even odder folks, including the city's first Beasts. Although not quite the utopia that Penn envisioned, it quickly grew to be one of the cultural and economic centers of the colonies.

Philadelphia had become so prominent during the latter half of the 17th century that it was the site of the first two Continental Congresses and the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Of course this, as well as its inherent strategic value, led the British to capture and briefly occupy Philadelphia during the American Revolutionary War. Several factions of the city's supernatural denizens saw the chaos as an opportunity to expand their influence, but, in a pattern that would be repeated several times in the city's history, Philly's hunter population pushed back enough to keep any of the factions from gaining preeminence.

After the Treaty of Paris in 1783, the city was the capital of the new United States until construction on the District of Columbia was sufficiently advanced to hold the workings of government in 1800. The federal government, relatively circumscribed though it was until the Constitution came into force in 1789, attracted even greater numbers of people to the city, including a fair number of not-exactly-people, drawn like moths to the mechanisms of power. The presence of the United States Mint alone attracted the presence of several hopeful Collectors through the decades.

Although no longer the national capital, Philadelphia retained its status as a major city and the industrial revolution led to a booming manufacturing industry. The factories and foundries drew large numbers to work in them, concentrating population in the city like never before. Packing such a large number of people into a relatively small area meant physically smaller territories and greater friction. In the 1870s this briefly erupted into street violence between three small broods, each claiming only a single factory. Further violence was forestalled when all three factories experienced unexplained and devastating fires within a fortnight.

The Great Depression hit Philadelphia as hard as any other city in the nation, upturning established orders and creating new opportunity for advancement among the city's shadow population. The large numbers of poor and unemployed made perfect prey for Philly's vampires. One particularly crafty bloodsucker was able to leverage the easy feeding and connections with several of the city's more aggressive Beast broods to expand his power over nearly all of the vampires in the city. Again, local hunters united in the face of this rising centralized power and spoiled his bid for control, this time through judicious use of arson. Much of his power base destroyed, the broods proved fair-weather friends and deserted him. Rumors persist to this day that one of the other vampire factions staked the would-be Prince and entombed him in a Works Progress Administration project.

The events of the 1930s also set the stage for one of the bloodiest chapters of Philadelphia's secret history when hunters began exterminating the city's werewolves. The bloodshed reached a peak in the 1970s, when hunter cells swept through the last major werewolf stronghold, Fairmount Park, and slaughtered those within. Since that time, the city has been in a state of relative equilibrium. Individual cells, Broods, coteries, and packs all rise and fall, but none has gained preeminence in the City of Brotherly Love.

Places

Fairmount Park

The jewel of the Philadelphia park system, Fairmount Park occupies nearly six and a half square miles in West Philadelphia. It was also once the core territory of the werewolves of Philadelphia, until it was the site of their slaughter in the 1970s. Today the park remains in the grasp of the successors of the various hunter cells who perpetrated the Fairmount Slaughter, but on nights when the moon is full and bloody, one may still be able to hear the howls of the massacred werewolves, or perhaps just the desperate cries of a modern trespasser being hunted for sport.

Laurel Hill Cemetery

The dead have lain in Laurel Hill for nearly two centuries, but some of them are a bit more active than others. The Wyrms, a scholarly band of vampires, have chosen Laurel Hill as their resting place, sealing themselves in tombs daily with what's rumored to be huge collections of occult artifacts and texts. Any sane Beast would only enter the cemetery uninvited during the day, when the tombs are guarded by the vampires' minions instead of the undead themselves. Robbing one of the tombs is nearly unthinkable, but a Beast mad, bad, or clever enough to pull it off might come back with a treasure trove to put Howard Carter to shame.

The Mutter Museum

Run by the Philadelphia College of Surgeons, the Mütter displays an absolutely enormous number of exhibits showing the ways in which the human body can go horribly wrong. A museum of the monstrous is sure to be a draw to Beasts poking around for long-lost kin. Unfortunately, hunters on the museum's staff keep the very best bits off of public

display. Beasts will have to do something extraordinary or extraordinarily violent to gain access to this well-guarded trove of artifacts.

The Map Room

In the back of a certain pawn shop in South Philadelphia lays a table-sized map of the city and its environs, divided by colored lines and annotated in a small, precise hand. This map reflects the current control of the city by various supernatural and human forces as accurately as its creator can determine. It is the work of a mage known as the Surveyor, whose survey crew of apprentices roams the city constantly gathering data on its current division. Open to all who know of its existence, the Surveyor rigidly enforces a policy of nonviolence within the Map Room. As such, it occasionally sees a wide variety of visitors looking to ascertain the current state of the city and devise strategies to maintain or expand their holdings. Often it also serves as convenient neutral ground for diverse parties to meet; many a truce has been brokered and plot has been hatched above the map table.

Brothers & Sisters

Therese Ross

Therese Ross is one tough old bitch of a werewolf. She's seen a lot of change in her lifetime, though only half as much since she lost her left eye. She's about as much of an authority figure as Philly's Uratha have, having survived the great purge at the hands of hunters and the loss of Fairmount Park. She shepherds a number of younger packs and may seek Beasts' aid on their behalf or in service of her long-term plans. She's a canny adviser, a cool head urging caution upon often short-tempered werewolf packs, but always with an eye on her long lost Fairmount.

Michael Franklin

One of the scholarly clique of vampires who make their homes in Laurel Hill Cemetery, Michael Franklin sits about midway down the city's byzantine hierarchy of the undead. He is of particular interest to Beasts as his occult studies have touched upon the doings of many different supernatural groups. This positions him well as a source of information for an inquisitive brood, provided they bring equally interesting tidbits to share in return for his help. Though he seems quite like an eccentric professor, Beasts would do well not to underestimate him. He is a predator who has survived over a century in conflict-ridden Philly.

In **Requiem** terms Franklin is a Mekhet of the Ordo Dracul.

Jerome Fitzgerald

Many of the territories in Philadelphia stretch for blocks, but Jerome Fitzgerald's home is a single large apartment building where he works as a building superintendent. Situated at the edge of werewolf and Union turf, this Gorgon Tyrant has managed to hold onto his tiny kingdom against all challengers for the last twenty years. A prickly enough obstacle to a small enough morsel, Jerome has developed polite if not friendly relationships with his neighbors. He might be willing to make introductions for Beasts, especially if they come with sufficient humility. It is so nice when family acknowledges one's accomplishments.

Network Zero

Not everyone interested in hunting a Beast down wants to kill her. These fellas just want to get her on film doing something weird. Of couse, that can be as damaging to a Beast as a shotgun blast to the head, but it doesn't necessarily have to be. What's more, these guys have access to everything from extremely blurry vampire snuff films to third-generation copies of 8mm footage of some sort of green glowing ooze slowly enveloping a subway train, something that can be invaluable to a Beast investigating a shadier branch of the monster family tree. Still, a Beast has to be careful with this loosely affiliated group of internet video enthusiasts, since one of the best ways to shoot kickass monster footage is to hang out with the jerks hunting said monsters.

Threats

Martinez and Sons Plumbing

The modern American city is filled with nondescript white panel vans painted with the name and logo of local tradesmen. From the outside, the three Martinez and Sons Plumbing vans look no different, but there is no Martinez or any sons, and the hunters inside know nothing about snaking a toilet. What they do have a firm grasp of is how to stake out a target, wait until the moment is right, and then strike. The vans pull double duty as getaway vehicle and mobile vivisection chamber as the cell plumbs the mysteries of supernatural anatomy. Eventually, though, someone will catch onto the scheme and the vans will have to be abandoned. A slight variation on the model is planned, and the cell has already begun quietly buying up a small fleet of minivans with dark tinted windows for Jiffy Taxi Cab Company.

In **Hunter: The Vigil** terms, Martinez and Sons Plumbing is a Null Mysteriis cell.

The Bank Bunch

This brood of Anakim and Ugallu Tyrants and Collectors are based out of a corner of Central City, working for the financial services industry. They are all quite well positioned in their field, which helps them satisfy their Hungers. That they are so well established drives them to vigilantly protect their domain from interlopers, such as the players' brood. If the intruders think they're in for an easy fight because they're going up against MBAs and accountants, they're in for a rude surprise, as the Bank Bunch is as formidable in a back alley as in a boardroom.

The Sewer Monster

Everyone knows the stories about crocodiles or mole people or rats the size of Dobermans in the sewers. What fewer have noticed is the slight bump in missing persons on the cold winter nights when the homeless are clustered around sewer grates, or the occasional finger or foot found by sanitation workers. There's something dangerous down there, whether it's one of the Children, a pack of feral werewolves with a taste for human flesh, or even just the big brothers of the alligator found near a sewer grate a couple of years ago.

The Colony

Feral cats blend so seamlessly into the fabric of a city that many people don't realize just how many of them there are, stalking the alleys, sunning themselves on rooftops. A colony in West Philadelphia is about to stand out from the crowd. Possessed by a spirit of vicious hunger, the colony moves as one, hunting to sate that bottomless hunger. It started with smaller game like the ubiquitous pigeon, but with every night it adds more cats to its number and needs larger and larger meals. An individual cat poses no threat, but dozens descending upon a victim all at once soon leave nothing more than red, wet bones.

Hooks

Wolves on the Border

Therese Ross approaches the player's brood asking a favor. She wants them to arbitrate a boundary dispute between one of the werewolf packs she's taken under her wing and a neighboring coterie of vampires, as the Beasts are somewhat terrifying relatives of both sides. That no one's ended up torn into bloody chunks or affixed to a wall with silver nails so far is a small miracle, given the distrust the two groups have for each other, so the brood has its work cut out for them. However, the brood has both an abstract interest in keeping different branches of the family from coming to blows, as well as a concrete interest in a tough, canny werewolf owing them a favor.

Plague Capsule

In Philadelphia, the past is always only a few feet beneath your feet, as proved this week when a construction crew unearthed a sealed lead box while excavating the foundation for a new supermarket. Marked 1793, historians supposed it was a time capsule and proceeded to open it. While they found only disappointingly mundane dirt inside, it now appears something escaped when the box was opened. People scattered across the city are falling ill with symptoms similar to the 1793 yellow fever epidemic and Philadelphia's supernatural denizens are not immune. Can the players' brood find what lies behind this outbreak and put a stop to it before they too fall ill?

The Maltese Tome

A rare 16th-century chronicle, allegedly penned by one of the Knights of Malta, was recently put up for sale at a specialty auction house in Philadelphia. It was rumored to detail the secret mystic rites of a early subset of the order, as well as number of other supernatural occurrences. Bidding by agents of both an elder vampire and the Aegis Kai Doru was fierce, but a private collector managed to outbid both in the end. Unfortunately for the collector, the book was stolen before from the auction house before the transaction could be completed. Both the vampires and the hunters blame the others for the theft and have offered money, information, favors, nearly anything if someone will find the book and turn it over to them. Can the brood track down the Collector who actually stole the book and wrest it from her control? Once they do, can they hold onto it long enough to reap their reward? What happens if they unknowingly turn over a fake?

Marking Territory

Something's happened to the map in the Map Room. All of the intricate borders and handwritten labels are gone. The only notation on the map is a single symbol, a knotted mass of brown-red lines that gives a viewer headaches if he looks at it too long. The Surveyor is nowhere to be found and people are starting to get nervous. Has the Surveyor just closed up shop? Is this the end game of a years-long magical working precisely tracking the status of the city? Or does the map accurately reflect reality, correctly showing all of Philly under the control of a single unknown entity?

Men at Work

An entire crew of five construction workers resurfacing a city street overnight has been found torn to pieces. Rumor has it that remarkably little blood was found at the scene, except for that smeared on a nearby wall in a bit of graffiti not seen since the 1930s, since the days of the vampire prince. Has a vengeful relic truly returned to Philly, and, if so, who has the most to fear: the hunters who foiled him, the Beasts who betrayed him, or the Kindred who entombed him?

A Serpent's Tooth

This is a legend of the First Nations:

When the gold rush came to Squamish lands – what would one day be Vancouver – the greed it inspired took hold of one of my people, a man named Shak-shak. Under the gold's influence, Shak-shak came to love wealth more than his own life. He spurned the potlatch, and as his neighbors starved in harsh winters, he reveled in his hoard. His avarice grew so vast that even the Great Spirit came to loathe him. It called down from heaven and transformed him into a two-headed serpent, so long its body threaded the entirety of our waters. He had become the Salt-Chuck Oluk, a thing made only to be despised. The Great Spirit promised that if a hero would pierce the serpent's heart, greed would be banished from the land.

As it always is, that call was answered. The story ends with Shak-shak's heart cut out and cast into the Capilano River, and the people rejoicing over the tremors of his death throes.

We Begotten had no pity.

–From the journals of George Wolf

Even in summer, when downtown air is sticky with saltwater and cannabis, the rain in Vancouver is unrelenting. It soaks every block, washing out the usual urban divisions till high-rise-steels and slum-brick-reds are all the same gray blur. At Main and Hastings, pale working girls and spray-tanned weekend warriors kibitz between downpours. On Davie Street, vagrants hawk umbrellas in front of LGBT bookstores and Japanese hotdog stands. Across the inlet, the Lions scowl over the Pacific Ocean through subtropical storm fronts. Vancouver's identity hasn't so much split as sprung a leak.

For the Beasts, a leak became a flood. The Children have suffered a deluge in their Primordial Dream, a great river linking each and every one of their Lairs. A brood of Makara claims these waters as a symbol and an instrument of their right to rule the other Families. The flood has given these Leviathans absolute power over their cousins and siblings for over sixty years.

How It Happened

Decades after the serpent's story had warped into its modern form, his hubris echoed, breeding Heroes like cockroaches. When the Great Vancouver Fire razed most of the new town and settlers turned to drunken rioting, a mob of Heroes set upon the Beasts. They boarded up the hideouts of the city's broods, and doused them with stolen whiskey, chanting the Salt-Chuck's name. Few survived.

In the aftermath, Family rivalries became vendettas. The Makara and Ugallu had always been at odds — such is the nature of a land where sea and mountain meet — and the Raptors blamed the Leviathans for Salt-Chuck Oluk's bloody legacy. Though the serpent was dead, his relations would pay for his sins. The Raptors began secretly opening Pathways for Heroes into Makara Lairs, hoping they would wipe each other out. It didn't work.

In 1911, "The Legend of the Salt-Chuck Oluk" was published in a series of articles on Squamish folklore. The stories became popular across the country, and Heroes seemed to wake *en masse* in the aftermath. Vancouver's vampires began to take notice. Always vigilant over their precious Masquerade, the vampires grew uneasy at the violence and attention being drawn to the supernatural world. The Raptors saw another opportunity. Masters of exploiting the fear of exposure, the Ugallu convinced the Kindred that the Leviathans were to blame and that it was in their best interest to call a blood hunt to stem the tide of Heroes. This time, it worked. Over the next forty years, the Nightmares of the Depths were nearly wiped out from Vancouver at the fangs of vampires and the swords of Heroes.

In 1951, the government began constructing North Vancouver's Cleveland Dam. No one gave it a second thought, let alone any Beasts, but that changed the day workers began digging up the site.

When I looked inside my Lair, it was flooded. As water and debris flew past my Soul, I tried to return to my body. I couldn't. Giant birds aren't natural swimmers, but the animal part of my brain tried to glide with the current. My wings tore apart like wet paper, and I blacked out from the pain. I thought my Soul would drown, which is a terrible prospect to an 8-year-old.

Instead, I woke up in my bed with three broken ribs and a pint of puked up water. I don't think my mother ever cried so hard in her life. She never understood what happened. For a long time, I didn't either.

–From the journals of George Wolf

A rift had torn between the river and the Primordial Dream, as if some plug in reality had dislodged. Searching for the hole proved futile. Worse, it benefited the despised Makara. The river formed paths between Lairs, floodways only accessible to Leviathans. Rumors spread that the workers had dislodged the remains of the Salt-Chuck's heart from the river, and the pogrom reached a fever pitch. The Raptors pointed their vampire allies at the last brood of Leviathans, hiding near the dam construction site and hoping to find the source of the water.

The leeches easily overwhelmed them. As the brood's Tyrant leader succumbed to fear of death for the first time since her Homecoming, she experienced a vision. In her mind's eye, a wave burst from the dam, washing over her and her tormenters. From its depths, a thundering voice cried out: *These are not your kin.*

In desperation, the Tyrant reached out with her Kinship, and found a thread she'd never felt before. She pulled, and she was enlightened. As the waves in her mind's eye receded, the powers of every vampire in her presence failed. Makara still celebrate the massacre that followed.

The Tyrant gathered every sibling she had left, and together they immolated the leaders of the Kindred court. They gave the remaining bloodsuckers a choice: servitude or death. All chose servitude. With their new minions, the brood turned on their estranged siblings. Travelling through floodways, they stole into the Lairs of their Raptor enemies. The choice was given again. Most Ugallu, too proud to see their sins repaid, chose a third option: exile. In memory of their martyred sibling, the Disciples of Salt-Chuck Oluk have dominated the supernatural denizens of Vancouver ever since.

Places

The Downtown Eastside

Ruin runs in veins as surely as drugs; if punishment's your taste, the Vancouver PD are eager to share their restraining techniques. Welcome to the Downtown Eastside. Canada's

poorest postal code is teeming with prey for the worst kind of predators. Beasts, vampires, and humans alike gorge on its miseries, slumming among locals for the chance of a unique dining experience. The nightlife's not bad either. Thrashers, "the best dive bar in town," is popular with Beasts, and Begotten from all over Metro Vancouver blow off steam here, playing with Nightmares under the cover of dim lights and hard punk.

The Hotel Vancouver

With its Italianate architecture and iconic copper roof, one couldn't ask for a more striking residence. The Hotel Vancouver is leaking, however, and that's what really makes it the perfect headquarters. The entire building is inexplicably resonant with the floodwaters, and Primordial Pathways are trivial for Makara Beasts to form here. The Disciples have declared the Hotel their capitol, renting several suites and holding monthly meetings with their enforcers in the hotel restaurant.

Cleveland Dam

The waters of Cleveland Dam are forbidden. The lake feeding into the dam devours any Beast who sets foot in its waters. Leviathans are no exception, in spite of their Birthright. Even in shallow areas, victims are sucked in, though witnesses have never confirmed whether the pull is a force or an occupant of the river. Accordingly, the Disciples have banned all Children from the area — except, of course, themselves.

Stanley Park

Stanley Park ate the changelings. On the bluffs of Brockton Point, the King of Summer yielded his throne to the Queen of Fall, and at the ceremony's end, every one of their subjects had disappeared. No one knows how it happened. No one remembers their names. No one even remembers when it happened. It might have been a year ago, but it just as easily could've been ten. Only the King and Queen survived, and they're not talking.

Brothers & Sisters

During World War II, Vancouverites of Japanese ancestry were interned. That internment made **Andre Yamamoto** bitter, and in turn, that bitterness gave him dreams of *oni*. His wife's death of dysentery twisted him into one. As a police detective on the DTES, the Namtaru sated his bitterness, pulling apart the fragile lives of the poor in pursuit of Ruin. When the Disciples emerged, he was instrumental in smoking out resistant vampires and later keeping tabs on other Beasts with a network of Mekhet spies. Until his retirement, he was the group's most feared servant. Now, at over 100, he's the oldest Beast in Vancouver. He doesn't do much legwork anymore, but his network keeps him well informed and, with a few phone calls, well fed.

Among academics, **George Wolf** is a folklorist, acclaimed for translations and commentaries on Squamish legends.

WATER WORKS

Vancouver's floodways are equivalent to Burrows **(p. 94)**, but they exist between just about every Lair in the city. Only Makara can enter or grant access to them; even the Heart of the Ocean Atavism doesn't seem to work properly in these waters unless wielded by one of the Nightmares of the Depths. Leviathans can form floodways between Lairs by spending a point of Satiety, without properly bonding with the other Beast. Other Begotten may resist this intrusion with a Clash of Wills.

Among Beasts, he's the city's resident occultist. His Soul is a thunderbird with wings of lightening, and he's known to strike down Heroes with hurricanes. He's possibly the only Ugallu left who witnessed the flood first hand, and his numerous journals chronicle a half-century of supernatural life in Vancouver. For those reasons, the Disciples are hesitant to twist the screws too hard. For now. His library — his Hoard — keeps him safe, but hidden within piles of ledgers he's found a secret that could end him and his Family. At all times, he carries a doctored passport and several thousand dollars in American cash.

Jeff Hasted preaches the bad news. In his eyes, the flood was the Lord's wrath, and now he and his fellow Disciples ensure God's judgment is carried out on the other Families. Every Sunday, Jeff claims a corner near St. James Anglican Church and preaches the end times. Through his constant presence, Jeff is the most public face of the Disciples, but he's also their only black sheep. The others don't care for his preaching: power is the point of Power, not dogma. Nor are they keen on his growing fascination with a particular vampire religion. As Jeff awaits the eschaton, he'll use every ounce of strength in his tentacles to prove the others live in sin. If they fail to repent? So much the better.

If you hear the music, it's already over. She's 90 pounds soaking wet, but on the streets **Kayley Levesque** is an apex predator. With Doc Martin stomping boots and a *joual* accent, she's ready for damage. With eight legs and razor sharp mandibles, she's ready to dine out. Part of Vancouver's growing population of street kids, this Eshmaki's gang-cum-thrash-band is a medley of runaways and castoffs, kept in line with threats of graphic ass-kickings. That's usually enough to keep her Hunger in check. Usually. Lately, Kayley needs to take it further. She needs to break bones and suck marrow, to squeeze iron rich juices from livers. She's not sure she wants to. She's not sure she can't.

Unlife is good to **Luke Van Buren**. A dishonorably discharged veteran of Afghanistan, with more street smarts than book learning, Luke was sired by the token Prince of Vancouver to kidnap live specimens for her experiments. Luke had a fundamental disagreement with that assignment, so he drank her soul. His claim to her irrelevant throne went undisputed, partly due to his knack for cleaving vampire skulls with his ax. Despite his title, "Prince" Van Buren swears loyalty to the Disciples and any other Beast who needs the muscle. All he asks is that his order be allowed to practice their pseudo-sciences undisturbed.

In **Requiem** terms, Luke is a Nosferatu of the Ordo Dracul.

THREATS

THE DISCIPLES

The Disciples of Salt-Chuck Oluk are anything but stable. Take a gang of Tyrants commanding undead hordes, give them an ideology that begins and ends with an eye for an eye, and the results are predictable. Backbiting is second nature to Vancouver's most powerful brood, but the iron grip they choke their siblings with is still their proprietary knowledge, and that's enough to hold them together. While the regime is more feudal anarchism than top-down dictatorship, they fall into lockstep over danger. Every threat is an existential threat. Every enemy is a mortal enemy.

HEROES

Vancouver's Heroes have long memories. While most of them buy into the usual, individualist narratives Beast slayers

BAD BLOOD

The Disciples practice their anti-Kinship through a powerful Nightmare. Only Leviathans who've swum through the floodways can learn it, and only the Disciples know how to teach it. Unlike other Nightmares, this power benefits from teamwork actions **(p.161)**, though not all actors need to know it. This power doesn't work on Beasts, Heroes, or mages. Outside Vancouver, it doesn't work at all.

Your Strength Is Your Weakness

You're a fraud! You've never built anything of worth without some magical cheat. Now you'll see what you really are, without your cheap tricks.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Satiety – Resolve

Normal: The victim gains the Abruption Condition.

High Satiety: The Beast gains the 8-again quality when using Social Maneuvering against her victim, or the rote quality when using Hard Leverage.

Satiety Expenditure: As long as he suffers the Abruption Condition, the victim takes lethal damage equal to the Beast's successes each time he tries to use a power.

Exceptional Success: The victim also gains the Shaken Condition **(p. 325)**.

are prone to, a growing number believe they're bound by a common cause. They've been waking from the same nightmare for a hundred and fifty years, and they're starting to understand why. They call themselves the Little Kings, after the Squamish Hero who slew the serpent. Their war cry is the Salt-Chuck's name, a whisper they dimly remember carried down the river of their dreams. It's an Anathema they can force on any Beast within the city limits, regardless of her Satiety.

Werewolves

When the Raptors began their crusade, few werewolves joined the bloodshed, but fewer offered the Leviathans any aid. In the eyes of the Disciples, that apathy was damning. The wolves were given the same choice as everyone else. Most who survived or escaped the purge fled to the province's interior, and for six decades, not a single pack has held territory in Vancouver. To say the spirit world went berserk in their absence would be an understatement. The natural hierarchy of the realm has collapsed. Verges between worlds are worryingly common, and among the handful of werewolves remaining, there are rumors that the flood is leaking through the Shadow.

Mages

For the most part, Vancouver's mages aren't concerned with Beasts. The Disciples can't affect Awakened magic, and they won't poke a hornet's nest when their power is so circumstantial. Some militant members of the Consilium have called for action, but their Hierarch, Sagalie Tyee, judges that the time isn't right. In visions of the past and future, she awaits a sign.

Hooks

A video circulates. In it, an Anakim Collector claims she's unlocked the secret of the Disciples' technique, and that any Family can learn it. A gory demonstration with a vampire follows. The Giant is willing to sell her secret to the highest bidder and puts the offer up in an online auction. The Disciples tear the city apart for her, but to no avail. Is her claim true, or is it just a control freak's shakedown?

He's not as stupid as he looks. Once a month, Luke Van Buren sneaks into train yards and loads huge crates onto a flatbed. Once a week, he sequesters himself in a hidden library beneath Simon Fraser University and studies till morning. He reports his results to exiled Raptors and werewolves up the highway in Mission, passing on folders bearing his covenant's alchemical equations. In a year, he'll crack his Mystery wide open.

One of George Wolf's journals has been stolen. He offers the brood a chance to pick his brain (and a lot on money) if they'll track it down for him, but as they investigate, they meet a remarkable amount of resistance. Witnesses won't talk, leads go cold, and soon the brood's Lair is vandalized with strange, disjointed graffiti. George tells them it's Squamish, but no other Beast in the city knows the language except him. His translation is rough, but he's sure he's caught the gist of it: *A cog is broken.*

One of the Disciples is murdered in her home. All clues point to her vampire servants, but they deny everything, claiming they heard a scream as she slept but found no assailant when they broke into her room. Besides, they couldn't hurt her if they wanted to. Before they're put to death, the rest of the Disciples want to know exactly what happened. Any trick the Kindred can use to work around their chain needs to be uncovered.

Storms rage over the flood. On the sunken horizon of Vancouver's Primordial Dream, a mountain rises. It's getting taller by the day, but even the swiftest Leviathan can't reach it. In addition, every new Beast in the city of late is Ugallu. The peak resembles one of the North Shore Mountains, so if an answer exists, it's hidden there. But whoever scales the mountain will have to work fast: the flood is receding.

The Third Religion

Faith isn't required. Faith rests on a pedestal carved in fact. Step through a curtain into the embrace of kusum and cardamom, and bless your eyes in the shrine's candle light. You gaze upon the Dark Mother.

She's...a severed hand behind an inch of glass.

You've travelled too far for sideshow attractions, but the priest yawns at your scoffing, like a scholar fielding questions from school children.

Then, you drop. Knees jellied; motor control rebelling. Panic would take your body, but you can't feel your body anymore. Not in the Dream. Something's dragging you by the throat, and it's not just a hand.

Kathmandu is a city of travelers. Pilgrims from all over Asia pay homage to Shiva in Pashupatinath Temple, and tourists from around the world marvel at both the splendor of Nepal's ancient crossroads and the rapidity those crossroads have modernized. Back alleys of terracotta statuary give way to blocks built wall-to-wall with high-end restaurants and chain hotels.

The capital of Nepal rests in the shadow of the Kathmandu Valley, a massive bowl formed by four mountains. In myth, the valley enclosed a lake of snakes, with a great lotus blossoming at its center. When the bodhisattva of wisdom saw the flower, he took up his sword, carving the Chobar Gorge so the lake would drain and humans could settle the fertile land.

Settle they did. The valley is a mandala of cultures and religions, home to nearly two million people. Hinduism and Buddhism are the lifeblood of the city, but invaders and missionaries have preached endless competing, syncretizing faiths over the centuries. Religion is inescapable. Holy festivals are a part of daily life, from simple Islamic services to full reenactments of the *Ramayana*.

Today, Nepal transitions. Monarchy has given way to shaky democracy, and the capital is sometimes still a target for

violence. The massive tourist industry has taken a blow, and many fear the city's "third religion" may fall into decline.

History

The Shrine of Mother's Hand isn't very impressive. The façade is falling apart and remnants of a Soviet truck form the reliquary. But what it lacks in style, it makes up for in substance. That's what the priests claim, and they have the followers to prove it.

When they first came from China in 1951, their fellow Children mocked them. They claimed to bear a true relic of the Dark Mother. Not just a belonging: a *part* of her. It wasn't difficult to be doubtful. The thing appears for all the world like an old woman's balled up fist, freshly severed and still bleeding. The priests refused (and refuse) to reveal how they acquired it, only maintaining that they staked their faiths in the Mother on it.

But soon came converts. While the object wasn't much, spontaneous entry into the Primordial Dream was. Supplicants are dragged into the realm and undertake a nightmarish vision quest hosted by what the priests say is an avatar of the Mother herself. No Family sees it the same. Eshmaki envision great predators, Bengal tigers and snow leopards the size of elephants. Namtaru see Rakshasas with rotten skin peeling from their bones. However it appears, it doesn't speak. It simply fills supplicants with the same rapturous fear they instill in their own victims.

The priests gained a flock, and it's never stopped growing. Broods of pilgrims clamor to witness the Dark Mother's miracle, and the priests never worry about drops in tourism. They have their own industry.

Story Hooks

The relic, whatever its truth, has been a flashpoint for conflict since the day it arrived. Nemesis skeptics call it a con or trick. Tyrant traditionalists call it iconography, or heresy. And then there's the brood of Collectors who want it for themselves.

Violence is inevitable, and it's only a question of who shoots first. But is it real? The rumor mill is always churning:

"The Begotten it belongs to can't feed off human nightmares anymore, but it can feed off its kin. Only its kin. And what better way to scare us than with our Mother? The hand's storing our fears like a battery, and one day, it'll get a full charge. The priests are going to return it to the owner. They're going to wake it up."

"Fast acting hallucinogens, maybe custom Nightmare. Easy. More pertinent question is the why. Whilst the mark's tripping out, they bleed the hand through a special Pathway. You know how their followers tend to make a lot of return visits? The blood's addictive. They pipe it directly into the victim's Lair. May as well be his brain. So? I'll put it this way: it's someone's mother, but it's not ours."

"I don't know what the hell it is, but I swear it didn't have a wrist last year."

Mother's Love

Meeting the purported avatar of the Dark Mother bestows visitors with a sense of awe. All supplicants take the Inspired Condition **(p. 324)**.

Brothers & Sisters

Feng Zhou has been the abbess since the Shrine came to Kathmandu, and that's how it's going to stay until someone pries the job from all five of her cold, dead hands. Zhou is a gourmand of petty arguments, a Nemesis even to other Beasts. She logs their little misdeeds and dusts them off for slow days, setting her priests into spirals of bickering. Her records are written on a long scroll, wrapped within a prayer wheel. The other priests tolerate her because they know she could bring the whole thing down with one word.

The Children don't remember who the **himam□nava** was before he took his Inheritance, but today the legend of this yeti lives large on the world stage, tacked on the coattails of Sherpa folklore. Every yak he mauls and every Hero he drops from a precipice is another blog post for the crypto-zoologists watching Nepal. Despite his brutal drives, Beasts brave enough to seek him out are privy to an unlikely fount of wisdom, but only if they'll fight him first.

Flayed Souls

He came with the Vikings, a warrior whose Life and Legend were the same thirst for death. That's one theory. Maybe he abandoned the Roman legions to conquer his own worlds, found our little archipelago and took a liking. Or maybe he was out killing Neanderthal Beasts while Cro-Magnon was still raping its way into Europe.

There's a hunter among us, and we Begotten are his game. Have been for centuries. What is he? Hero? Beast? Doesn't matter. He's the world's most successful serial killer, and he wants to rip the Soul from your flesh.

The sun never sets in summer in Orkney, Scotland. Under twilight colored midnights, the Standing Stones pick out stars. Pictish carvings cast shadows over the countryside, defaced with runic graffiti telling of Norse conquests, and a code of law still practiced today. Magic flows through the land as easily as the ruins. These islands were hunting grounds for Cernunnos and battlefields for Valkyries.

This is a Scotland where the people never wore tartans; they killed men in tartans. Orkney was a Viking oasis, a foothold in the British Isles meant to serve as a base for piracy. If not for a king reneging on a dowry, it might still be part of Norway.

Farms take up most of the land, as they have since the Neolithic, and bards still tell tales of dragons and trows. Though

some of the oral folklore of the islands was lost with the death of the Norn language, a steady resurgence in native Orcadian culture — and archeological interest its many ruins — has preserved Orkney's magic into the modern day.

History

When the Norse came to Orkney, so did their Beasts. Though the Picts failed to prevent the Viking conquest, Family proved stronger than tribal allegiance, and native Beasts were protected by their Norse counterparts. Too many Viking epics boasted of Heroes slaughtering Beasts.

The culture of these Beasts melded. Norse dragons and Pictish serpents saw more in each other than in their human compatriots, and ever since, Beasts bearing visages from Pictish legend have hunted nightmares as equals to those of the Norse. For a thousand years, the Beasts enjoyed relative harmony.

Then, in the 1970s, Ben Stinchcomb was slain in his Lair. His body was flayed — flesh stripped to muscle — and his Soul had disappeared. Despite the gruesome scene, there wasn't much to go on. His killer was never found. The Children mourned and moved on, thinking his Soul had gone on to better dreams. His death was tragic, but no more than any other Beast lost to a Hero.

It might've been forgotten if Meaghan Hopkinson hadn't been found flayed, twenty-four years later. Then, Danny Haskell, twelve years later. The, Jana Skorstengård, six years later.

The Children backtracked through their history, searching for the killer in their midst. In the late 19th century, they found his trail. He'd flayed before, though Beasts of the time had dismissed both deaths as a rogue Hero. If the sequence holds, halving as it does at each interval, the Flayer will strike within a year.

The Beasts of Orkney are at a crossroads. Each death means the destruction of a visible fraction of their unique culture, and the killer will strike with alarming frequency after the next flaying. If it can't be stopped, every Beast will be slain before the decade is up. And yet, the Orcadians say they have no fear of death.

They fear for their Souls.

Brothers & Sisters

Over forums, social media, and the Primordial Dream, the Children of Orkney have searched for allies. Several Beasts from mainland Scotland and the rest of Europe have arrived at the behest of their Orcadian siblings. Most come as hired guns, but a few can't resist the call of an occult murder mystery.

A cabal of **Moros** mages have also come in support of the Beasts, at least nominally. The Awakened keep to themselves, studying ruins and performing obscure rituals. Despite their aloofness, they claim to be just as invested in stopping the Flayer as the Begotten are. For months they've scried the island's aura, searching for some subtle tremble.

Mike Holland has been tracking the Flayer for years, but he's starting to lose the thread. This Anakim was the first to discover that the murders went back a century, and he's been obsessed with finding other examples, sometimes to the point of neglecting his Hunger all the way into starvation. Unfortunately, most Beasts from the times he's researching spoke Norn, and Begotten records in that language are virtually non-existent. Mike's planning a trip to the University of Glasgow, though, where a collection of Orcadian legends are held in archives. Not having any academic credentials, he's going to need someone to help him break in.

Orkney could never support more than a handful of vampires, not with ***Ærinndís*** around. The elder Gangrel warrior arrived with the Norse, slaughtering Pictish vampires who couldn't flee her talons. For almost as long as Scandinavia held Orkney, Ærinndís fed off its people. Fortunately, no one alive or dead has seen her since the 1600s, and it's thought she fell to a lengthy torpor. Should her tomb be found, she may know something of the Flayer. Problem is, the Kindred have it in their best interests to never see her again.

The Hero Bay

Tokyo centers on the Tokyo Bay, formerly the Edo Bay. It sprawls outward for many miles of dense urban landscape in every direction except the Pacific Ocean. Tokyo is a respected world economic power, the most populous metropolitan area in the world, and an international hub.

For its human inhabitance, Tokyo is possibly the single safest major city in the world in which to reside. Its crime rate stands significantly lower than most developed cities. Your chance of being murdered stands statistically similar to your chance of being struck by lightning. This is, of course, referencing recorded deaths. A Beast's death rarely ends up in the crime statistics.

For the supernatural, the Tokyo Bay has a nickname, Shujinko-Wan, roughly "Hero Bay." Tokyo draws a wildly disproportionate number of Heroes, compared to other cities. Even considering its massive size, Tokyo has numerous times the number of Heroes per capita. The Beasts of the region trade many stories and rumors as to why this is, but no matter what the reason, Tokyo is a hotbed for those who have taken on the mantle of questing savior.

Why do they stay? For thousands of supernatural creatures, Tokyo is home. For many, it was home before they became monsters. Some know nothing outside Tokyo. Many have no idea the number of Heroes that stalk the streets. Some leave still, but with its massive population and other advantages, many monsters feel Tokyo is worth the risk.

How it Happened

Tokyo has always been a hotbed of Heroes, at least as long as it's been Tokyo. Rare is the Beast that keeps written records, and the verbal history marries the Dawn of Heroes to the formation

of the City of Tokyo, in 1889. It's probably not true, but enough accountings put the influx of Heroes close to that time, that the local Beasts accept this romanticized assumption as "true enough."

The Dawn of Heroes

When Tokyo was still Edo, monsters enjoyed great prosperity in the massive city. One great Beast, called Owatatsumi Kami (basically "Great Water God Deity"), ruled openly over all the various breeds of monsters in Edo. It kept a council of vampires, shapeshifters, sorcerers, and other, stranger things, and managed an empire of monsters for many years. It featured many great beings the Beasts of Tokyo sing of to this day. A sorceress named Nakatomi represented the magical community. An ancient vampire named Inoue represented the creatures of the night, which numbered more than in any city on Earth.

Nobody knows what exactly Owatatsumi Kami did to cause the Dawn of Heroes, or even if it caused the Dawn at all. Stories never tell it as a coincidence, but the sheer variety of stories suggest it could very well have been. Some stories tell that Owatatsumi used its great voice to call the greatest otherworldly souls from all across Japan in order to create its council; this voice was so very loud that it woke the Souls of Heroes all across the island of Honshu. Another story tells that it felt its legacy would never truly be remembered unless it faced down a questing hero. So in this tale, it crafted a sword that would turn its holder into a Hero, tasked with ending all monsters in Edo. This tale also ends with Owatatsumi's death from such great hubris. In fact, every tale ends in Owatatsumi's death, or at very least its going into hiding. Some say Owatatsumi will return at some promised time or another.

From the point when the Dawn happened onward, Heroes sprung up rapidly and constantly. Everything a Beast could do to risk creating a Hero created a Hero. Unfortunately, most of these Heroes were sufficiently discreet and distanced from their sources that the Beasts had no idea they were creating their enemies, or that they could curb that creation easily. They still don't see the link between their actions and the glut of Heroes.

Around the time Edo became Tokyo City, Owatatsumi's empire ended, and the monsters of Tokyo became fractured. Some of the Beasts found cliques within other monsters' circles. Some formed their own tenuous factions. Mostly, Tokyo's Beasts struggled to survive. Shortly after Owatatsumi's disappearance, the Heroes overwhelmed the supernatural population of Tokyo. For the Beasts, this meant a dark age, a number of decades in seclusion, in flight, in hiding. The Heroes banded into "guilds," where they colluded to root out and eradicate all the monsters of Tokyo and the Kanto region at large.

The Great Kanto Earthquake

This dark age ended in 1923, during and immediately after the Great Kanto Earthquake. The Hero guilds took the earthquake as an omen and as an opportunity from the heavens to eradicate monsters. Due to their massive population and relative decadence, the Heroes focused heavily on the vampire population, nearly eradicating them wholesale with daytime raids, targeted fires, and siege tactics.

The Beasts took this as an opportunity in kind. As the Heroes rose to the occasion and slew countless vampires, the Beasts rose up to devour the weary Heroes. In the weeks following the earthquake, over one hundred Heroes disappeared or were otherwise added to the estimated 100,000 dead from the tragedy. While it was an unprecedented victory, the price paid was more Heroes still, as the eradication effort required the Beasts take drastic measures, which created a whole new, bigger generation of Heroes. Their organizations, their guilds, though, were eradicated.

The following decades were a wild time, with many Heroes and little coordination. Battles were more frequent, but rarely featured groups on either side of the fence. Lack of tactical experience meant more dead Heroes, and more escaping Beasts. This stood as a deep contrast to mortal Tokyo, which took the time after the earthquake to restructure, reorganize, and otherwise build itself into a world power.

This all remained the case until World War II, when the deep and rapid changes in organization and population in Tokyo and Japan as a whole gave Heroes the opportunity to reorganize and rebuild their guilds. This time around, they built defensively, centered upon a few of the survivors from the Kanto Earthquake purge. They kept their raids to a minimum, only focusing on low-risk, high-opportunity assaults. They even policed their own, keeping obvious offenders from ruining the hunt for everyone else. As the saying goes, the nail that stands up gets hammered down.

Now, the guilds exist and are quite powerful. But mostly, they exist to find new Heroes and keep them from causing problems, and those problems in turn from causing ripples. The Beasts don't have free reign due to the raw population of Heroes, but they aren't dragged out in the streets for the slaughter either.

Forging a Hero

Mechanically, Tokyo is far more likely to create Heroes than other areas. Any time a Beast commits an action that could result in a Hero's creation, it happens. On one hand, this gives the Beast a Beat. On the other, it brings into existence an agent of the Beast's potential destruction.

Heroes created by this strange phenomenon aren't tied to their creators, however. They're listless, wanton Heroes that tilt at whatever windmills they can find. In many cases, they never even learn of their creating Beasts. However, this preponderance of Heroes means that other supernatural creatures in Tokyo have to deal with these misguided hunters. Fortunately, a Hero's abilities are generally keyed to hunting Beasts, so this means they're not quite so deadly when hunting outside their ideal targets.

Places

Tokyo is the world's largest city, and thus has a great many places of interest. Here are some current hotspots that most of the city's Beasts know.

Dragon Shrines

Tokyo's Beasts defend a handful of dragon shrines across the region. These Shinto shrines celebrate dragons as water deities that help the farmers and fishermen with their bounties. Beasts have a whole different use for them. When a Beast is close by a dragon shrine, Heroes are unable to pursue them with

their supernatural gifts. They can investigate them manually, but their powers fail to work. However, most are defended viciously by werewolf packs as holy sites.

The range at which this effect persists depends on the shrine. Some of the minor shrines only defend a small area, a few meters in any given direction. Some of the greater shrines can create "dead zones" of entire city blocks. Players with **Werewolf: The Forsaken** should note that these shrines stand as loci, and their ratings determine the range of effect.

The Mikan Cafe

This Akihabara cafe caters to businesspeople and obsessive manga fans, offering a chance to be served by obedient, gracious "maids." Unlike most maid cafes, this one was built on the site of an ancient temple. Its guardian, an elder vampire, still considers the cafe to be her temple, where she cares for a new generation of "priestesses." This vampire, called Seio, is well known to Tokyo's Beasts. She has a vendetta against Heroes and has drawn many into her temple for the slaughter. For a significant price, she'll hunt and destroy Heroes.

To readers with **Vampire: The Requiem**, she's a Daeva of the Ume House.

The All 7 Karaoke Club

The All 7 is a vocaloid night club in the Harajuku neighborhood. It celebrates "Nana Natsu," a digital creation, a singer that doesn't exist in the real world — at least, not yet. To those Beasts nearby, they feel a strong sense of affinity to Natsu, as if she were somehow kin. Many Beasts vie for control of the club (and the surrounding block), hoping to hoard it as part of a Lair.

To readers with **Promethean: The Created**, Natsu is on the verge of becoming an Extempore. As she gains popularity, the life around her may spark her with the Divine Fire.

The Night Train

Tokyo's massive subway system hosts more people than any other in the world. You can get anywhere in the metro area for a small fee and a short wait, at almost any time. Those attuned to the otherworldly know of a specific "schedule" of trains that have a barely-understood effect: they can transport a rider anywhere in the city — at least to any other station — instantaneously. However, each station has an exact moment, one exact train, where this can be done.

To do so, the rider must buy one specific bowl of ramen at a vending machine at the station, and sit in one specific seat on the train. The ramen is overpriced and unpopular, and the seat tends to remain empty even during peak hours, for reasons unknown. But with the right purchase and the right seat, the rider instantaneously vanishes from the train (none of the passengers any the wiser) and appears on a train at the station of choice.

The "schedule" is a convoluted, eldritch thing. No Beast knows it well. However, a mass of disgusting, monstrous creatures, rumored to be Philipino Mandurugo, vampires, kyonshi youkai, or other things, who areliving in the subway tunnels knows the schedule, and will give it for a small bribe or to those who have done favors for their family. They do not advertise what they are, but they're horrendous and frightening, even to the most hardened Beast.

Odaiba Island

Odaiba is currently a shopping center set on an artificial island built during Japan's diplomatic contact with the Americas. For humans, this means massive tourism and commerce. However, to the supernatural denizens of Tokyo, Odaiba is a dangerous place. It's home to many terrifying spirits, strange crab-like monsters that possess humans and nest along the shore. They're easily avoided; simply stay away from Odaiba. However, many newcomers make the mistake of visiting the island. Sometimes, this isn't actually a mistake, as elder Beasts will send their lesser kin to the island for menial errands that often end in violence.

Brothers & Sisters

With its massive population, Tokyo likewise boasts an enormous number of kin. If it exists in the World of Darkness, it's probably represented in the Tokyo Metropolitan Area.

Vampires

Tokyo's vampire population mostly distances itself from the Beasts. This isn't a forced separation; they just have their own affairs to deal with. However, one Dana Merchant, an American vampire, fancies herself a diplomat to creatures different than the bloodsuckers. She's gone out of her way to make ties and arrangements with various monsters. She's had more luck than one might expect from an outsider and a fervent member of a vampiric Christian church, but she still fights an uphill battle due to the disorganized Beast population in the metropolis.

Vampires have a strong hand in the Hototogisu. The corporation involves itself heavily in vampiric politics, so the Beasts remain cautious and defensive dealing with the undead. Any given vampire could be a plant, a potential kidnapper for the corporation.

Shapeshifters

The shapeshifters of Kanto live in scattered packs, usually centered on shrines and on their own holy places. Unless a Beast stumbles across one of these places, she should have limited interaction with those of changing flesh. Some Beasts run afoul of strange, vaguely bird-shaped shadow spirits the shapeshifters call Tengu. These are not the Tengu of classic Japanese mythology; these beings inhabit corpses, sometimes vampires, and hunt the undead relentlessly. Some Beasts with vampires in their families become these Tengu's targets.

Some Beasts make ties with werewolf packs for temporary access to their protected dragon shrines. These agreements generally afford brief trips to the shrines in order to elude enemies, but at least two Beasts have integrated into werewolf packs to take advantage of the shrines.

The Rampant

The Rampant are not proper humans, but also not proper monsters. They are born with certain strange gifts, gifts they claim come from demonic blood. These gifts are sometimes sufficiently obvious that they cannot be explained away as coincidences; some can create dark, terrifying magical fires in their hands.

The Rampant are largely cordial with Beasts. They believe their role is one of redemption and punishment, that they're tasked with using their demonic blood to right the wrongs of other demons. Usually, this means destroying creatures such as vampires and greater demons. Most perceive Beasts not as demons and evil spirits, but as benevolent spirits, godlike beings to revere. This hasn't stopped some of them from destroying particularly malicious Children.

Some Heroes have taken particular interest in the Rampant of late, and at least one guild of Heroes has dedicated itself specifically to destroying "children of *oni* blood." Some Beasts have banded with the Rampant due to the common threat.

For those players with **Hunter: The Vigil**, the Rampant are a Japanese-specific subdivision of the Lucifuge.

Yosei

In Tokyo, many creatures from beyond, youkai, spirits, or perhaps other alien monstrosities, abduct humans. Those few who escape are forever bound to the spiritual realms of their captivity. These survivors, these Yosei, have formed an alliance that spans across the Tokyo Metropolitan Area. The Yosei Court is modeled after the ancient Taketori Monogatari, Tale of the Bamboo Cutter. They follow the leadership of a "Moon Princess" who changes each year, who rules from a seat of Mount Fuji, some 100 kilometers away. She maintains delegates to each of the other creatures of Tokyo; twelve at any given time. Her current delegate to the Children is Akira Hayashi, a former museum archivist who now looks every bit a skeleton with a thin patina of paper flesh. Hayashi mostly appears interested in dealing in artifacts and remnants of Japan's lost history.

Threats

With so many monsters in Tokyo, the threats to said monsters stand as commensurate. Corporate institutions stand in opposition to Tokyo's Beast population, as well as smaller forces.

The Hototogisu

The Hototogisu is a multinational corporation that maintains strong ties to some of the various kin throughout Tokyo (and rumors suggest abroad as well). They stand as a threat because their agenda in dealing with the paranormal involves voraciously seeking it out, stealing or abducting it, and often taking its power.

Their power base is sufficient that they've not been thoroughly infiltrated by any of their target groups, but those who have made headway claim their "vault" contains over one hundred "specimens." They have a small handful of Beasts in their employ, and who knows how many in captivity. Unlike Heroes, their goal is not eradication, but to harness their victims' power to political and financial ends.

The Guilds

Tokyo's Heroes organize into guilds, which end up both boon and bane to the local Beasts. On one hand, it means a hunted Beast is in for a much greater threat. On the other, it means she's less likely to find herself followed by a nobody on the scene.

Each Guild consists of between four and a dozen Heroes, with two of the largest guilds pushing twenty members at times. These groups exist as social clubs as much as monster hunting organizations. To guild members, their guilds are everything. They're all-consuming hobbies, which take up every moment outside their "day jobs." Some of these Heroes eschew normal life entirely and devote themselves wholly to the guild's service.

Guilds teach their members military tactics and share valuable lessons about the hunt. Each carries a theme of sort, often modeling themselves after other styles of organizations or clubs. Most look the part of sports clubs or literal hunting lodges. Some take stranger inspiration, hiding as "inventor clubs" or as model replica clubs. These craft-heavy groups tend to focus their energies on creating effective weapons and traps against their monstrous prey.

Demon Hunters

Tokyo's also host to a number of self-proclaimed "demon hunters," otherwise mundane humans who have taken on the mantle of monster slayers. They're far from the level of organization seen in the long-standing Hero guilds, but they have support and mentorship networks. Some of these networks have existed for centuries. Unlike the Heroes, the demon hunters act mostly as vigilantes, rooting out specific problems and eradicating them as isolated incidents. One demon hunter group calling itself the Pacific Ocean Swifts has caused quite a bit of trouble for the city's assorted monsters. It's rooted in a nationalist movement that fights against mostly Korean immigrants and has made waves in the city's political spheres.

Hooks

Some say Owatatsumi Kami never died, but instead found some great truth and grew more and more powerful with each passing year. These stories say it will come back soon and devour the Souls of all Tokyo's Beasts. This purge, it's told, is Owatatsumi's attempt to bring about the "Dusk of Heroes," ending the scourge for all time. While most Beasts see this as a myth, some prepare to stop Owatatsumi from rising. Others look forward to rushing its return.

The Hototogisu seeks to subjugate all forms of supernatural life in Tokyo. Unfortunately, the various factions are far too disparate to affect any sort of change. Beasts share kinship in such a centralized faction, however, that some of the eldest look to act as unifying forces to end Hototogisu influence. For every unifier, the Hototogisu keeps at least one sympathetic Beast ready to undermine his kin's influence in the supernatural world.

INHERITANCE

"Ben? Are you here?" Robin looked at the dark water, not really hopeful but determined not to give up yet. "It's me, Robin. I just want to talk."

The media firestorm had burned bright but briefly - one kid dead in a bloody, "ritualistic" crime scene and another missing made for a few sensational lead stories, but didn't have the legs of a pretty girl having vanished. Robin had seen the aftermath of Heroes before, and knew how to wait out the coverage and the inevitable trickle of hunters and occultists that accompanied them.

At first she'd assumed Ben had just gone to ground, was trying to process the attack, but then the Burrows connecting his Lair to the rest of the brood collapsed. His Horror was still nearby, both she and James could feel it, but as days turned to weeks, a different sort of suspicion crept into her mind.

As if on cue, the first rumors showed up in local online chatter not long after.

Local kids were talking about strange things down at the lake. A pale, slim boy - or sometimes a girl of similar description - was walking alone by the water late at night. Except if you got close enough, they weren't alone at all, and you'd realize what you thought was a shadow on the water was really a shape right under the surface. Supposedly they'd beckon you to join them, the pale kid and the thing in the water, but all the rumors agreed that would be the worst and final mistake of your teenage life.

"I'm not here to hurt you, or Noelle, or anyone else." Robin continued, still scanning the water. "I just want you to know if you're all right."

"He's fine." Robin turned and saw a pale young woman detach herself from the shadow of a nearby tree, followed by another pale teenager a moment later. Robin tasted ashes immediately, as if she needed confirmation of their vampiric nature. "You're one of his kind, aren't you?"

"Yes." There was no point in lying.

"I knew you'd come looking sooner or later." Noelle's tone was flat, indifferent. "He said so."

"Is Ben here?" Robin asked. The closer she looked at Noelle, the more ragged the vampire appeared. Her clothes were ripped and stained, as if she was sleeping out here in the trees. Not at all the modern, sleek predator Ben had approached only a year ago.

"You should go." Noelle said. Behind her, the other equally ragged vampire nodded. "He's fine."

"Can I ask him?" Robin said.

Noelle cocked her head. "Go on, honey. Show her."

Robin heard something break the surface not far behind her, but when she turned and saw the thing that had been Ben, her heart fell. It rose on itself like a coiled serpent, and while she could see no malice in its large black eyes, she didn't see anything like recognition either. As she watched, its mouth opened, venom dripping like rain on the lake, and if its tentacles seemed to reach out pleadingly for a moment, it was almost certainly her imagination. It slipped back under the surface and all Robin felt was relief, mixed with a profound sadness.

"See? We're very happy here." Noelle faded back into the shadows, leaving only her voice after her in the midnight air. "We're home."

TALES OF THE DARK MOTHER

HIN

"I don't think this is good." Hin struggled with the English. The mages ignored him, as they often did. Hin sighed. He didn't mean good, but he wasn't sure how to phrase it.

The mage called Atalanta glanced around the room. "I think we're ready. Symbols are in place, sacrifice is ready. Hin, we good to go?" She said it like she was addressing a four-year-old about to act as ring-bearer in a wedding; important as these things go, but if he screwed up and spoke out of turn, no one would really care.

"I don't this is good," Hin repeated. He looked over at Babel and spoke in Cantonese. Babel shrugged helplessly, and Hin cocked an eye — normally he understood.

"Guys," said Babel. "Hin needs to tell us something. Give me a minute to—"

"No." Pluto's voice was deep, resonant, and terrifying. "No magic. We're doing this. We've waited too long. We've put too much into this. Whatever Hin needs to tell us can wait."

"Sunk cost," said Hin. It was a phrase he knew well; one of his finance professor's had drilled it into the class and Hin had found it a useful way to feed. "Sunk cost means you think you can get back what you already—"

"Later, Hin." Atalanta stood before the altar and raised her hands. Babel, obviously concerned, patted Hin on the shoulder reassuringly and raised his hands as well. Behind them, Pluto struck the ground with his staff.

The gate opened. Something stepped through.

"That's not..." Atalanta didn't finished the sentence. She dropped to her knees, hopeless, terrified, mouth agape. Babel turned and ran, but could not make the doorknob work. Pluto tried to bluster, but only wound up cowering behind his staff.

"I tried to tell them, Mother," said Hin. At least She had no problem understanding him. "Will you let them live?"

She spoke, and Hin nodded.

"Spare him, then," he said, pointing to Babel. "At least he listens sometimes."

He turned to his friends, trying desperately to put up spells to protect themselves, call for help, repel Her, end the summoning. It was nothing but noise. "I'm sorry," he said. He wanted to say more, but he couldn't think of the words. They weren't listening anyway.

Chapter Seven
Storytelling

Storytelling **Beast: The Primordial** is an integral role that's often challenging, sometimes frustrating, and never truly controlled. It's part art, part craft, and part pretending you know what you're doing. It requires both adherence to rules, and rigorous improvisation.

How do you do all these things at once?

Part of this comes from experience. Jump in. Find out what works and what doesn't. Develop a style. Learn your patterns and tropes. Have fun. Fail. Succeed.

The Basics

Everyone develops their own styles of Storytelling. You'll start off with a good foundation, though, if you keep a few basic concepts in mind.

Communicate With Your Players

This is not only important, but essential. Your goal is fun for the whole group. You need to constantly feel out what's working and what isn't. You have to ask players what they want and ask them what they've enjoyed. Don't be coy.

Parts of the game let you do this discreetly. For example, part of character creation means coming up with Aspirations. These are a way for your players to communicate what they want from the game and for their characters. Write these Aspirations down. Engage them. When Aspirations are fulfilled, players need to come up with replacements. Keep on top of these. You'll find that as the chronicle progresses, new Aspirations will key to your story's elements. If you pay attention, they'll tell you your players' perceptions of those elements.

You don't have to shy away from "spoilers." You can look to your players' goals. Nothing stops you from working consciously toward those goals. In fact, if you're open about the direction your table wants for the story, your players will open up to things that would otherwise only come from dice rolls. The player might say, "I think it's about time Joey's informant died in a Hero attack." This is a good thing. If you know it's a desired outcome, you can spend planning time coming up with interesting ways to make that happen, and it takes weight of improvisation off your shoulders. You can focus instead on making the scene the best it can be.

> You get trapped by stories. Though I've got this reputation for being out of control, it's not true, it just happens to be a more interesting story than the truth.
>
> —Terry Gilliam

Knobs, Dials, and Switches

Beast: The Primordial is a big book. It's the result of many years' experience, countless design discussions, and over a dozen authors across hundreds of pages. You don't need to fit the contents of every single page into every story. In fact, it's probably for the best that you don't. That's where knobs, dials, and switches come in.

If you like a concept, feel free to emphasize it. If you like Heroes, make them the heart of your story. If you like Lairs, tell stories about them. Even if the idea you want to emphasize only gets a paragraph of attention across the entire book, you can bring it to the forefront and ask questions about it. Explore that thing. Define it. Own it. Change it. If you care about something enough to bring it to the forefront of your game, look at why you're interested in it, and sell that to the players.

On the other hand, if something doesn't work for you, leave it by the wayside. The World of Darkness's Storytelling System is designed to be modular; you can remove bits and pieces with minimal fuss. You might have to adjust a trait or two, but usually you can take out an element of a game without causing immense ripples throughout all the game systems. This is doubly true for setting elements, since each is its own separate idea.

You don't even have to figure these things out on the front end. You can scrap things, add them, and modify them as you go. Just communicate with your players and be consistent.

Be Consistent

It's your job to change the rules. You have to adapt and make the rules fit your story needs. This is important because, while **Beast**'s rules are designed to cover most circumstances well, there are always ways to handle specific circumstances that might fit the moment better than a more general rule. There's no realistic way to list every potential scenario and variable in a book like this; even if there was, it'd be unnecessary and pedantic. Instead, the rules are mutable enough that as Storyteller, you're empowered to twist and tweak them to fit your needs.

However, you must be consistent.

Your players must understand the general "physics" of the game world. We encourage you to change rules to suit genre and theme, but your players have to understand these changes and why they work so that they can make the most appropriate decisions. The default World of Darkness setting and Storytelling System rules assume a general level of horror, action, and drama. If you want to move those dials, you just need to be clear about how you're doing so, and communicate with your players about what works and doesn't.

For example, the default rules assume that falling is relatively dangerous to deadly. Without some severe tweaks, humans cannot survive a terminal velocity fall; even jumping off a small building can be a game changer with the level of damage it causes a character. If your game pushes toward high-flying action, you might halve or even remove falling damage. That's fine; it means your characters might be climbing buildings and jumping across rooftops. It's an excellent way to tell a story, if that's what you go in wanting to do. If you don't communicate this to your players, however, how are they supposed to know? When they threaten a Hero by holding his ally out a third story window, do they understand they're not really risking killing that character? And importantly, do they understand that they need not hesitate when their character's choice involves risking a major fall?

Remember that character choices are all important parts of genres and moods. Have you ever read a book or see a television show where a character seemed to be making choices that would work well in a completely different kind of story, but fell flat in the one she was in? In a Storytelling game, this phenomenon occurs when the player is playing her character in accordance with a misunderstanding of the setting and rules conventions. So be consistent, so she can make the right choices.

Other World of Darkness Products

What if you decide to set the chronicle in New York City, and one of the players pulls out a copy of **Geist: The Sin-Eaters** and notes that New York already has a write-up for the World of Darkness? Easy: Use it to the degree that you want to.

Lots of World of Darkness products make note of various locales around the world, but these descriptions might not be consistent from one product to another because there's not really an established "canon" for the setting. The setting doesn't progress; if a vampire is mentioned as the Prince of Trenton in one book, he's not necessarily going to be mentioned in another. That degree of consistency is limiting, and it sends the message that to really get a full picture of the World of Darkness, you need to read every book available. That's simply not true — to get a full picture of the World of Darkness, you need to paint it yourself. All the books do is give you colors.

With that said, the existing World of Darkness books can give you a great amount of information and some fun plot hooks. Since **Beast** is meant to be crossover friendly, it's possible to use a lot of them as written. So, again, use them to whatever degree your group finds agreeable.

Chronicle Design

Beast, like many of the games in the World of Darkness line, can be a bit overwhelming to run because of how big and open it is. You understand how to make characters from reading Chapter Three, and you understand the history and general existence of the Children by reading Chapter Two, but how do you synthesize it all into a *story*?

The various World of Darkness game lines include advice about how to build a chronicle, but one way to start is to decide whether you want the chronicle to be *plot-focused* or *character-focused*.

In a plot-focused chronicle, the Storyteller sets up a pre-existing situation and has the players create characters that fit into or interact with that situation somehow, or introduces the situation in the first session. An example might be the Vancouver setting described in Chapter Six; the hive of that city is flooding, and the city has an old, bloody rivalry between Makara, Ugallu, and vampires. Creating a brood for that city requires deciding how the characters fit into that situation — what if one player wants to create a Raptor character, and another has her heart set on a Leviathan? It's not impossible to reconcile these things, of course, but characters need to be created with the situation in mind. The characters are important, but the events and overall setting of the game is the focus point.

While plot-focused games work for **Beast**, it's really designed to be a character-focused game. In such a game, the players create their characters with minimal or no setting information from the Storyteller, and their history and backstory forms the basis of the chronicle going forward. This approach ensures that whatever stories come out of the chronicle are personal and focused on the brood and their supporting characters, but it also puts a great deal of responsibility on the players to create not only their characters, but a shared setting. Fortunately, as Storyteller, you can facilitate this kind of chronicle. Just set aside a session or two to act as "character and chronicle creation," and take the players through the following steps. The order of the steps isn't absolute; find a sequence that works for your players.

Step One: Create Characters

Follow the steps in Chapter Three; everyone winds up with a character that they feel exited about playing. Make note of the following:

- **Other Player-Controlled Characters:** If two players decide their characters know each other, or even just met in passing, make a note. Shared history helps build the setting.
- **Merits:** Merits like Allies, Contacts, and True Friend necessitate some follow-up. How did the character meet these people? What is the nature of their relationship? What does their inclusion say about the chronicle setting?
- **Kinship:** If a player wants to start with a non-Beast character as kin, make a note of it but don't establish any more detail than necessary. What kind of crossover to include is a decision that the group should come to as a whole (and is a later step).
- **Setting Elements:** If one of the characters has the Heart of the Ocean Atavism, it's reasonable to want a body of water nearby. If a player wants to create a Beast who teaches folklore at a prestigious university, then the chronicle needs access to such a university. Make notes about how the players' choices establish the setting for the chronicle — they'll become useful in the next step.

Sex, Drugs, and Other Difficult Topics

Beast is a horror game. That means that it's going to include violent, difficult subject matter. You don't need to shy away from that; if your players have agree to take part in a **Beast** chronicle, then hopefully they have read the book and understand that nature of the game.

With that said, playing in a horror game doesn't mean that a player is agreeing to be uncomfortable. Some topics are hard for people to handle, whether because of personal experience or just because they don't make for a fun evening. Before playing any World of Darkness game, including **Beast**, ask your players if there are topics or motifs that they'd prefer to avoid. If so, avoid them. It's as simple as that.

Sex and sexuality, drug use, domestic abuse, violence to children, and sexual violence are common examples of things that players might like to avoid in a roleplaying game. These things might be "realistic" to deal with in the context of a modern horror game, but realism isn't the goal here. The goal is telling a fun and compelling story; if the players are uncomfortable, they won't have fun. Be kind and respectful to your fellow players, and take the risks with your characters instead.

Step Two: Establish the Setting

The group should work together and decide the primary setting for the chronicle, taking into account anything established by the characters' backstories. The players (including the Storyteller) should make any concerns or preferences known. For example, a Storyteller might prefer to keep the setting in her home country so as to avoid portraying another country badly (or just generically). A player might wish to avoid her hometown, since **Beast** is a horror game and putting something familiar in a horror context can be upsetting.

Beyond that, start with what you know about the setting and build out. Characters with dots in Streetwise do better in a city rather than a rural town. Characters with Specialties like "Party Scene" or "Drug Trade" need a setting that allows them to use those traits. Talk about what the characters picture for the chronicle — do they like the idea of chase scenes across large, empty expanses of land, lit by the moon, or do tight alleys and lots of foot traffic sound more appealing? Once you've got an idea for a "home base" for the chronicle, do a little research online. A Wikipedia page can tell you all kinds of baseline information about city (date of founding, population, demographic information, different neighborhoods, and so on), and start providing you with iconic backdrops for your **Beast** stories.

Step Three: Build Character Histories

Some of this is done during character creation, of course, but dig a little deeper. Present the players with a few of the questions below. You don't have to have every player answer every question; pick a few that you find evocative and have the players answer them. A word of advice: Write down the answers somewhere. It's easy to forget details when you're brainstorming. One possibility is for every player to have a notebook dedicated to the game, which then stay in the Storyteller's possession between chapters. That allows the Storyteller to refer to them when designing stories, and it allows the players to refer to their notes easily during play.

- **Where do you live?** What kind of house or apartment? Who are your neighbors? What history do you have with them? *System tie-in:* Resources Merit, Safe Place Merit.
- **Where do you work?** What job does your character perform? Does she hate it? Love it? Work on auto-pilot? *System tie-in:* Resources Merit, any Skills.
- **Where do you spend your time?** Where does the character go in off-time? What's her favorite place to get lunch during the day? What places does she frequent? *System tie-in:* Streetwise Skill, Contacts Merit.
- **How long have you lived here?** Did the character move here from a different city? When? Under what circumstances? Who does she miss? Who misses her? *System tie-in:* Streetwise Skill, Status Merit.
- **What significant relationships are you in?** Is the character married? Dating? A fan of casual, anonymous sex? Asexual, but social? Socially anxious? How does your character relate to others? Consider your character's sexual orientation, too (but see the sidebar). *System tie-in:* Social Skills and Attributes.
- **Do you have family?** What family members are local, if any? What are the character's family obligations? Does she still regard the peoples she grew up with as family, or does she only think of other Children or supernatural beings that way now? *System tie-in:* Allies, Contacts, True Friend Merits.
- **How do you feed?** Does the character try to teach a lesson when feeding? Most Beasts do, but it's not required (the Horror doesn't care one way or another). Does the character have a preferred feeding method? Any habits or rituals she observed when choosing prey? *System tie-in:* Intimidation, Brawl, Crafts, and Occult Skills.

- **Have you ever encountered a Hero?** The Heroes that Beasts encounter, unfortunately, tend to be the ones that want to kill them. Has the Beast ever crossed paths with a Hero? Did she attract the Hero, or did he just appear out of nowhere? What happened? *System tie-in:* Combat Skills and Merits, Investigation Skill, Stealth Skill, Spoor Merit.

Step Four: Build the Supernatural Landscape

A good way to decide on the supernatural tone and tenor of your chronicle's setting is to ask each of the players to describe a supernatural event that happened in the area. This can be something that a player's character witnessed, heard about secondhand, or caused. This step builds into the next one (establishing crossover), but it's a separate step because when done well, it helps establish some weird events without putting them into specific games' contexts.

For example, a player might say "my character saw a man — well, a humanoid shaped thing, anyway — pushing a woman up against a wall in an alley with its mouth on her neck. Blood was streaming and she was obviously dead. My character moved in for a closer look, and the thing bounded up the wall to the roof and ran off." The creature in question sounds like a vampire, but isn't necessarily one. It's out there somewhere in the city, and it's a hook that the characters can follow if they'd like. By describing simply what the character experiences, rather than trying to describe the occurrence in objective terms ("my character saw a vampire tear someone's throat out"), the players leave the question open of what is really going on. Remember one of **Beast**'s themes: No neat little boxes. Just because something appears easy to explain doesn't mean it is.

Step Five: Crossover

It is possible to run **Beast** with no interference or influence from the other World of Darkness game lines. The game assumes that other supernatural characters and weirdness exist and will play a role in the chronicle, but if the Storyteller would rather use "vampires" and not get into the backstory and setting of **Vampire: The Requiem**, that's fine, if a bit more work.

With that said, the default assumption is that troupes will use at least some of the World of Darkness' content in **Beast** games. In this step in chronicle design, the players and the Storyteller should talk about their expectations for crossover and how it should work, what (if any) game lines should be excluded, and what the players would like to see as far as crossover themes.

How the different game lines' themes mix with **Beast**'s is discussed in Chapter Five and later in this chapter, but go into a bit of detail with your players. One player might enjoy the idea that, since vampires and Beasts both feed on people in different ways, some conflict over the ways they feed might be interesting. A vampire might view a Beast's feeding method as sadistic and barbaric and invasively personal, while the Beast points out that while she might pounce on a person from above and knock them down, the worst that happens is that they get some scrapes and bruises, not lose a liter of blood. Another player might wish to explore the two beings' relationships with humanity and family. Vampires create more of their own kind, and refer to the relationship thus created in familial terms ("sire," "childe"). A Beast doesn't create another Beast so much as facilitate or hasten the Devouring, and the relationship, though sometimes referred to in a familial way ("big sibling"), isn't meant to be lasting. A Beast needs to find her own way. Why, then, is the vampire's relationship of greater risk in turning toxic? And what of a vampire's still-living family as compared to a Beast's birth family?

All of these questions deserve a bit more consideration than, "yeah, put vampires in the game." Players should be able to say *why* a given supernatural character appeals, or at the very least, be willing to develop and learn those themes in play.

The Apex

An important part of this step is determining the region's Apex. Remember that the Apex is often a Beast, but that's because Beasts often interact the most directly with the Primordial Dream. Any type of supernatural character can become an Apex; the position can shift, however, as another character becomes more relevant and powerful. If the Storyteller has an idea for the Apex, she can share it, otherwise, let the players figure it out. Likewise, let them choose the Hive Trait that runs through the Chambers and Lairs in the area, and ask them how that Trait changes or works with their characters' Lairs.

Some things to remember about the Apex that can have interesting implications in your chronicle:

- **The Apex doesn't need to be a Beast, though that's slightly more common.** The Apex could be a vampire, werewolf, mage, ghoul, ghost, psychic, Sin-Eater, Promethean, changeling, mummy, or any other supernatural being — even a demon.
- **The Apex doesn't need to know that it is the Apex.** In fact, other than Beasts, few supernatural creatures would have any way to know of their status.
- **Changing between one Apex and another can be swift or gradual.** If a new, powerful being arrives in town and immediately begins terrorizing people, it's likely to become the Apex quickly. If the Apex is an old vampire slowly growing more detached from humanity, its influence might fade over a period of years while a new Apex rises to power. Playing a story set in this interim might be interesting.

Step Six: The First Session

The first chapter of a **Beast** chronicle can involve a scenario that the Storyteller creates. Maybe it starts dramatically (an explosion downtown! A sudden, city-wide nightmare! The Apex instantly changes! Fire in the sky!), or perhaps the event is subtle (a visitor from the brood's past arrives; random passers-by stare at the Beasts in horror for a second; the characters' Horrors stir in their Lairs as though something roused them). The idea is to get the players looking into whatever happened. The more you can tie in something from their shared history or the work everyone did in setting creation, the better, because then the setting feels familiar and vibrant. If the players identified important Storyteller characters, use them! Making the troupe feel like you paid attention when they were designing their characters goes a long way toward keeping everyone engaged with the game.

Another way to start off a chapter is to get the characters together (have the player come up with a reason) and play through a day, but when a situation comes up that you, as Storyteller, would normally decide upon something — an event, a revelation, a new character — let a player do it. Don't let them think about it too long, just make note of what happens and use it to build the story going forward. If a player states that they go down to the river and see something huge swimming in the water, you don't need the player to specify what the monster is. All you need to know is that a monster lives in the river. That by itself, hopefully, can act as a springboard for the story or at least part of it.

End the first session on a high note. It doesn't have to be a cliffhanger, but there should be a sense of menace, and hopefully some small victory. The characters should have a clear direction and an idea of what to do next, and something should be worrying them or threatening the status quo.

Advanced Storytelling Techniques

Many of the techniques used in fiction and in film can be used at the table with a little adaptation even though they're not directly addressed in the game rules. For example, foreshadowing can be a powerful storytelling tool. Symbolism, cutaways, dream sequences, flashbacks, these are all valid pieces of the art you can deliver to your table. Use some note cards. Think about scenes you expect to happen (but not necessarily their results, since your players will walk all over any laid plans), and the tools you could use to better deliver those experiences.

For example, if you know your players are likely to meet the Hero in his corporate boardroom, and that'll be a major event in your session this week, plan to use some techniques in advance. Some options you might use:

- Look to the description of the boardroom. Liken it to something else. Is it functionally his "throne room?" Give it all the neo-gothic decorations you'd like. Pull up a medieval tapestry, and jot down a flowery description of it. Is it his hiding spot, where he's cornered? Tell us about the faux rock walls and how the shadows can conceal him from any angle.
- Think about his "grand speech." Don't write it out and read it; that's boring. But come up with a few key bullet points and even some quotes that support your themes. Is he a conniver? Start with Shakespeare. Is he a user? Look to *Trainspotting*. Short but pointed references can give the players a frame of context that'll immediately help them to fill in any blanks you left in your descriptions.
- Look at his body language. Come up with tells and gestures that betray his motivations and secrets in the scene, and pepper them throughout the description. Is he lying about taking hostages? Perhaps he scratches the back of his neck when asked about them. Does he have a backup plan? Show his confidence even in the face of certain doom.

These are just some basic examples. You can even couch them in game mechanics. The room description could be part of an action to assess the tactical aspects of the scene. The quotes could be backed up with rolls to catch popular culture references the players missed. The body language could be given or interpreted as part of an Empathy action.

Eschew Common Structures

In Western film, books, and other media, particularly genre fiction like **World of Darkness** and **Beast: The Primordial** draw inspiration from, you find certain trends and tropes. The "monomyth," popularized by Joseph Campbell's "The Hero With A Thousand Faces" is one of the most common structures in modern fiction. It largely entered the pop culture parlance through George Lucas's *Star Wars*. However, it doesn't really work for **Beast**. You can make it work, but that structure is not **Beast**'s default state.

Why?

In such a structure, the Beast has to die. The Hero must conquer "the dragon," subsuming the Beast's power and moving on, like the monster was simply a hurdle on his quest. This clearly doesn't work, for a couple of reasons. First, it would mean every game would end in the characters' deaths. Second, the Beasts would only play a menial role in the story. In this game, the Beasts are the stars of the show.

Still, you can't just reverse the story, and shift roles. In the Hero/Beast dynamic, Beasts are not assumed to be proactively against Heroes. Heroes are still the active force in the relationship. This seems like it might be at odds from

the presentation on p. 72, that identifies Heroes as reactive; both at true. Heroes are reactive insofar as they do not exist (again, in terms of the narrative) without a Beast, but they are active insofar as Beasts don't generally go seeking them out. Beasts *attract* them through their actions, yes, but even then, the Beast is simply the catalyst in the relationship. The Beast doesn't achieve a great milestone in her life for destroying the Hero. In fact, if the Beast achieves a great personal milestone for destroying the Hero, that belittles the relationship. Part of the compelling aspect of Heroes is that the Beast doesn't usually have a direct tie to her assailant. The Hero comes out from left field. The Beast has her own life to deal with. Usually, the Beast's only knowledge of the Hero is his motivation, and that if she doesn't fight, he'll destroy her.

Instead, look to stories about outsiders, about disenfranchised people, and about communities that exist on the outskirts of the mainstream. Beasts aren't the heroes, but the Heroes aren't really the heroes, either. Nobody needs to be the hero of these stories. These are stories about people (albeit monstrous people) and the unique challenges they face. They're not only stories about overcoming adversity, but about how people react to dramatically strange circumstances. Consider *Grendel*, an archetypal Beast story. Grendel isn't a story about whether or not Grendel can conquer his foes and overcome obstacles; it's a story about Grendel coming to realize what he is and coming to terms with that. We don't care if he can win in a fight against a given opponent, we simply care about what the fights mean.

Four-Act Style

Consider looking at other models. One good example of an alternate story frame is the Japanese Kishotenketsu, which is popular in some Japanese animation, and has been co-opted in some western television shows when they film a "Rashomon-style" episode. It's a four-act structure that works in a relatively tight pattern of introduction, development, twist, wrap-up. For Western audiences, many of the renowned films of Akira Kurosawa have popularized the idea (even if it's not something formally recognized and widely discussed). Stories such as Rashomon embody the idea of a "conflict-free story". This isn't to say the story has no conflict, but the story isn't about the conflict, it's about understanding the path and the intricacies in interweaving tales.

In the example of Rashomon, most of the "conflict" is already resolved by the time the story begins. It features a murder and rape in the backdrop of the tale, and three people each tell their own version of the story. The resolution is finding how the characters respond, grow, and achieve understanding. It's worth noting, Rashomon is only an example of the style. The important feature of the **Kishōtenketsu** is that the story is about revealing the truths and the unifying threads, not about asking whether or not the protagonists can overcome a challenge.

In **Beast**, a **Kishōtenketsu** story can be a unique challenge. After all, Beasts are a mighty lot. They face challenges, and they overcome. Sometimes they fail, but the deck is stacked in their favor. If you're using a four-act as inspiration, whether or not they can overcome challenges is tangential to the real point. The story becomes about growth and exploration. No Nightmare, no Atavism will help a character grow and achieve realization. In fact, most of a Beast's major tools force more questions, and bring a character further from the answers.

The Storytelling System mechanics are all about building and resolving conflicts, so you'll have to look at them in a slightly different light here. First, we touch on the general Storytelling System mechanics. Then, how these concepts could apply to **Beast: The Primordial** specifically.

This model assumes a single game session covers the four acts of the story. However, if you are planning ahead for a larger chronicle, each act could be a full game session, and you can play it in a more relaxed, soft-handed fashion. But a four-act story requires some attention to pacing, to keep things moving ahead. All games require mind to pacing, but in a more traditional game, break points are more obvious. As the characters uncover and resolve challenges, the story moves forward. Conflict drives the plot. With a **Kishōten**ketsu style story, it's important to move forward as soon as possible, and to not let threads linger too long. Listless characters, and by extension listless players, will tend to seek out conflict resolution if they feel there's no direction.

Act One: Introduction — This is all about introducing the characters and story elements that will come into play throughout the story. It's usually a relatively quick phase of the chronicle. If you're only playing a single session, keep it to less than a half an hour at most. If you're playing an extended chronicle, this could be a full prelude session, or even a couple of sessions showcasing characters individually. This can look a lot like a standard game of **Beast: The Primordial**, especially in a longer chronicle.

In fact, if you have the time and want to make the most out of this opportunity, use Act One to create your characters. Walk in with concepts, and just note on your character sheets how many dots you get, then fill them in as things become relevant. If it happens that your character needs to be able to paint, add dots to Crafts and Intelligence. If lockpicking becomes a concern, fill in some Dexterity and Larceny. This will mean that every event in the first few sessions will be a sort of "spotlight event," showcasing one competent character.

In **Beast** specifically, this should be where you showcase some of what makes the characters truly monsters. Give spotlight to Nightmares and Atavisms. Give longer, more elaborate descriptions than you might otherwise. Focus heavily on the direct and indirect ramifications of these monstrous features. Don't be afraid to give a quick cutaway, just a brief description of some of the ripples happening off-camera. If a Nightmare breaks a person's will, show them at their family dinner table that Sunday. Show the family asking him what's wrong, and gossiping about him when he goes to the restroom. Show us his fiancé, cupping an engagement ring, and opting to

NAME NAMES

One of the most important techniques you can use as a Storyteller is to name everyone. That's not "the gas station attendant", that's "Donna, the single mom working overnight at the gas station to save up for her kid's college tuition." Even if the players' characters don't know these facts, the players will appreciate the blush of life in your chronicle. Populate your World of Darkness with individuals first and foremost. If you feel like relying on stereotypes and generalities, name them and give them little sparks of uniqueness to make your world your own.

If you have time before your game, sit down for a few minutes and jot down some names and basic descriptions for the random people who populate your world. You don't need to give them professions or roles, simply identities. Then, as you need to fill a role in your chronicle, plug one in.

This not only makes your World feel alive and real, it gives you the opportunity to invest in scope and emotional resonance without going overboard. Ten people might die at the gas station, but your players will almost certainly care more if Donna dies. In a game like **Beast**, where the characters live in a semi-secret state with their monstrosity hidden from the public, huge statistical impacts quickly become hard to believe. Naming your Storyteller characters means you don't need to lean on extremes.

second guess himself and put it away when his lover's behavior becomes erratic and disjointed. Show us his custody hearing where his defensive attitude costs him visitation rights with his children. This should happen quickly, but clearly.

It's important to note that this is not supposed to be a punishment for your players; this is reward, in narrative form. The players portray awful monsters, and this is your chance to show them that their decisions truly matter. This isn't to say they need to revel in monstrosity; if that's what they're into, great. But more to the point, you're rewarding them by making them truly relevant and resonant in the game setting. They are not tourists; they shake the world around them. They're proverbial dragons. They need to matter.

Act Two: Development — Here is where the bulk of the chronicle establishment happens. Here, you build. You create. You generate. As Storyteller, you add conflict, and you pile on plot. It's important you don't allow for any superlative resolutions at this point; your goal is to add plot, not let it go away. The players need to be made aware of this in order to keep with the structure. Normally, players will work toward resolution as rapidly as possible. With this style of play, they have to understand that they can't get that until a certain amount of time has passed.

This phase of the story should be about half the total game time. It ends once you have a strong collection of plot events to build from. If it feels like the tension is getting too great and there's too much to handle, that's about time to move on. You need at least a few random additions from failures, so if those aren't coming fast enough, introduce them yourself.

During this act, any player may take a Beat once per game session in order to spin a side narrative, a short, descriptive scene using some of the random elements generated by failed rolls (see below).

In **Beast**, this usually means showing us how far the ripples go. It means catching the attention of Heroes. It means drawing back the curtains and showing the other denizens of the **World of Darkness**. It means showing how if you go far back enough in time, everything looks like a pattern.

Act Three: Twist — Now, you set the main characters aside for a short while and tell a parallel story. This builds from the people, places, things, and events you've established in the past scenes with the alternative failure rule, and through your own additions. Again, this should have little to nothing to do with the main narrative. But you need to build a short story with these elements. In this stage, players can grab characters and "take ownership." They can also add others. If you need to roll dice for actions, use the sidebar for creating these side characters.

In **Beast**, you can use this opportunity to truly twist the play. You can take the game in a completely different direction, particularly if you're running an extended chronicle where you can devote a session or two to this act. For example, what if the players portrayed Heroes in your setting? Or, what if you suddenly break and ask your players to participate in a seemingly unrelated session of **Vampire: The Requiem** this week? If your players are amenable to suggestion, you don't need to explain what you're doing. Just tell them you want to try something different tonight, and run with it. Let Act Four tie these threads together.

If you go this route, it's important to keep things as separate from the primary narrative as possible, but to offer hanging threads the players can tie together. Beast is particularly good at this part of the tale, because it offers such sweeping diversity tied to its core paradigms. You can use any of the other World of Darkness games to tell this part of the tale, and it will remain workable within a context that's both easy to justify, and easy to present as something mysterious and separate from the main story.

You could run Act Three in a different place, or even a different time. What do the werewolves of Ancient Egypt have to do with your Beast chronicle? That's a good question; it's one you'll answer in Act Four. Why does a story about Jack the Ripper matter to our tale set in modern Tokyo? That's another great question. But for help answering, use symbols, references, quotes, and callbacks to other chronicle events. You don't have to explain them, and should just move on if players try to draw conclusions now. But if the leader of a majestic Gaelic Freehold

SIDE CHARACTERS

When creating characters for the four-act variant, you don't want to take the time to fill out entire character sheets in play. Instead, use these simplified character sheets.

Characters have three Attributes, "Power, Finesse, and Resistance". Power covers Strength, Intelligence, and Presence actions. Finesse is Dexterity, Manipulation, and Wits. Resistance is Stamina, Resolve, and Composure. All characters have one free dot in each, and you have four dots to distribute amongst them however you see fit.

Characters also have Skills, but only the ones they need. By default, this means two Skills at three dots, four at two dots, and six at one dot. You can fill them in as you see fit. Additionally, you can take three Specialties as they come up in play.

These characters don't normally have Merits, but can earn them quickly in play. Any Beats you earn while playing that character can be exchanged for additional game traits. One Beat can become a Merit dot. Two can become a Skill, five can become an Attribute. Two Beats earn a Skill. Five (or an Experience) earn an Attribute. Merits earned in play should be relevant to the immediate context.

Derived traits work as normal, except as follows:

Defense = Finesse + Athletics

Initiative = Finesse x 2

Health = 5 + Resistance

Willpower = Power + Resistance

RULES SHARD CHOICE INSTEAD OF FAILURE

This model requires you shift out failure as a default occurrence. In this style of play, if a player rolls no success on an action, she has a choice. She can take a failure (or upgrade it to dramatic failure for a Beat), or she can take a single success. If she takes the success option, she must also introduce a person, place, thing, or event to the story. What's important is, she must bring this up but it cannot relate directly to the story at hand. It can relate to other failure-generated things, but it cannot relate to the story about the protagonist characters. The Storyteller can veto these elements, but should err on the side of permission.

The Storyteller has a slight variant; her characters fail on failed rolls, and she must introduce unrelated things. Essentially, she takes both options simultaneously with every failed roll.

These random elements must remain unrelated to the main narrative until the fourth act. During the second act, once per game session, a player may take any of those random elements and tie them together in a short, parallel scene described to the table. If he does this, he takes a Beat. It'd be wise to jot these elements down so the players can all see what they're working with.

of changelings uses the same line as the Hero in your New York **Beast** chronicle, your players will notice it.

Act Four: Wrap-Up — Lastly, we bring it all together. Here, we discover how the divergent stories are actually one story. Every element on the table is eligible for "resolution," which means a player can take it and, within the scope of their character's story, explain how they are related. Doing this grants a Beat. Cross out the element, or otherwise note that it's handled, and it's married to the story entirely. This can be done once per player per scene. During Act Four, the players can't add new elements for failed rolls.

This act should be all about revelation and understanding. The players should use these relationships between elements and their characters in order to finalize the story and make sense of the events.

That's the **Kishotenketsu**. You can find numerous examples of the style for inspiration, some more obvious than others. Miyazaki Hayao's *My Neighbor Totoro* is a wonderful example of such a story, not focused on conflict, but on exploring and understanding. While lighter than a **Beast** story, it's not hard to look beneath the surface for common, useable threads. But pay close attention to the moments that would be rife with tension in a Western film. Many are simply glossed over, because they're not the tale's focus. Many Japanese horror films (and Western horror films, if you look hard enough) follow similar rules, but in reverse. There's no hope in overcoming the conflict, so instead we come along for the ride and see what happens and how the characters grow and change as result.

Crossover

Beast: The Primordial is just one game of many game lines in the World of Darkness. Other lines include but are not limited to **Vampire: The Requiem**, **Changeling: The Lost**, and **Demon: The Descent**. They all use the same (but slightly custom-fitted forms of the) Storytelling System. **Beast** boasts a unique position in these game lines, in that it's the first to be designed specifically with crossover play in mind. By crossover, we mean featuring characters from multiple game lines simultaneously. Beasts see all the other denizens of the World of Darkness as kin, so they're likely to fall in with others. You may have a game featuring a coterie of vampire characters that happens to feature a Beast character, or even a cosmopolitan game featuring characters from numerous game lines at once. While **Beast** was written with this intention in mind, it requires some special consideration, even for experienced Storytellers.

Anchor On Theme

Since the various game lines each have their own themes and moods, crossover play is prone to muddying the waters. As Storyteller, your best bet is to pick a single theme and run with it. Anchor your chronicle on that theme, and don't worry too much about the others.

If you have a game with a vampire character, a Beast character, and a changeling character, you have three competing core themes and multitudes of other secondary themes. You could tell a story of personal horror, gothic romance, strange fairy tales, or any number of other stories. It's important to pick one, however, and it's okay to let the other potential themes fall by the wayside. Stronger stories say one thing eloquently rather than stumbling over numerous things.

This isn't to say you should ignore characters and their contexts. In our previous example, if you choose to run a story of dark fairy tales, your vampire player may still wish to indulge a bit in her character's descent into inhumanity. She may wish to explore her newfound situation and curse. That's okay! Support that. In fact, that's a perfect place for her to express her character's Aspirations. Just be clear on the front end what style of stories you're telling and what type of game you want to run.

Game Balance?

Did you know that demons (or perhaps mummies) are the strongest things in the World of Darkness, objectively? Did you know that in a hypothetical space, a plain room with no other factors, a changeling can hand a vampire his ass on a platter? It doesn't matter. Every one of the World of Darkness games is designed with different goals in mind, and absolutely none of those goals are "objectively equal power levels with every other game line." You have to disavow yourself of this way of thinking early on, or you're in for a lot of frustration.

Some of the game lines have characters who are better in specific fields. Vampires, for example, have numerous social tools that can manipulate, fool, and persuade characters. Werewolf packs, on the other hand, are apex hunters, and can find, chase, and kill damned near anything. While exceptions exist, you don't expect werewolves to outperform vampires in a social arena, and you can't hope for vampires to hunt with the ferocity of werewolves.

What isn't okay, however, is making one player not have fun. You don't win the game through tactical dominance; you win the game by telling cool stories and having fun. If someone isn't having fun, you all lose. It's important to address possible conflicts up front and be clear about them. If you have a player with a vampire character who wants to be a social maven, it might cause conflicts if the werewolf player decides to focus entirely on werewolf social powers, outshining the vampire in her expected area of expertise. These are certainly problems any group can come across, but they're especially pronounced in crossover groups. You can cut these problems off at the pass by making your characters together and discussing what everyone wants their characters to be good at, bad at, and otherwise.

Be Careful With Social Groups

Every World of Darkness game line has its own social groups. Vampires have covenants, werewolves have tribes; most of the game lines have their own respective social groups. If you feature multiple game lines in your chronicle, you can quickly run the risk of bogging down your stories in minutiae if you try to showcase each of the relevant social groups. This isn't to say that you should plainly ignore them (you can if you want, certainly), but digging too far into their details will leave a lot of players and characters dry.

For example, if you have a vampire character in your chronicle, it might be tempting to talk about the politics and mystical sciences of the Ordo Dracul and make that a focus of your game. But there's a good chance your changeling player won't find that very interesting. Conversely, you can find interesting bedfellows by exploring these ties. While the changeling player might not have much interest, a Promethean character could have a lot of overlap with the Ordo Dracul. And if these terms mean nothing to you, that tells you how a player might feel if you delve too deeply into another game's specific game-specific content, to the exclusion of the game you're actually playing.

Find Universal Motivators

Don't think about what might motivate specific monster types and try to overlap. Instead, think of the very general conflicts that motivate most people. Think of love, revenge, existential threats, sacrifice, and all the other timeless things that bring people together in stories. Don't focus on differences, find points of commonality. In fact, you can front-load this. If you come up with a motivator for your chronicle, just flat-out ask your players to make characters who would care about that event, and do something about it. Motivating a diverse group is one of the most challenging parts of Storytelling a crossover game. Put some of that burden onto your players.

If you want to be daring, talk with them during character creation and have them come up with their common motivator. Also discuss with them at least the seeds for alliance. Bringing random groups together can lead to unwanted strife and unbelievable relationships that feel forced.

Heroes

Heroes can be difficult to use effectively because we tend to think of them as, well, heroes. They are called "Heroes" for reason, though (they could just as easily have been called "Slayers," which would have conveyed a different message): **Beast** is about the monster/monster killer narrative, but it's meant to subvert it. Beasts aren't necessarily good people; they *can* be, but it's not a prerequisite for being the protagonist. Heroes aren't necessarily good people, either.

As Chapters Two and Five made clear, a Hero isn't simply someone who kills Beasts. Heroes are people who can sense disturbances in the Primordial Dream; some of those people find Beasts and cannot express what they feel any other way but violently. Those are the Heroes that **Beast** uses as antagonists. As such, when Storyteller a game of **Beast**, you bear the responsibility for the narrative roles that your antagonists fulfill.

The reasonable, caring, "good" Heroes don't make much of an appearance in **Beast**, not because they don't exist, but because the narrative role for the Hero in **Beast** is that of a violent, narcissistic antagonist. If you want to include Heroes that break with this narrative role, go ahead! The prevailing thought among Beasts is that Heroes are dangerous and violent, because that's the type of Hero they tend to find. Again, thematically speaking, breaking narrative assumptions and recognizing that easy labels aren't so useful is very much in keeping with **Beast** (this is also why Melanie is included as an example Hero; she's not violent and narcissistic. The way that a brood deals with her would be very different than dealing with, say, Desmond — p. 220 and p. 216, respectively).

Creating interesting Hero antagonists is tricky, but below are a few things to consider in doing so.

Arguments

Look at the fervor with which people will argue about what is important to them, from comic book movies, to gender, to space cowboys, to vaccines, whatever. Even if the person doesn't have a leg to stand on logically, they hold their perspective. If you listen to their reasons, it at least makes sense why they believe what they do, regardless of whether or not they reasonably should. It's about identity. If you identify with something, an opposing viewpoint isn't attacking your argument, you feel

like it's attacking you. This is, perhaps, more noticeable on the Internet, because people online don't see the other people they are talking to, so it's much easier to depersonalize. People are wired to believe what they hear or see first, though, and they also tend to sympathize with whatever argument gives them a narrative that they can agree with.

That, in short, is how Heroes see Beasts — as monsters out to get them personally, or at least that exist in defiance of everything *they personally* stand for. Heroes believe that whatever a Beast does is a slight against humanity. Since Heroes are part of humanity, they see everything a Beast does as a personal attack and an affront to their very identity.

Where this becomes complicated is that the Beast might well deserve it. Some Beasts are violent, sadistic, terrible individuals. All Beasts feed on fear, but a Beast can choose to minimize the damage it does (and, as mentioned, **Beast** is a horror game — no one should be expecting the protagonists to be paragons of virtue). Heroes don't make a distinction, though. The only moral high ground that Beasts have to seize here is that Heroes generally attack preemptively, without bothering to see whether a Beast is doing lasting damage to people. Again, these narrative roles are something for which the Storyteller and players are responsible. It's entirely possible for the dramatic thrust of a chronicle to revolve around that question: "Am I the monster the Hero sees me to be? Can I be otherwise?"

Conspiracy Theories

A simple, single belief is easy to discredit. If the Hero is wrong about that one single-minded topic, he can be shut down wholly in an instant and the entire fabric of his identity falls apart instantly. That leads to violent rages and Heroes who would give up their cause. What you need, as a Storyteller, is a conspiracy theory.

Crafting a good conspiracy theory is about complexity and depth, not about its potential validity. Look to the most popular conspiracy theories in the real world; they don't hold up to even a moderate scientific inquiry. But they're sufficiently complex that a given believer can grasp onto a few threads they truly identify with (and again, Heroism is all about identity) and hold to the exclusion of all other concerns.

Find a number of important elements in your chronicle. This can be people, places, things, organizations, or events. If you want to do it well, jot each down on a sticky note and place them on a whiteboard. Start drawing red lines between things. On every line, come up with points of connection the Hero could come up with. These connections do not have to be realistic. Keep doing this until everything is tied to at least two other things. You need definite, complex lines of collusion here, so if any single one of them falls apart, the theory at large remains intact.

Note that your Hero doesn't need to inherently know or believe any of these things when he becomes a Hero; but they need to be things he can spontaneously come up with when confronted with evidence that might hurt his convictions.

As a rule, your Hero should come up with two threads for everyone one that's challenged. Why? Because challenges to his convictions should never, ever erode his resolve. Challenges should only ever reinforce it.

The more complex aspect of conspiracy theory requires the theorist to be at the center of the theory. For most theorists, it's one thing to say NASA never landed on the Moon. But it takes a whole different level of theorist to speak with any sort of "authority." That theorist is your Hero. He stands at the center of his grand theory. After all, he was slighted. Remember, the conspiracy is a challenge to the Hero's identity.

The Hero must never consider himself culpable for any of the various strings on this web. No matter what he does, he has to be able to rationalize, justify, or ignore the influence of his actions. This means he needs an excuse for why everything goes bad around him.

The Sidelines

The worst part is that the Hero has sympathizers. The Hero has enablers. The Hero can build a cult of personality and find groups of people who will be in his corner no matter how wrong he is. To those people, he's truly a hero, and everything he does is for the betterment of humanity. Even if they don't love him, they love his actions and refuse to believe he's anything but just.

These people will act as his shield and vehemently believe that's not what's happening. He uses them, weaponizes them, and manipulates them. They internalize his wrongs and either project guilt elsewhere for him or take it upon themselves. "Clearly, he only had to shoot that innocent person because I wasn't there to negotiate for him." "He doesn't hate you because of who you are. He doesn't hate anyone. He hates your actions. I'm a vampire. If he truly hated people for who they were, he'd hate me." These are the kinds of things a Hero's enabler say to deflect criticism.

Heroes and Integrity

In previous chapters, we mention that the sort of Hero who becomes violent and goes hunting for Beasts tends to have a low Integrity rating (that qualifier "tends to" is important, but we'll come back to that). It's important to unpack that idea so that you understand *why* that's the case and what it means for Heroes.

As explained in Chapter Four, Integrity is a game trait measuring the health of a person's soul and self-image. Integrity does not, by itself, measure whether a person is "good" or not. It is not a measure of kindness or compassion. Certainly people with high Integrity traits tend to be strong of character, and strength of character leads to empathy and compassion, but it is possible to have a high Integrity rating and be harsh, cruel, or even violent. It simply means that the character is well aware of who and what he is.

Violent Heroes, though, lack that awareness. Their souls are weak, whether by nature or by difficult lives whittling away

their Integrity. They tend to be shortsighted, self-centered (but not self-aware), and unfocused. A person can fall to this level of Integrity in any number of ways; when you are designing Heroes for your **Beast** chronicle, it's worthwhile to consider how it happened. You don't need to design breaking points for the character (though you can), nor do you need to detail how any given dot of Integrity was lost, but just a general sense of what happened to the character is enough. Did the character avoid talking to people out of belief that he was better? Did the character suffer some hardship and look for someone else to blame? Or is the answer more basic — is the character an abuser or a bully?

As noted in Chapter Four, it's possible to lose Integrity from exposure to the supernatural, but this by itself doesn't usually reduce the trait low enough to qualify a person for becoming a Hero. Thematically, too, it's not appropriate for someone whose only "crime" was bearing witness to the supernatural to become a violent narcissist; if such a character is going to go out and seek out the supernatural, it should probably be in a different context than strapping on a sword and a gun. Since Heroes are Storyteller-controlled character, you as Storyteller dictate why the Hero is the way he is, so make choices that allow the Hero to fulfill the appropriate role in the story. If the Hero is a sympathetic character, driven to hunt monsters by the relentless attacks of the supernatural, then you might be better served checking out **Hunter: The Vigil** (and perhaps using Beasts as antagonists). If, however, the Hero has deliberately shunned other people, defining himself by what he is not, what he hates, or the wrongs done to him, that's a perfect candidate. The line is thin, and that's deliberate.

Your players don't need to hate a Hero antagonist. They should fear him, because he's trying to kill them, and they should worry that he might go after friends and family if he can't kill a Beast. Certainly they *can* hate him, but the parallel between Beast and Hero is clear: They both experience the Primordial Dream, they both respond in ways that feel natural to them. Is the Hero any more to blame than the Beast? Doesn't the Beast have a right to exist? Is there a middle ground? Or is the Hero such a zealot that no middle ground can be reached, and only death will solve the problem? All of this depends on what kind of story you want to tell.

Resolving a Hero's Threat

The easiest way to resolve the threat a Hero poses to a Beast is to kill the Hero. When a Hero comes after a Beast, weapons loaded and a curse on his lips, that might be the only option. It's certainly the easiest. Other choices exist, though. Here are a few possibilities.

Alter the Hero's Dreams

What if the Beast enters a Hero's dreams and confronts him there? The immediate risk is low; "dying" in a dream just shunts a person back to his body and leaves him Soul-Shocked. Of course, the Hero might try to follow the Beast back to her Lair and kill her there, but maybe it's worth that chance. Maybe the Beast can talk to the Hero and show him that she has a place in the world. Maybe she can make him realize that he hasn't thought his fight through, and that what he's trying to accomplish is all about *him* and his own gratification. That's a hard lesson for anyone, and it might take a while, but in dreams, the Beast has the advantage.

Go to Ground

The Beast hides. She stays out of public sight for a while, doesn't disturb the Primordial Dream (which involves not letting her Horror feed, but keeping her Satiety up — Family Dinner can help with this), and lets the Hero become frustrated in his search. She has to be careful to stay out of his way, maybe plant a false lead — hopefully one that doesn't get anyone killed! — and wait for something else to catch his attention. Hopefully, he finds something else to pour himself into, and that tracking down dangerous monsters isn't the way he wants to spend his time.

Surrender

This is dangerous gambit. The Beast gives up. She presents herself to the Hero in a public place, and says, "now what?" If the Hero is the fanatic he presents himself to be, he might attack anyway, but then that's his choice — he's defined himself by violence, and the Beast can respond in kind. If he falters, the Beast can take the opportunity to talk him into leaving her alone, either with threats or reason **(or the Social maneuvering system; p. 161)**.

Family Union

One of Beast's most basic conceits is that the eldest have a strong sense of family and draw close to kin. Their families work; they stick together and weather the storms as a unit. This is never easy, since families are hard enough to hold together without factoring in that the members are literal monsters, and their ties aren't so clean and clear as direct siblings and offspring.

With a few techniques, you can shed some of the complexity and challenge inherent in bringing a family together. This section builds on some of the setting creation ideas presented earlier in this chapter.

Getting Them Together: A Web

You can play out an "origin story." You can draw your characters together in the first couple of sessions. It can also fall flat or add undue burden before getting to the meat of the story. This model assumes you get all that out of the way before the game starts, during character creation.

When you make your characters, write all their names along the largest piece of paper you can find. Jot them down

in a rough circle. Early on in character creation, connect every character somehow. Draw lines between the characters and establish relationships. Note the relationships along those lines. Keep them simple and readable, no more than a short sentence. This is for establishment, for building things later. It only matters that every character has some tie, some thread. These threads can be somewhat superficial, but don't leave anything blank. Even if the connection is, "doesn't know him, doesn't trust him," that's a connection. It speaks to the relationship.

You can present these relationships as two-way streets. "We were friends in school," is fine, for example. But they can also be one-way, or even two one-way connections. "I have a crush on him" going one-way, while "I'm trying to find reasons to fire him" is fine. You should keep directly "negative" relationships to a minimum; don't avoid them altogether, but you need a group that isn't going to immediately devolve into infighting and betrayal. This isn't necessarily a bad place for a story to go, but it's probably not wise to start there.

Then, as you develop Merits and other characters affiliated with your characters' stories, add them to the chart. They don't need quite as many connections; they'll be directly tied with one character (the one whose sheet represents them with a Merit dot), but they need at least one other. These can be even more indirect than the ones for the primary characters. "I watch him and keep wanting to ask him out when I see him at the coffee shop, even though I don't know his name," is the level you should shoot for (or higher) here. Be sure to also give every secondary character on the chart a connection to another secondary in the same fashion. This way everyone walks into play with certain understandings, and tools they can use to foster improvisation.

Note that this simple model will result in some soap-opera style interactions sometimes. This isn't a problem; it's part and parcel when everyone has to be connected to others within the story. At times it might feel a little forced, but you can work that out in play. Massage the relationships, and make them feel more organic. In this case, you're not building a statue from nothingness; you're approaching the project with a huge lump of clay, and you have to cut off parts you don't need, and polish the ones you like.

If you want to take it to a more proactive level, have every player ask the others questions in order to establish these relationships. Instead of Bob telling Sally "my character served in the army with yours," Sally asks Bob, "when did we risk our lives together?" This lets every player set expectations for her character's relationships.

Sometimes, you might also run into situations where the proposed relationships are unwanted. If one player says, "Our characters were in the military together," and the other says his character is a pacifist that would never serve in the military, there's an impasse. Encourage your players to compromise and try to find explanations, rather than excuses. Instead of saying no, try to find how it might work. With our military example, maybe his character was a poor kid trying to get into med school, so he signed up as a medic to help pay for university. The idea is, if you make compromises and let other players have a little investment and influence who your character is, they'll care about that character a little more and identify with him. This will lead to a stronger sense of familial cohesion in play.

Conflate Commonalities

Most families share close blood ties and common culture. Even if a member has moved far away, she can come back to reunions and talk about grandma's pie, and the way Cathy always forgets to take off her shoes when she visits. You can see how Erica, Mike, and Shauna all have that same little round nose.

Beast Families don't have this level of commonality. They're rarely directly related, and they tend to come from all walks of life. As Storyteller, you have to help the players find threads of commonality and emphasize them. If they can't find any, propose them. This might be difficult, but the trick is to keep pitching possibilities. Even if they seem trivial, creative players can run with them and make them significant. If the players need to send an important document, talk about collectible stamps at the post office window in hopes a couple of players might say their characters are interested. In the summer fields while the characters pass by, talk about a historical reenactment going on, or a renaissance festival they may be associated with. Just drop as many potential hobbies and interests as you can, in order to give the players an opportunity to grab and pull together.

Likewise, present points of opposition. Don't just rely on existential threats like Heroes. Present political landscapes to your players that are hostile to certain ideas and identities. Present social issues that affect the people in their lives. The world around the characters is a tapestry, and the more details you give, the more elements the players can work with. Remember, a lot of people in the world are both assholes and not really deserving of a direct, deadly response. Find points of antagonism that multiple characters can identify with: enemies of my enemy, and all that. But enemy of my enemy only lasts as long as the mutual enemy.

When using antagonism to bring the characters together, you have to give them time to bond and discuss. You can use urgency as an occasional tool to push the story forward. Ultimately, though, if an antagonist's existence is all that holds the characters together, that fabric will quickly unravel once the antagonist is gone. If the characters establish emotional or philosophical reasons for opposing that antagonist, those reasons will outlive the threat.

Lairs

Every Beast has a Lair. Its labyrinthine Burrows and Chambers conceal the Lair's — indeed the Beast's — Heart. In

earlier chapters, we've touched on what a Lair means in game mechanics, how a Hero can destroy the Heart and how to build the Chambers. But here, we touch on Lairs as a story construct, and how to use the Lair as a dramatic device, by focusing on a few key points about Lairs.

The Paradox of Safety and Weakness

A Beast's Lair is her sanctuary and her true home. A Beast's Lair is also her most vulnerable spot. These two ideas seem mutually exclusive, but aren't in practice. While a Beast can die if the Heart of her Lair collapses, her Lair stands deeply defended and challenging for even a trained assailant to attack. Think of it like a turtle's body. If you can get to the turtle's heart, it's very easy to kill. But that ignores how challenging getting to that heart is; at the point where you get to the soft heart, it looks less like a weakness and more of a tribulation.

When Storytelling the Lair, it should always impress and awe. Take the bits and pieces given by the players when designing Chambers and Burrows, and run with them. Focus in on minor details and make them elaborate and layered. Add to what they've given you. In an extended chronicle, use time between game sessions to look into the weird, abandoned, overgrown, haunted, and otherwise curious places in the world. Take note of the details that stand out and evoke strong responses and carry those into your Lair descriptions. Ideally, you want to bring in new ideas that both surprise players and make sense for the respective Beasts' Horrors.

Conversely, playing up the Lair's vulnerability is essential to convey its role in a Beast's existence. One method for doing this is to anthropomorphize the Lair wherever possible. Reference organs, tissues, and limbs in your descriptions. Liken Chambers to the heart's chambers. Burrows become arteries. If the Lair sounds alive, it sounds like it can die. Whenever a character takes action against the Lair or someone does something risky within the Lair, use the opportunity to describe the Lair as aware and concerned, as fragile and mortal.

Constant Threats Are Boring

Lairs are weak points that every Beast possesses. However, that isn't carte blanche to bombard the players with plots against Lairs. Efforts against Lairs should be result of extended culmination and escalation. Even if a Hero has reason to suspect the entrance to a Lair, it should never be the first option. Consider the theatrical value of a Western where the protagonist starts off by shooting the main antagonist. It's anti-climactic and denies the film a chance to make us care about both parties.

Dissociate For Effect

While Chambers correspond to the physical world, they're ultimately part of the Primordial Dream. Presenting this can be a challenge, though, since it's easy to fall back on the Lair just being another location where scenes can occur. Experiment with using dissociative descriptions to get that point across.

Say things that feel right but don't necessarily make sense when held up to scrutiny. "The wall smells slimy." That statement certainly says something and evokes some ideas of what the wall smells like, even though "slimy" doesn't describe an actual smell. Each player might think of something different when piecing together that description in her mind. That's fine! So long as those different ideas don't cause direct problems in the game (and minor sensory details generally won't), it'll only help to build an air of otherness in Lairs.

Engage the Players

This treatment of Lair puts a lot on a Storyteller's shoulders within the context of Lairs. However, as a Storyteller, you're welcome and encouraged to put some of the responsibility in the hands of the players.

When choosing Lair Traits and creating the Lair, have your players go a step further than their character sheets. Come up with a common theme. For example, find photos of real-world residences or musical compositions. Have your players dig and find strong, evocative examples, and assign the examples to their Chambers, Burrows, and Heart. These can (and probably must) be symbolic, less direct.

As your players decide on Traits, let those initial artistic and symbolic choices inform the mechanical decisions.

Present Chances to Expand the Lair

The text of **Beast** talks about building up a character's Legend. That means a number of things in game terms — it can refer to working toward Inheritance, building a character's web of Kinship, and generally becoming a known, powerful force in the World of Darkness. Part and parcel to that, though, is expanding a character's Lair.

Doing so, of course, involves the player expending Experiences and buying more dots of Lair, but that's the easy part. As the Lair rating goes up, the Beast has more potential Chambers, but adding Chambers requires that the Beast seek out appropriate situations. It also requires that you as Storyteller pay attention to which characters have additional Chamber slots and try to present situations in which characters could fill them. In general, try and present one situation for Lair expansion for a given character in every chapter (with the understanding that it won't always happen, but also that the players will make their own opportunities, too).

The process for adding a Chamber is described in Chapter Three (p. 94), but let's break down the steps.

Lair Resonance

The potential area has to match at least one of the Beast's Lair Traits. This means that, as Storyteller, it's a good idea to have a list of the characters' Lair Traits handy. If the characters wind up tracking a rich Hero back to his palatial estate with marble floors and high ceilings, you can note that the place has the Echoing Trait. Any character whose Lair shares that trait has the potential for adding a Chamber during this scene.

A brood can work to each other's benefit here. Say that Ansel's Lair has the Traits Echoing and Poorly Lit, but Ansel doesn't have any open slots for Chambers right now. Gary recently increased his Lair rating, though, meaning he has an open slot. His Lair Traits are Poorly Lit and Noxious Gas. If these two Beasts are in the aforementioned estate and Ansel uses the Echoing Trait (already present) to impose his Poorly Lit Trait, Gary can then use *that* Trait as resonance to add a new Chamber.

Nightmares or Breaking Points

In order to add a Chamber to her Lair, a Beast has to either achieve an exceptional success on a Nightmare, or someone has to suffer a breaking point and lose Integrity (whether or not the Beast is present). These eventualities mean different things in the game, and though they lead to the same end mechanically, they deserve a bit of attention.

If a character inflicts a Nightmare and the player rolls an exceptional success, the character has forced her nature as a manifestation of a Primordial horror into someone's mind. The effect is deliberate and invasive; while the character might not have been trying to build up her Lair, she is definitely building up her Legend. In the future, when the character's Soul inflicts nightmares, it might hearken back to this particular Nightmare and set of circumstances.

For example, consider Ansel and Gary again, hunting down their Heroic enemy. The Hero has bodyguards. When they emerge to defend the home, Gary hits one of them with Bugs Everywhere! The unfortunate bodyguard sees tiny, scorpion-like things skittering out from under the rugs, their tiny legs sounding deafening in the echoing hallway. If Gary uses this circumstance to build his Lair, when his Soul goes roaming in this area in the future, the nightmares it inflicts might reflect this moment—the little scorpion bugs, the stone hallways, maybe even the echoes (though they're not part of Gary's Lair normally).

If, on the other hand, a character loses a dot of Integrity, the Beast is building her Lair not on her own magical prowess, but on another character's spiritual weakness. The character commits an act or witnesses an occurrence that shakes her self-

image and damages her soul, and the Beast's monstrous Soul builds a nest with the fragments. A Chamber created after such an occurrence is likely to be very comfortable for the Beast, a kind of second Heart.

Back to Gary: Suppose instead of using the Nightmare on the bodyguard, he activates the Infestation Atavism and disintegrates into a billion tiny arachnids. The bodyguard, just a normal guy whom the Hero didn't bother to warning about this eventuality, panics and experiences a breaking point. The Storyteller throws some dice, the roll fails, and the bodyguard loses Integrity. Gary builds a new Chamber full of soft, thick webbing, supple enough for Gary to walk on (though other characters tend to fall through it).

It is also possible for a Beast to build a Chamber based on Integrity loss that she had nothing to do with. As described in Chapter Three, if a character loses Integrity due to witnessing the supernatural, it creates a Chamber in the local hive that the Beast can add to her Lair, provided she can learn the context in which it occurred.

This rule is, of course, designed to give Beasts a concrete reason to go looking for other supernatural creatures and learn their stories. Beasts don't need to learn the deep, dark secrets involved, of course. If someone lost Integrity during a mage's bloodletting ritual, the Beast doesn't need to know the political ramifications that would have ensured if the local Consilium *hadn't* looked the other way for this particular ritual, since the perpetrating mage is a supporter of the faction that is trying to stay in power. All she needs to know is that it *was* a bloodletting ritual. Of course, now that she knows, is there anything she can do to help?

Appendix One
The Morning After

The night of the party is amazing. Colored lights, sweet, strong drinks, and hot lips beneath a streetlight. Beads around necks signify willingness and consent, and caution is throw to the gutter along with cigarette butts, red plastic cups, and condom wrappers. But in the morning, someone has to clean it all up. Someone has to make this place presentable, or else the parties stop happening.

The Children of the Dark Mother don't fear recrimination so much as consequence. When the fallout from their actions happens, it doesn't always hinder them, *but it often comes back on their families. But not everyone cares what happens the morning after.*

Introduction

The Morning After is a story for **Beast: The Primordial**, designed for 3–6 characters. At least half these characters should be Beasts, but the story works with a mix of Begotten and other types of characters.

Treatment

The Begotten of the French Quarter in New Orleans all know one another. They don't all belong to the same brood, but they do their best to make sure the Quarter stays friendly. That means being courteous to one another, being polite to the local supernatural population (especially vampires), and helping each other clean up, when necessary.

The Apex in the Quarter is Esmee Childress, an Ugallu on the verge of becoming the Beast Incarnate. Everyone knows Esmee, and while she's difficult to get along with sometimes, she's a good friend to have when things go bad. But as she's leaving her Legend behind and forging a Myth, she's on the verge of doing something that will change the Quarter irrevocably, invite scrutiny from all over the country, and sour relations between the Children and the Kindred forever.

The characters have the chance to prevent Esmee's plans from coming to fruition, but do they want to? Do they support her intentions and ambitions, even if it means ruining their homes? If they do stop her, are they prepared to have such a powerful enemy?

And in the midst of all this, a group of Heroes casts about blindly for a monster to slay. They're on Esmee's trail, but Esmee is happy to distract them with younger Beasts (read: the characters) until she's ready to party.

Themes: Responsibility vs. Creativity

Esmee is creating a violent work of art, meant to cement her as a true monster in the modern age. Of course, in so doing, she'll kill a lot of people and make New Orleans the focus of every Hero in the area for a long time. No matter what she does, other people have to live here. But should Beasts be bound by the same rules as people, especially Beasts as powerful as Esmee? She's family — does that entitle her to forgiveness? Assistance? Nothing?

Human savages,
like other wild beasts,
find snares and poison in
the provisions of life and are
allured by their appetite
to their destruction.

— Jonathan Swift,
The Guardian #61

Mood: Street Level

The French Quarter is vibrant, alive, and dirty. The night air carries scents of amazing food, stale cigarettes, and garbage. Restaurants rub shoulders with stores selling "novelties" (that is, sex toys), antique shops, and places where weary tourists can get their tired feet massaged. Vampires hunt here, coaxing people into the narrow alleys or dark corners of jazz bars. Werewolves sometimes howl by the waterfront, singing to the spirit of Lake Pontchartrain. Some of the doorways in the Quarter open into the Hedge, if you whistle the right tune before stepping through. But this is just life in the Quarter — the supernatural denizens know it, the Beasts know it, even the normal folks know it. Making a big deal out of it would be rude.

A Chapter in Your Chronicle

If you are using **The Morning After** to kick off a **Beast** chronicle, it might be wise to run a quick story — just a chapter or two — and establish the characters and the city. Let the players be your guide, focus on their character's Aspirations and interests, and then start off **The Morning After** having introduced Esmee and whatever other supernatural elements you want to include. If you want to jump straight in, that's fine, you'll just need to explain to the players that their characters know Esmee, and try and establish some of the local, street-level feel you're going for.

A Story By Itself

If you're running this story as a self-contained arc, be careful of shutting doors. Make sure that the characters always have a clear lead to follow and don't call for Investigation rolls unless you're prepared for a failure as well as a success. Be aware, too, that a one-shot can lend itself to a more devil-may-care attitude about long-term consequences, which is a bit out of theme for this story.

Extended Family

The Morning After, and indeed, **Beast** in general, is meant to be friendly toward crossover with other game lines. Before running this story, consider whether you are going to include characters from other game lines, and if so, in what capacity? While to some extent the answer to that depends on what books and materials you have access to, it should also depend on the scope of the story you want to tell. Consider the following options.

Just Beasts

It's entirely possible to run **The Morning After** without acknowledging any supernatural creatures beyond the Begotten. You might decide that such creatures exist but keep to themselves, or that you just don't want them to intrude on your **Beast** game. Either is fine, but understand that means that the pressure on Esmee (and on the players' characters) is coming from other Beasts only. That assumes a tight-knit community of the Begotten, with little or no "extended family" giving their input.

Beasts + 1

With this option, the story includes Beasts and one other type of supernatural character. Maybe the brood regularly associates with a pair of vampires. Maybe the brood knows a motley of changelings that has taken up residence in the Quarter, or is sheltering a Promethean who is passing through town. In this case, consider whether the non-Beast characters have enough "pull" in their respective societies that they can put the screws to the brood when Esmee's plan becomes clear — or, indeed, if Esmee's plan is going to cause a lot of friction between them and the Children.

The Whole World of Darkness

This method requires some work, both in terms of set-up and for the Storyteller to keep the game from devolving into madness, but it can be very rewarding. In this method, the World of Darkness is an integrated whole — New Orleans has a vampire population (perhaps the one described in the **City of the Damned: New Orleans** sourcebook, perhaps not), but also plays host to werewolves, mages, changelings, and whatever else you want to throw into the mix. Sure, that might strain credulity, but a) we're talking about a game in which the players take on the roles of nightmare monsters from the Primordial Dream and b) New Orleans is a big city. The metro area has a population of roughly 1.2 million, and that's not including visitors. If .5% of that population is in some way touched by the supernatural, that's still 6000 people (or "people,"

anyway). That's more than enough for several otherworldly populations to be represented.

If you're going this route, think about where the points of conflict are, who the movers and shakers are, and where the Beasts fit in. Pay closest attention to the French Quarter, since that's where the action takes place. Think about who is likely to come looking for the perpetrators when the explosion happens in Scene Two, or, if the worst happens, Esmee achieves her Inheritance in Scene Eight.

Backstory and Set-up

Before we get into the story proper, some backstory and introduction to the characters is probably helpful. The Storyteller should pay close attention to the events preceding **The Morning After**, both because it will help him work this story into an existing chronicle (if necessary) and because the players will likely think of avenues of approach not covered by the following scenes. If the Storyteller knows what came before and what the principal characters' motivations are, he will be able to roll much better with the proverbial punches.

Backstory

Esmee Childress is an Ugallu Beast who has lived in New Orleans all of her life. She has grown in power over the years, expanding her Lair all over the city and, through her occasional travels, the world. She's owned and run various businesses in the French Quarter, intimidating other owners into selling her their property, opening up shop, doing fairly well for a while, and then burning the place or otherwise destroying it to feed her Hunger. Recently she realized that she's gained a reputation as a storm crow — insurance companies know her and refuse to deal with her, the New Orleans Police Department suspects her for insurance fraud, and the people who live and work in the Quarter all know that everything Esmee touches eventually crumbles.

Esmee, for her part, wishes to embrace this identity, reach the Incarnate Inheritance, and leave New Orleans to build her Myth across the South. She's already bought property in Savannah, but she wants to give the Big Easy a real send-off and become the Beast Incarnate in the process. She found the method for doing so in Allain Bourand.

Bourand is a concert promoter, specializing in setting up shows in spaces that are less "zoned" or "licensed" and more "found" and "abandoned." The bands he books are up-and-coming but locally renowned, and he knows a lot of folks in the Quarter who can get their hands on beer and other intoxicants to sell at his makeshift concerts. Most of them wind up getting shut down by the police — up until a few months ago, when the police seemed to look the other way as long as no one gets hurt. This is because Allain Bourand is a Hero. A few months ago he met up with Rhonda Blank, a detective in the NOPD, who had recently become a Hero as well. Now with police protection, Allain wants to set up a concert to lure in Esmee and, using a group of followers that he and Rhonda have amassed, kill her.

Esmee is well aware of this scheme, however, and intends to detonate explosive devices at the concert, spraying poison gas into the air and then swooping down to kill Allain, Rhonda, and any other Heroes in attendance under the cover of the chaos. Then, she'll fly off over the Mississippi River, leaving people talking about the Storm Crow and laying the foundation for her Myth (this approach to the Incarnate Inheritance combines aspects of the "Subvert the Hero" and "Spawn Legend" methods of achieving it; see p. 242.

Set-up

As **The Morning After** begins, Esmee is winding up her preparations. She has the chemical explosives prepared and she has leaked information to Allain's people that she will be at the concert. All she has to do now is wait until the night of the show. Unfortunately for her, Rhonda and Allain aren't so patient — they're still looking for her, so she wants to distract them for a few days until the concert. That is where the players' characters come in. Esmee plans to visit them and direct Allain's attention toward them. This isn't a betrayal, as far as Esmee sees it; she knows that Allain is a fairly careful Hero and doesn't rush into conflict with Beasts, and so she figures that he and the characters will just circle each other for a few days until the concert, then she can kill the Heroes and leave town.

What she isn't taking into account is Rhonda, who is much more aggressive and proactive than Allain. Once Rhonda catches the scent of a Beast — or, worse, a brood — she'll take action.

New Orleans

We don't have space in this book to cover the rich and vibrant history and geography of the Crescent City, and so a certain degree of research is required for Storytellers running **The Morning After**. Here's what you need to know:

The French Quarter stretches along the Mississippi River from Canal Street to Esplanade Avenue, and inland to North Rampart Street. Depending on how one defines the boundaries, it covers roughly 78 blocks and is the oldest neighborhood in New Orleans. The streets are narrow, some of them old enough that they have narrow grooves for drainage. Near the waterfront, some of the architecture is newer, but most of the buildings are Historical Landmarks and boast Spanish influence (from when much of the Quarter was rebuilt following the Great New Orleans Fire of 1788).

The streets of the Quarter are lined with art galleries, bars, jazz clubs, antique stores, and many, many restaurants. The tourist trade keeps them in business, and foot traffic is common

late into the night. Some streets are better lit than others, of course, and in the World of Darkness, the unlit portions of the Quarter are often home to creatures like vampires hunting for blood, changelings slipping soaking up the joy and revelry of the city, demons hiding from their obscene maker, and, of course, Beasts sating their Horror's Hunger.

If you want to get a look at the French Quarter, many acclaimed (and some not so acclaimed) films were shot there. Some examples that have some resonance for the **Beast** and the World of Darkness include: *Cat People* (1982, dir. Paul Schrader), *Interview with the Vampire* (1994, dir. Neil Jordon), *Angel Heart* (1987, dir. Alan Parker), *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (2008, dir. David Fincher), and *The Big Easy* (1986, dir. Jim McBride).

Involving the Characters

The Morning After assumes that the characters are residents of New Orleans and live (or at least work) in the French Quarter. Not all of them have to be Beasts, as explained above; some could be vampires or Sin-Eaters or whatever other supernatural creatures you'd like to include. They need some reason to spend the story in the French Quarter, however. Below are a few suggestions:

- One or more characters owns a bar or a café. It might cater to the tourists and mortal inhabitants of French Quarter, or it might only be open to the supernatural, a kind of safe haven for the Beasts and their cousins.
- The characters could run an antique store or gallery. Such places can enforce "no photography" rules (useful for Beasts seeking to maintain some privacy or vampires avoiding cameras), and can be open by appointment only.
- The brood might own or rent condominiums throughout the Quarter and work, if necessary, in other parts of the city. They might also work in one of the numerous hotels in the Quarter.
- The characters might be recent transplants to New Orleans, still finding their place and getting in good with the locals.

The Cast

Esmee Childress

Share a glass with me.

Hear that? Storm's coming.

This is what I always was.

Background: Esmee Childress was born and raised in New Orleans, and her upbringing was fairly normal. Her parents were working class; her father was a mechanic and electrician, while her mother did cleaning and housekeeping and other domestic jobs. Esmee went to school and studied dutifully, and her parents saved everything they could, hoping that they could one day send their little girl to college.

Esmee always had a violent streak, but she kept it in check. She loved her parents and she didn't really want to hurt them; when her little brother was born, though, she contemplated tipping over his crib or pushing his high chair over. These thoughts always horrified her. She wouldn't *really* hurt her brother; she knew she wouldn't, so why did she think it?

The dreams began one day when her father took the family walking along the river. They stopped for beignets at Café Du Monde and walked on the riverside, looking out over the Mississippi. Storm clouds began to roll in, and Esmee overheard an old man remark that he'd seen this city "suffer God's wrath more than once, and one day it would all come down." Esmee couldn't stop smiling, and her grin made her little brother cry.

That night she dreamed of being *in* those clouds, endlessly falling, as some great winged horror swooped and pecked and clawed at her. She had that dream every night for a year, until finally she stopped searching for the creature and focused instead on the city below. And in that instant, she realized she *was* the creature, and dove toward the city with a feral scream in her beak.

Esmee was different after that. She still loved her family, but they sensed the change in her. Her little brother refused to be alone with her, and her parents stopped saving their money for her college fund. When she turned 18, they gave her what little money they had saved and wished her well, but she knew that this "farewell" was really "good-bye." She moved around the city, taking what work she could, and building up her power and her Lair. Finally she saved enough money to buy out a man who owned a little café on Chartres. She ran it well for fourteen months, and then an out-of-control taxi smashed through the front window and destroyed it.

For years after, Esmee moved around the Quarter, buying a property (or buying into one as a partner), running the business for a while, and then destroying it to feed her Hunger. As she did, she felt her Horror growing more powerful, until finally, she realized she was ready to become the creature she'd dreamed so many years ago.

Description: Esmee is a beautiful black woman in her mid-30s. She is slim, toned, and wears a smile that might be described as both joyous and disturbing. She wears long flowing dresses and ties her long hair back with a black headband adorned with a lightning pattern. Her nails are long and usually painted blue, and she smells like fresh rain.

Storytelling Hints: Esmee is vivacious, but her lust for life involves breaking things and destruction as much as it involves food, sex, and good times. She is well read and intelligent, but not especially well educated, which leads to odd gaps in her knowledge. She's never been out of the South; though she knows the Quarter better than almost anyone, she knows very little of the rest of the city, let alone the state. Most of all, Esmee is restless, even bored. While she loves her city, she's looking forward to seeing it broken behind her. That, she feels, is a kind of love. She loves New Orleans too much to have to miss it.

Legend: Destructive

Life: Dutiful

Family: Ugallu

Hunger: Ruin

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 5, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 6, Stamina 4

Social Attributes: Presence 6, Manipulation 5, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Crafts 3, Investigation 2, Occult (Voodoo) 5, Science 1

Physical Skills: Athletics (Flight) 5, Brawl 5, Larceny 2, Stealth 4, Weaponry 3

Social Skills: Empathy 3, Expression (Oration) 2, Intimidation (Storm Crow) 5, Persuasion 3, Socialize 4, Streetwise (French Quarter) 3, Subterfuge 1

Merits: Barfly, Danger Sense, Danger Sense (Advanced), Fame 1, Fist of Nightmares, Fleet of Foot 3, Parkour 4, Relentless Assault 5, Resources 3, Safe Place 3, Spoor 4, Striking Looks 2, Striking Looks (Advanced)

Atavisms: Alien Allure, Limb from Limb, Storm-Lashed, Titanic Blow, Wings of the Raptor

Nightmares: Everything You Do is Worthless, Fear is Contagious, Flying and Falling, You Cannot Run, You Deserve This, You Knew This Would Happen, You Must Obey

Lair: 8 (Crosswinds, Downpour, Exposed, Noxious Gases, Thunderous, Unstable)

Health: 7

Willpower: 6

Satiety: 3

Size: 5

Speed: 15

Defense: 10

YOU KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN (KINSHIP NIGHTMARE)

You saw this in your dreams, and now that it's happening, you're trying to make sure it plays out differently. But your body reacts exactly as it did then, exactly how you knew it would, and your visions are all coming to pass.

Dice Pool: Presence + Satiety – Resolve

Normal: Once this Nightmare is inflicted, the next time the target sleeps, she dreams of an upcoming event chosen by the Beast. The event must be something the target would have reason to fear — a confrontation with the Beast, for instance, or something more mundane such as a court hearing. The dreams are surreal and horrifying, but seem pregnant with meaning and allegory. The target recovers no Willpower from sleeping and awakens with the Distracted Condition.

High Satiety: The dream is more intense, and the victim seems references to it everywhere. The penalties from the Distracted Condition are doubled (–4 instead of –2).

Satiety Expenditure: The Beast can send her Horror into the victim's dream. The Beast can therefore shape the form of the dream, inserting whatever specific elements she wishes. If she then replicates this dream scenario later, the victim experiences a breaking point.

Initiative: 9

Armor: 0

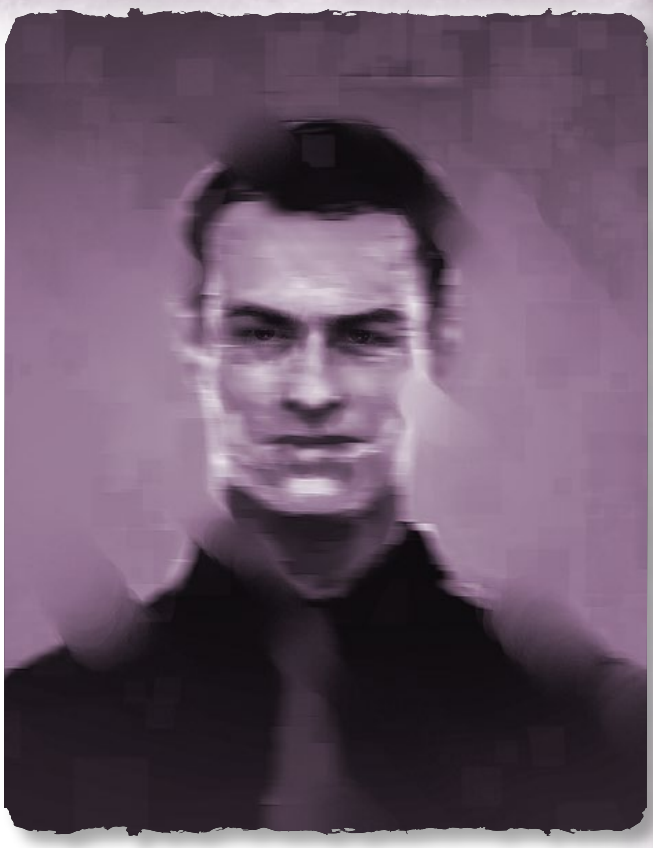
Notes: Esmee's You Knew This Would Happen Kinship Nightmare is one she developed from her association with Ghist. It allows her to grant visions of the future to a target, but the visions are horrific and almost impossible to interpret. She has already used this Nightmare on Allain, which is why he is so dead set on killing her at the concert. As the Apex, the Hive Trait that she imposes upon the Quarter's hive is Unstable.

ALLAIN BOURMAND

I can get space, no problem. Cops will leave us alone.

Hey, I never said I'd get a crowd. You need to draw the crowd.

This city's full of monsters.



Background: Allain Bourmand has a French-sounding name, but it's as fake as everything else about him. Born Allen Bergman in Shreveport, he moved to New Orleans after dropping out of college. He told everyone he'd figured out that he didn't need a degree to be a musician, and while that might be true, he wasn't nearly good enough to make it happen on his own.

Four failed bands later, Allen — who'd started calling himself "Allain" while playing in an ill-conceived zydeco/metal fusion group — found himself drinking at a bar on Bourbon Street when he heard a man at a nearby table lamenting the fact that his band hadn't had a gig in months. Allain found the guy a space; it wasn't hard, Allain had lived in the Quarter for a while and knew a bunch of places without current ownership. The gig wasn't exactly a rousing success, but people came and saw the band, and suddenly Allain had a new profession: Underground concert promoter.

This would have been all very well, except that Allain had a nightmare while crashing in an abandoned building near Esmee Childress' latest digs. It wasn't a nightmare that he could really understand; no monsters or crashing planes or any of that. Just... everything open, exposed, blow flat. He woke with a start, and knew that something was *wrong*, nearby. He walked out into the Quarter, and saw Esmee watching her place burn. He knew what had happened. She was going to destroy the Quarter, and he was going to be the one to take her down. He was going to do it in front of a crowd, too, and everyone would cheer him on for killing the storm crow in their midst.

Description: Allain is in his late 30s, and he's starting to feel it. His brown hair is thinning and his middle is getting a bit thicker, but he still manages to wear a sharp suit and nice tie. He's missing a couple of teeth (he hasn't had anything like regular health care in almost two decades), but he's learning to smile to cover that up.

Storytelling Notes: Allain is jealous. He's jealous of the bands that he promotes, the young, talented, fiery musicians that live on the streets or in vans who play jazz on corners and jam with each other, who still have the youth and vim to drink all night and sleep all day. Allain doesn't have that anymore; he still drinks, but if he overdoes it he pays the next morning. He's still poor, but he can't handle poverty the way he could once, and he's starting to worry for his health. Becoming a Hero was exactly the boost and distraction he needed — now his life has *purpose* again. The concert he's promoting, the one that will lure out the storm crow: *that* will be his legacy.

Allain is unaware that Esmee used a Nightmare on him. The Nightmare — You Knew This Would Happen — allows her to curse a victim with dreams of a coming tragedy. The dreams might or might not be prophetic, but they seem important, and so Allain is determined to have his showdown with Esmee at the concert.

Allain's Legend is *Champion*. He's going to be one whom the grateful masses lift up to their shoulders, the one who will never have to buy drinks again after he kills the monster. He sees nothing but sunshine and roses after he kills Esmee.

His Life is *Parasite*. Allain has very little talent or ability of his own. He knows the Quarter well, and he's good at time and space management. His biggest problem in getting concert space was the cops, but with his partnership with Rhonda Blank, even that's not an issue anymore. Now he can sponge off younger, talented musicians forever.

Life: Parasite

Legend: Champion

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Computer 1, Medicine (Drugs) 1, Occult 2, Politics 2

Physical Skills: Brawl 2, Drive 1, Firearms 2, Larceny (Lock-Picking) 2, Stealth 3

Social Skills: Expression (Guitar) 1, Persuasion 3, Socialize 3, Streetwise (Music Scene) 3, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Allies (Heroes) 2, Barfly, Fame 1, Inspiring, Small Unit Tactics

Gifts: Champion's Endurance, Real World

Health: 7

Willpower: 5

Size: 5

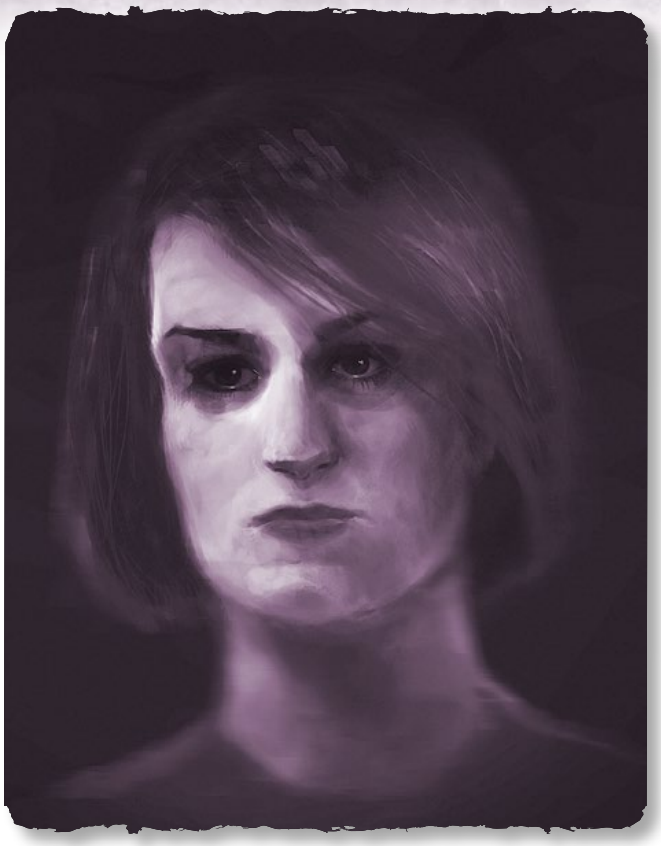
Speed: 9

Defense: 2

Initiative: 5

Integrity: 4

Armor: 1/0



RHONDA BLANK

That ain't the way we did it in my old precinct.

You're not too bright, huh?

You think I gotta arrest you? I don't.

Background: Rhonda Blank grew up in Atlanta, Georgia, the only daughter in a cop family. When she joined the force, no one was surprised, and her family held out hope that she'd be a detective like her mother. They discovered, though, that Rhonda didn't have the same knack for it that her mother, her late father, or her brothers did. She knew the procedures well enough, but she had trouble communicating with people and she was a poor judge of character. One evening, her mother sat her down and was about to ask if she'd accepted the fact that she'd probably stay in uniform her whole career when a call came in — homicide. Rhonda's mother took the call, left, and never came home.

The new detective in the precinct was a gruff, older fellow, and Rhonda hated him instantly. She tried to get her fellow officers to listen, to understand that something was *wrong* with Detective Fitz, but no one did anything but brush her off. Then the dreams started. Lots of people in the precinct had them, the dreams where some unseen thing grabbed the cops and yanked them into the dark. Rhonda never did, and she felt sort of jealous. Just one more thing other cops "got" and she didn't.

Rhonda had dreams, sure, but they were weird and abstract. She'd wake up with vague feelings that there was something she should be doing, but she couldn't quite identify it. One day, though, she found herself on assignment with Fitz. He said that he had known her mother, and that she was a good cop. Rhonda asked what had happened to her (she'd the reports, but they seemed light on details), and Fitz just cleared his throat and looked away. He knew, but wouldn't tell her, and Rhonda decided he must be responsible.

She stalked him off the clock and realized that he was vulnerable to electricity. Using her stun-gun, she incapacitated him and then finished him off with a shot to the head. She was rewarded with a rush of power and knowledge, but also a sickening realization: This wasn't an isolated incident. The monster who'd killed her mother was one of many.

Rhonda recently transferred to New Orleans and struck up a friendship with a local scumbag who just happens to be on the same mission she is. While Allain wants to be given credit and adulation, though, Rhonda just wants what she always wanted: to be a cop, like the rest of her family.

Description: Rhonda is a fit, muscular woman in her early 30s. She keeps her hair short and never wears jewelry. She wears snug-fitting clothes and always carries a stun-gun as well as a pistol. Rhonda doesn't smile much, mostly because she never feels like she does it right; she is awkward and off-putting at the best of times.

Storytelling Notes: Rhonda is just as self-aggrandizing as Allain, but she's more subtle about it. Years of having more expected of her than she could deliver have instilled a kind of circumspection in her. She prefers to work behind the scenes, do her homework, and then strike once she figures she knows enough. Unlike Allain, she's got a couple of kills under her belt,

but she takes her cues from him because he knows the city better. She's not willing to wait for Allain to strike, though — Esmee's not the only Beast in this dirty city.

Rhonda's Legend is *Revelator*. She's going to be the one to expose the truth to the masses, to see all of them have that same moment of realization that she did — the monsters are legion, but they can die.

Her Life is *Second-Best*. Her mother knew that Rhonda would never be a detective; she just didn't have the wherewithal. Her activities as a Hero have forced her to develop some skill, but mostly she's still just slightly behind the curve, though she thinks of herself as a patient genius.

Life: Second-Best

Legend: Revelator

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 4 (6 vs. Beasts), Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social Attributes: Presence 1, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: Academics 2, Computer 1, Investigation (Homicide) 1

Physical Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl (Police Tactics) 3, Drive 2, Firearms 2, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Intimidation (Bad Cop) 2, Streetwise 2

Merits: Allies (Heroes) 2, Fast Reflexes 2, Iron Skin 2, Police Tactics 3, Status (Police) 2

Gifts: Chosen Blade (stun-gun), Loremaster, Vanquisher's Strength

Health: 8

Willpower: 4

Size: 5

Speed: 12

Defense: 5

Initiative: 7

Integrity: 2

Armor: 2/0

SWAYED FOLLOWERS

Great responsibility and all that, right?

We're ready. Just say the word.

You didn't tell us it could do that!

Background: Allain's followers are second-string musicians, street performers, groupies, barhounds, and other locals that he's talked into hunting Beasts. They don't have any particular supernatural knowledge. Allain uses them to put up fliers, follow known Beasts, and, if necessary, act as shock troops or distractions.

Description: Most of these followers are in their 20s, homeless or crashing with friends, and trying to make a living in the Quarter as best they can.

Storytelling Notes: Few of these folks have any real fighting experience, and they are easily subject to the Beaten Down Tilt and vulnerable to Nightmares and other supernatural effects. However, they don't run or surrender until injured, and they can be dangerous just on the strength of numbers. Remember that if such a character suffers a breaking point in the right kind of environment, a Beast character may be able to use the area as a Chamber for her Lair (see p. 94).

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

Physical Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Mental Skills: At Storyteller's discretion

Physical Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Stealth 1, Weaponry 1

Social Skills: Socialize 2, Streetwise 2

Merits: Storyteller's discretion

Health: 7

Willpower: 4

Size: 5

Speed: 11

Defense: 4

Initiative: 5

Integrity: 6

Armor: 0

Ghist

What do you need?

This ends badly. Just a friendly warning.

What did I tell you? Why don't people ever listen?

Background: Ghist is a supernatural being, but it's up to the Storyteller as to what kind. Below are a few suggestions:

Vampire: Ghist is a Carthian Mekhet. He was a chemistry professor at Tulane University before his Embrace, and he was brought into the All-Night Society to try and manufacture a chemical that would disrupt a vampire's undead system. He's never quite managed that. Rather, he knows how to do it, but he feels it would be unwise for him to complete the work.

Mage: Ghist is a solitary Acanthus. He Awakened in New Orleans after years of working the black market, selling everything from drugs to weapons to collectible toys. Awakening showed him the fragility of life and destiny, how everything was linked by a vast web of possibility. Ghist is still largely unsure what to do with his magic, and is sometimes paralyzed by his ability to see the future.

Promethean: Ghist is an Osiran presently studying the Refinement of Quicksilver. His superlative ability to identify and manipulate substances allows him to make a living creating and selling explosives. Ghist has a weak understanding of what happens to these substances once he sells them, and his association with Esmee isn't helping his quest to become human. Like all Prometheans, he sometimes receives prophetic dreams, but his have gotten more intense and frequent of late.

Whatever type of supernatural background the Storyteller chooses for Ghist, he is a black marketer specializing in chemicals and explosives. He has known Esmee for some months now and has the Family Ties Condition from her. He also possesses an affinity for prophetic visions or dreams, and Esmee has used that affinity to craft her You Knew This Would Happen Nightmare.

Description: Ghist is of mixed ancestry, part white and part Indian. He hides his thinning black hair under a knit cap. He speaks with a light Louisiana drawl and wears an Army jacket (though depending on his background, he might or might not have actually served). Ghist carries a pistol in his jacket pocket.

Storytelling Notes: Ghist's function in the story is to provide the characters with information about the explosives at the concert, and to give them a window into whatever supernatural subculture the Storyteller wishes to include in her **Beast** chronicle. Since he's prone to visions of the future, he might also be a source of cryptic information for the characters in future stories—one of them might even wind up developing the same Nightmare that Esmee did.

Mental Attributes: Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 3

Physical Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social Attributes: Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

Mental Skills: Academics 1, Crafts (Mechanics) 2, Occult 2, Science (Chemistry) 4

Physical Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Firearms (Pistol) 2, Stealth 2

Social Skills: Animal Ken 2, Intimidation 1, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Contacts (Black Market) 1, Sympathetic, Resources 2, any other appropriate Merits the Storyteller wishes to add

Health: *7*

Willpower: *7*

Size: 5

Speed: 10

Defense: 4

Initiative: *7*

Armor: 0

Esmee Comes Calling

Mental •• Physical • Social •••

Overview

Esmee comes to visit the characters, catch up with them about what they're doing, and plant evidence to lead Heroes toward them (and away from her).

Description

Everybody Knows Esmee

Esmee walks down Iberville, and storm clouds follow her. She's beautiful, in the kind of elemental, dangerous way that a hurricane is beautiful. She turns, looks up at the sky, and smiles as a raindrop hits her forehead. Gripping the doorframe, she swings into your little establishment. You feel your heart sink a little. Esmee's come to visit.

Storyteller Goals

This scene is meant to help the players establish their characters in the setting and to let them figure out how they relate to Esmee. Unless you've run chapters before beginning **The Morning After**, all the characters know is that Esmee is the Apex of the French Quarter and that she presently runs a shop on Royal Street that sells handmade masks.

Esmee comes and visits the characters in their place of business or home. If it's the former, she behaves like a customer — she makes an appointment as necessary, orders a drink, or whatever the protocol is. If visiting their home, she brings a bottle of rum with a black bow tied around it and says that she was feeling lonesome and wanted some company. In either case, she tries to draw the characters into a chat.

Esmee is personable and smart, and is capable of imparting a great deal of history and information about New Orleans in general and the French Quarter in particular. If the characters mention Heroes, she says that it's sometimes better just to lead them astray than to kill them, or, at least, to kill them on one's own terms. Esmee is happy to answer questions on the subject of Kinship and other supernatural creatures. If the characters bring up this topic, she mentions she has a friend named Ghist who allowed her to learn some very interesting Nightmares. (What exactly Esmee knows and can impart about other supernatural races depends on what you, the Storyteller, wish to include.)

Esmee is unwilling to talk about herself too much. If the characters are perceptive, they might note that she is being deliberately coy.

After some polite conversation and perhaps some rum, Esmee thanks the characters for their company and excuses herself.

Character Goals

Chat with Esmee. Learn about New Orleans.

Knowledge about Esmee

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Streetwise

Action: Instant

Hindrances: New to the city (–3)

Help: Contacts or Status in New Orleans (+1), Longtime resident (+2)

Roll Results

- **Dramatic Failure:** The character misidentifies Esmee as a young Beast, perhaps a longtime resident of the French Quarter but barely past her Devouring.
- **Failure:** The character has heard of Esmee and knows she is the Apex of the area, but no specifics.
- **Success:** The character knows that Esmee has a reputation as a "storm crow." Where she goes, disaster follows. She has owned several businesses in the Quarter, and each of them has been destroyed or heavily damaged.
- **Exceptional Success:** As above, and the character has heard rumors that Esmee's Lair has a Chamber in a vacant building on St. Louis.

Reading Esmee

Dice Pool: Wits + Empathy vs. Manipulation + Subterfuge (6 dice)

Action: Instant and contested

Hindrances: Character has been drinking (–1)

Help: Esmee has been drinking (–1 to Esmee)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character misreads Esmee's emotional state and believes that she is contemplating suicide or the Retreat.

Failure: The character is unable to read Esmee's state of mind as anything other than what she presents.

Success: The character knows that Esmee is restless and is planning something. She is enjoying the characters' company well enough, but something else is going on.

Exceptional Success: The character realizes that Esmee is being open and forthright in her presentation of herself, almost as if she wants the place to remember she was here. She touches walls, interacts with the surroundings (plays music on a jukebox, for instance, or simply eats dinner if the place is a café), and so forth.

Consequences

This scene is mostly for exposition purposes, but if the characters wish to follow Esmee, you could have her walk down to the river and roll directly into Explosion on the Water. If not, then run Explosion on the Water the next evening or when a character is down by the waterfront.

Explosion on the Water

Mental ••• Physical •• Social ••

Overview

An explosion near the waterfront demands the attention of the characters as well as everyone else in the Quarter.

Description

Confession of the Dying Man

"Paid...she paid me. Make this. Came back." The man isn't making sense, and you can't stop the bleeding. He's against the back wall, a bloody smear leading down to his prone body. The wail from approaching sirens mingles with the cry from a riverboat, and he shifts slightly. "She took it. It's not here no more." You glance around the ruined shop, but how will you figure out what was taken?

Storyteller Goals

A repair shop near the riverfront explodes, causing widespread panic and terror but few injuries. The shopkeeper, a man named Stephen Olmos, is fatally injured in the explosion. If the characters can get to him in time, they can question him before he dies and before the police arrive. Try and run this scene when the characters are out walking or near the waterfront for some other reason. If they followed Esmee at the end of Everybody Knows Esmee, she enters Olmos's shop (Olmos Repairs), talks to him for a moment, and then leaves. The explosion happens a few minutes later. If a character enters the shop, Stephen calls "be right there" from the back of the shop and then activates a bomb. Anyone in shop when the bomb goes off suffers nine points of lethal damage. After the explosion, the area has the following Traits: Burning, Fog, Noxious Gases, Poor Light (characters might be immune to some of these due to their own Lairs or use them to impose Traits from their Lairs).

Esmee paid Olmos to design and build her bombs. She paid him and retrieved her wares, and then used the You Must Obey Nightmare to force him to activate a bomb in his shop. The explosion mortally injures Olmos, but he lives for a few moments afterward.

While it is unlikely that Beasts have any method of saving Olmos' life, it's possible that they have family that can help. A mage with sufficient Life magic, for instance, might be able to heal Olmos' wounds. A vampire might simply decide to Embrace him. In any event, if the characters have a way to save Olmos, he is willing to confess — he built two bombs for Esmee. They aren't powerful enough to destroy buildings; each one contains roughly half the force of a hand grenade. However, they are also packed with a toxic payload, a poison powerful enough to sicken or kill people at the blast site and fill it with noxious black smoke.

If the characters search the rubble, they might find something else of note — evidence taken from whenever they entertained Esmee! The characters can remove this evidence, of course, but they can't be sure they found everything.

Character Goals

Learn about Esmee's plans. Find the evidence she planted. Watch Olmos die.

Recognizing Olmos

Dice Pool: Wits + Streetwise

Action: Instant

Hindrances: New arrival to New Orleans (–4)

Help: Criminal Status (add Status dots)

Roll Results

- **Dramatic Failure:** The character believes that Olmos is a police informant and that his business is bugged and under constant watch.
- **Failure:** The character does not know who Olmos is, other than a repairman who runs a shop near the waterfront.
- **Success:** The character knows that Olmos was an EOD expert in the Army before retiring, and that he is rumored to construct bombs for unsavory people as well as consult for the NOPD on occasion.
- **Exceptional Success:** The character knows that Olmos is an associate of a chemist and black marketer named Ghist.

Searching the Wreckage

Dice Pool: Wits + Investigation (the characters can teamwork this roll)

Action: Extended (one roll = 1 turn, 10 successes required, police arrive after 5 turns)

Hindrances: Smoke (–1), Burning (–2)

Help: Teamwork (as explained on p. 161)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Characters lose all accumulated successes and suffer damage from Burning or Noxious Gases Traits.

Failure: The characters can quit the investigation or accept a Condition and continue.

Success: The characters find a piece of evidence that would lead an investigator back to them — a business card, a labeled napkin or matchbook from their business, or a personal item from their home.

Exceptional Success: As above, and the character remembers seeing Esmee holding the item when she visited.

Consequences

The characters probably come away from this scene with some suspicion that Esmee is up to something, and that it might involve them personally. They can confront her directly, in which case go to Meeting with Esmee. They might try and track down Ghist, in which case go to Trace Chemicals. If they sit back and wait, proceed to NOPD.

NOPD

MENTAL • PHYSICAL •• SOCIAL •••

Overview

Accompanied by dogged investigator and Hero Detective Rhonda Blank, the local police visit the characters, drawn by the evidence planted by Esmee.

Description

Don't You Need a Warrant?

"Blank," she says, showing you a badge. It takes you a moment to realize she's telling you her name, but it's there on the ID: Rhonda Blank. "I'm here to ask you a couple of questions about the explosion at Olmos' Repair."

Storyteller Goals

Rhonda Blank pays the characters a visit, accompanied by a couple of uniformed police officers. If they run a business that's open to the public, she drops in or makes an appointment as appropriate. If not, she finds one of them at home and tries to intimidate her way in.

Rhonda is not a terribly good detective, but she's not actually here because she thinks she can arrest anyone. The evidence that led her here was Esmee's Spoor. Once she sees the characters, her role as a Hero kicks in and she makes them her new targets.

Rhonda attempts to get the characters to confess their involvement with, or at least their presence at, the explosion at Olmos Repair and the death of Stephen Olmos (or, depending on what the characters did, his disappearance). She doesn't have any physical evidence that they were there, unless they were really incautious and stayed until the police and EMTs arrived. She makes note of their names, addresses, and whatever other information they'll reveal, and then she asks them what they know about the concert coming up on Friday.

At this point, it's unlikely the characters know anything at all. Rhonda presses the issue, asking if they're planning to go, whether they know the band, and if "Ms. Childress" is going to be there. When she says that, she realizes that she's overplayed her hand and changes the subject clumsily.

After she leaves, though, she immediately begins an investigation into the characters in an attempt to use Loremaster (p. 213) to place an Anathema on the Beast. Remember this only works on a Beast who has the Sated Condition when she begins using this gift; once she starts, it doesn't matter if the Beast's Satiety Condition changes. The player can employ the Spoor Merit, if the character has it, to throw Rhonda off track. If she successfully places an Anathema, choose one that will make the character's life difficult before or at the concert. Rhonda is prone to using Weaponbound (her stun-gun), but might also choose Phobia (police lights) or Entrancement (fire).

The Storyteller uses Rhonda's Intelligence + Investigation for Loremaster and rolls once per day of game time. She needs to accumulate five successes in order to place an Anathema. The target character becomes aware of the attempt immediately, but doesn't know (though he may guess) that Rhonda is the Hero in question.

Character Goals

Get rid of Rhonda without raising suspicion.

Staying Cool Under Questioning

Dice Pool: Composure + Subterfuge vs. Rhonda's Manipulation + Intimidation (5 dice, counting her Specialty)

Action: Instant and contested

Hindrances: Character is Starving (–2), character is Ravenous (–3)

Help: Character is Gorged (+1), Rhonda has physical evidence that character was at the explosion site (+2 to Storyteller)

Roll Results

- **Dramatic Failure:** The character gains the Leveraged Condition and lets slip, either verbally or with a gesture or nod, that he was at the explosion site.
- **Failure:** The character gains the Guilty or Shaken Condition (player's choice) but gives away no specific information.
- **Success:** If the player's successes match or exceed the Storyteller's, Rhonda gives up, though she doesn't necessarily believe the character's story. If the Storyteller's successes exceed the player's, Rhonda learns a new piece of information — maybe the name of a brood-mate not currently present.

- **Exceptional Success:** If the Storyteller wins with an exceptional success, the character gains the Guilty Condition and Rhonda learns a new piece of information. If the player wins with an exceptional success, Rhonda doubts that she has the right person — she still knows that the character is a Beast, of course, but considers the explosion site a dead end. Apply a –1 to all attempts to use Loremaster on the character.

Consequences

If the characters go looking into the concert, go to Concert Promotion. If they try and find Ghist, go to Trace Chemicals. If they track down Esmee, go to Meeting with Esmee. If they just try and lay low, go to Heroics.

Trace Chemicals

Mental ••• Physical •• Social ••

Overview

The characters track the chemicals used in the explosives back to a black marketer called Ghist.

Description

Ghist's Place of Business

The room is dirty, dingy, and smells like hot metal. Black streaks on the walls and ceiling mark failed – or perhaps successful? – attempts at making explosives. A black wolf emerges from the back of the shop. It snarls at you, and then sniffs the air. A second later, a man stands before you. "You smell like Esmee," he says. "She didn't tell me you were coming, though, so what's up?"

Storyteller Goals

The characters can use the information they uncovered at the explosive site to find Ghist. Depending on the resources, friends, and Skills they bring to bear, they can accomplish this in any number of ways. The most basic and probably most reliable is to ask around with other criminals and black marketers and find out who was supplying to Stephen Olmos. The system for doing so is included below, but if the characters come up with a workable way to perform this investigation, run with it instead.

Once the characters find Ghist, they discover that he is uncomfortable with what he has done. He doesn't have any particular desire to hurt people (whether or not he feels guilty about it is another question, and depends heavily on the decisions the Storyteller has made about him), but he is afraid of Esmee and chose to acquiesce to her instructions.

Ghist is willing to discuss the "product" he made for Esmee with the characters. He created a batch of a poison that, in its resting state, is a liquid. The explosive device that Olmos created, though, will aerosolize it, making a cloud of noxious gas. It is capable of killing or seriously injuring people who inhale it, but it rapidly loses potency; Ghist guesses that within a minute or two of dispersal it won't be able to do anything worse than give someone a bad cough.

He claims that Esmee didn't tell him where she plans to use the poison, which is true if misleading. He has had dreams of the concert and can envision and describe the venue. He is not, however, immediately willing to share this information with the characters. The characters can use Social maneuvering to get him to share what he knows about the concert; their impression level starts at good because of Thicker Than Water (p. 87). If the characters promise that they will "handle Esmee," should she get angry over Ghist sharing information, the Storyteller should give the character a positive modifier for the roll.

Ghist doesn't know how to disarm the explosive device (because he didn't make it), but if the characters ask, he provides a canister that contains an antidote for the poison.

Ghist is amenable to taking on the Family Ties Condition from one or more of the characters, but this, too, requires Social maneuvering and probably more than one visit.

Character Goals

Learn about the poison. Befriend Ghist.

Finding Ghist

Dice Pool: Wits + Streetwise

Action: Extended (one roll per hour, 8 successes required)

Hindrances: Character is a known associate of police (–2)

Help: Character has Status among criminals (add Status dots)

Roll Results

- **Dramatic Failure:** The character loses all accumulated successes, and word gets back to Rhonda that the character has been snooping around looking for Ghist. The character gains the Notoriety Condition.
- **Failure:** The character must either quit the attempt or take a Condition.
- **Success:** The character sets up a meeting with Ghist.
- **Exceptional Success:** The character sets up a meeting with Ghist, and her initial impression level is excellent instead of good.

Consequences

If the characters decide to investigate the concert more, go to Concert Promotion. If they want to talk with Esmee, go to Meeting with Esmee. If they don't take immediate action, go to NOPD (or Heroics, if you've already run NOPD).

Concert Promotion

Mental •• Physical • Social •

Overview

The characters see folks putting up fliers in the Quarter, promoting an upcoming concert.

Description

Advertising

The flyer is one of many identical ones stuck to light posts, walls, and on bulletin boards throughout the Quarter. Business owners will take them down, of course, but the people canvassing the streets have put up enough that the message will get out and spread. The flyer advertises a concert: a [genre] band called [band]. A block up, you can see a pair of figures stapling up more flyers.

Storyteller Goals

If the characters ask around about the upcoming concert or start checking with folks in the music scene about it, they find the flyers easily. The flyers advertise a band; feel free to name the band and specify whatever genre would be interesting to you and your players. The characters may or may not have heard of them (up to the player; if the character is abreast of the local music scene, she might know about them — if in doubt, have a player make an Intelligence + Streetwise roll).

The flyers advertise the concert, giving the venue, the name of the band, and a URL in small letters. The characters can take one of these flyers for study and analysis, or they can ask the folks putting them up for more information.

The people putting up flyers have the Swayed Condition, but that doesn't make them Heroes, just Hero flunkies. They don't have any method of identifying Beasts. They do, however, have pictures on smartphones of any Beasts that Rhonda has identified, meaning that if such a character approaches them, the character might be able to recognize their apprehension.

Character Goals

Learn about Allain Bourand. Get details about the concert.

Recognizing Anxiety

Dice Pool: Wits + Composure

Action: Instant

Hindrances: Streets are busy (–1)

Help: Character has Trained Observer Merit (9- or 8-again)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The character lets something of her monstrous nature slip. If Rhonda is using Loremaster on this character, apply a +2 modifier to her next roll.

Failure: The character doesn't notice the flunky's reaction.

Success: The character sees one of the flyer distributors pull out his phone, look at the character, and then start texting frantically.

Exceptional Success: The character is close enough to see her own picture on the phone and can identify when and where it was taken (Storyteller's discretion, but preferably during NOPD).

Analyzing the Flyer

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Streetwise

Action: Extended (one roll per turn, five successes necessary)

Hindrances: Character is upper-middle class (–1), character isn't from New Orleans (–1)

Help: Character is or was a street musician (+1), character is native to New Orleans (+1)

Roll Results

- **Dramatic Failure:** The character loses all accumulated successes and knows only where and when the concert will take place.
- **Failure:** The character can either quit the attempt or taken a Condition to continue.
- **Success:** The character learns when the concert is to take place (Friday night), where it's going to happen (venue depending on genre of the band), and who is promoting it (a man named Allain Bourand). The character also realizes that this concert is probably taking place illegally (that is, Bourand doesn't have permission to use the space).
- **Exceptional Success:** The player can choose one of the benefits from rolling an exceptional success (as described on p. 158), or the character learns that Bourand has a reputation for providing underground concerts that, for some reason, don't get raided by the police.

Consequences

If the characters go to speak with Esmee, go to Meeting with Esmee. If they lay low, go to Heroics. If they track down Ghist, go to Trace Chemicals. If it's Friday night in game, go to The Concert.

HEROICS

MENTAL • PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL •

Overview

Rhonda Blank and some Swayed followers track one of the characters down and try to kill him.

Description

Cornered

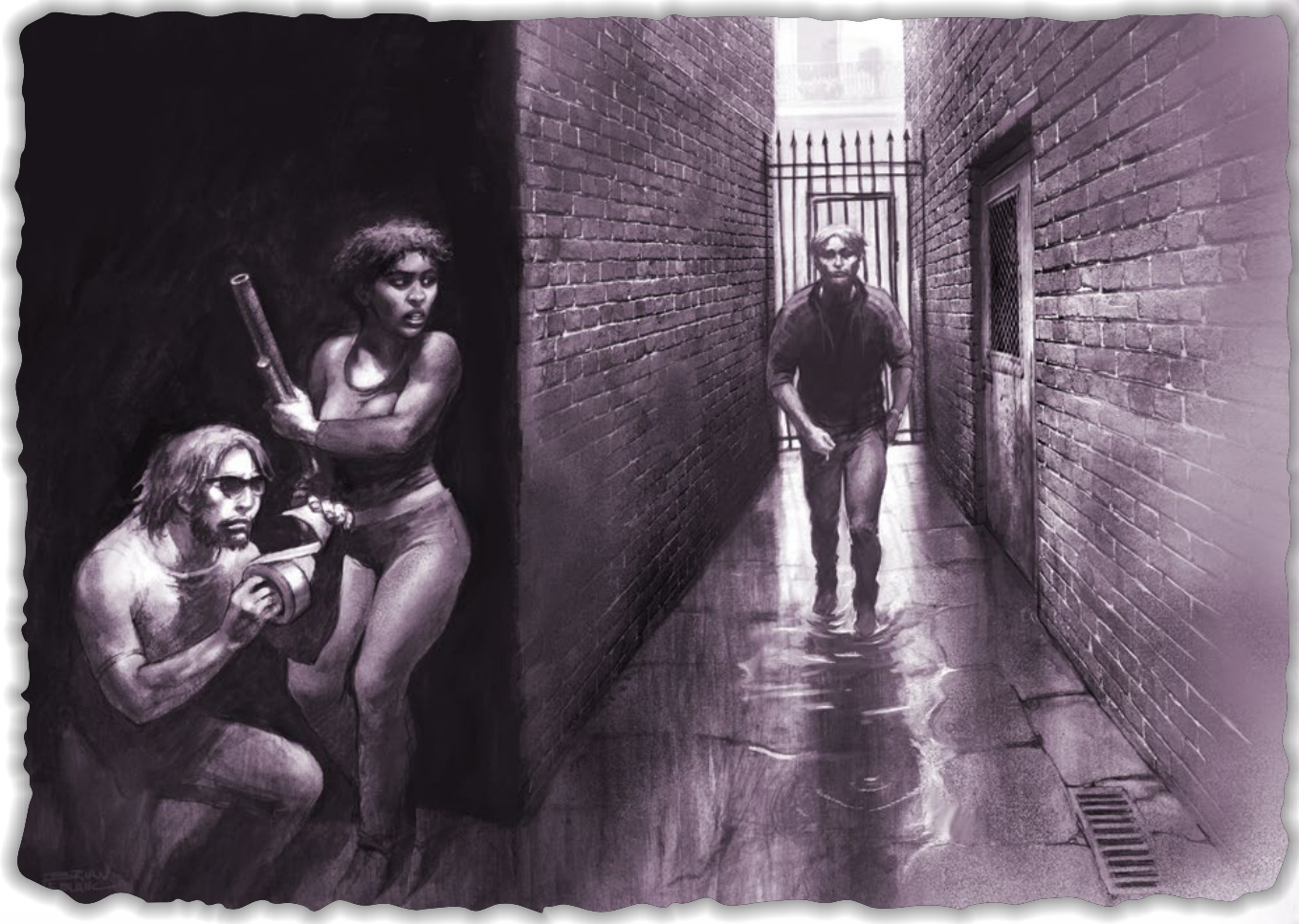
Three people block the mouth of the alley, and behind you is an iron gate with a padlock. The alley is only wide enough for two people. A stocky woman wearing a black helmet and a half-mask stands in front of you, holding a stun-gun in her hand. The man behind her holds a pistol, nervously, but he's obviously just holding it for her.

She tenses and lunges toward you.

Storyteller Goals

Rhonda attacks, having identified one of the characters as a Beast and (hopefully) placed an Anathema on him. Allain does not take part in this attack, but he watches from afar using a pair of binoculars. If the characters spread out or have some method of tracking him down, they might discover him, but this scene is written under the assumption that the just deal with Rhonda and her followers.

Rhonda tries to pick her spot well — a blind alley, a dark parking lot, or the Beast's home. If she can break in and lay an ambush, she will. She has four Swayed followers with her, but they have the Swayed Condition from Allain, not Rhonda, and will flee the scene if they are Beaten Down (p. 327) or if anyone is killed.



The followers are armed with nightsticks (1B) and knives (0L). Rhonda carries a pistol (2L) and her stun-gun (p. 180; add one damage for Chosen Blade and possibly the effects of the Weaponbound Anathema).

Rhonda tries to catch the character alone. If she fails to do so, she weighs her options during the first turn of combat. If she thinks she can best the characters, she presses the attack, instructing her followers to gang up on the characters and swiftly subdue them. If not, or if she loses two followers, she calls a retreat. If the characters corner her, she flashes her badge and identifies herself as a police officer. She doesn't have her phone or a radio with her, however, so she can't actually call for backup.

Depending on the circumstances, this scene could be a desperate chase as a character attempts to get help or get to safety, or a quick slaughter as Rhonda's followers drop like flies. In either case, don't cut the scene short when the fight ends. If the characters have killed or made good use of their Nightmares, one or more of them might be able to activate a new Chamber (p. 94). The fight scene is probably also an excuse to sate Hunger (especially for Ravagers, Predators, and Tyrants). But dead people don't just vanish — the characters might have as many as five bodies left, and one of them a police officer. What do they do? They might drag the bodies into someone's Lair, toss them into the river, or call in favors from other supernatural creatures to dispose of them. If they just walk away, though, they all wind up with the Notoriety Condition — the police don't take kindly to the death of the one of their own, after all. If Rhonda escapes, she doesn't report the incident, but she knows more about the characters and their capabilities (and can use Loremaster on any who have the Sated Condition).

Character Goals

Defend themselves. Kill Rhonda.

Detecting the Ambush

Dice Pool: Wits + Composure vs. Composure + Stealth

Action: Instant and contested

Hindrances: Unfamiliar terrain (–1)

Help: Safe Place Merit (character adds Merit dots)

Roll Results

- **Dramatic Failure:** If the player rolls a dramatic failure, the character freezes up and loses her Defense during the first turn of combat. Also, any character attacking the player's character receives a +2 modifier.
- **Failure:** The character loses her Defense during the first turn of combat, and cannot take an action.
- **Success:** The character notices the ambush in time to react; the player rolls initiative normally.
- **Exceptional Success:** The character can warn any allies she's with about the ambush; even if other players fail, the characters can still apply Defense (though they cannot act).

Consequences

Once the characters have dealt with injuries, bodies, and so on, they can consider their next move. Depending on what they have accomplished and learned so far, they might go to Trace Chemicals, Concert Promotion, Meeting with Esmee, or The Concert.

Meeting with Esmee

Mental •• Physical • Social •••

Overview

The characters take a meeting with Esmee and have a chance to learn (and, perhaps, halt) her plans.

Description

The Lair of the Storm Crow

Winds whip around you, and the air is so toxic and foul you can barely breathe. The Burrow is a street in the Quarter, but the shops are demolished, windows smashed, roofs aflame. It leads up a steep incline, the way no street in the Quarter does, to a plateau high above the river. Esmee lounges, immense and avian, black feathers obscured by the raging winds.

Storyteller Goals

The characters can visit Esmee any time during the story. What they ask her and how she receives them will, of course, depend on what they've been doing and what they already know. Unless they have disrupted her plans somehow (tracking down Allain and killing him, for instance), she's happy to see them.

Esmee will answer the characters' questions, provided they're respectful. Some likely questions and answers include:

What's going to happen at the concert? Esmee is happy to reveal that the concert is a trap for Allain and his flunkies; she intends to kill him, publically, and then take her leave of the city. She doesn't reveal that she's near her Inheritance (partially because she's excited about it and doesn't want to jinx it, and partially because she sees it as her business), but if the characters pry, she reveals that she's "on the verge of transformation." A character can realize what she means if the player makes an Intelligence + Occult roll (see below).

Why did you lead Heroes to us? Esmee says she figured a brood of Beasts could handle a little attention from a Hero, and anyway she's going to kill him soon. If they mention Rhonda, she apologizes and says she didn't know about her (which is true). If they press the issue, she offers to kill Rhonda herself and will indeed do it that night, in whatever dramatic manner you wish.

Why did you kill Olmos? Esmee was concerned that Olmos would talk to someone, and she was also hungry at the time.

What about the French Quarter? If the characters raise the point that her plan is going to damage the Quarter, she claims the damage will be minimal. If they point out that explosions and poisons tend to have unpredictable effects and are likely to bring to mind "terrorism" more than "unholy monster," she takes their point and agrees to leave the explosives and gas out.

Who gets your store? Esmee had been planning on burning her little mask store down, but if one of the characters wants it, she'll sign over the deed.

Violence

If the characters consider getting violent with Esmee, have the players use Family Resemblance (p. 88). Success on the roll gives them an indication of Esmee's power level, which is best expressed in story terms by the characters' Horrors running and hiding. Esmee is *extremely* powerful, probably one of the most dangerous creatures in the world. She doesn't bear the characters any ill will (they're family, after all), but if they attack her, she's perfectly willing to crush them. Make it clear to the players that violence against Esmee will probably result in death.

Character Goals

Talk with Esmee. Get a complete picture of her plans. Talk her out of using the bombs.

The Apex

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Occult

Action: Instant

Hindrances: Less than a year from Devouring (–1)

Help: Lair 2 or more (+1)

Roll Results

- **Dramatic Failure:** The character believes Esmee intends to undergo the Retreat and become Unfettered, dying in

her Lair. This is, of course, at odds with her plans and probably confusing to the character.

- **Failure:** The character is unsure what Esmee means by "transformation."
- **Success:** The character understands that Esmee is close to her Inheritance and that the next step is to become the Beast Incarnate, creating her own Myth and becoming one of the true legendary monsters of the world.
- **Exceptional Success:** The character further understands exactly how powerful that makes Esmee, and that he should show due deference. That character gains a +1 to all Social interactions made with Esmee, provided he stays respectful.

Consequences

Depending on when this scene happens, the characters might move to Trace Chemicals, Concert Promotion, Heroics, or The Concert.

THE CONCERT

MENTAL •• PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL ••

Overview

The night of the concert arrives. If she isn't stopped, Esmee detonates a bomb and rises through the poison cloud as a horrific monster, killing the Heroes in attendance and achieving her Incarnation.

Description

Encore

Cheers erupt as the band takes the stage for their encore. They've only done a few songs, of course – when you don't have permission to use the space, you can't linger. But the crowd seems to be enjoying the music, the drugs, and the overpriced beer. That's when Esmee appears.

She walks past the musicians and shoves the lead singer. He goes flying off the stage and collides with a wall with a wet thud. She grabs the mic and her voice flows like spiced rum. "Allain? Where you at, sweetie?"

Storyteller Goals

What happens at the concert depends heavily on what the characters have done and arranged. It probably isn't going to be a massive brawl, since the characters have by this point had a chance to take on Rhonda already. The concert is more likely to be some denouement, allowing the brood to see Esmee on her way. In a sense, she is passing her position of dominant Beast of the French Quarter along to whichever of the characters wants to take the role on.

If the players are expecting to close out the story with a fight, Rhonda or another Hero might make an appearance. Don't feel compelled to do it, however. Give the players something to do during this scene, even if it's just talking with Esmee before the concert starts. Maybe the characters help

minimize the damage, or maybe they make it *more* dramatic, taking the opportunity to indulge their own Hungers as Esmee takes her leave. By this point you should have a sense of what the players and their characters enjoy; play to that.

By the time the night of the concert comes around, the characters might know exactly what to expect or they might be going in blind, depending on how much investigation and legwork they've done. Below are the four most likely options.

Explosions

If the characters haven't talked to Esmee or have failed to convince her to leave the explosions out of it, she steps on stage and calls Allain out. Allain rouses his troops and draws a pistol, but Esmee activates the bombs. Anyone standing near them suffers nine levels of lethal damage, and the area immediately takes on the Noxious Gas Tilt **(as the Lair Trait; p. 106)**. Esmee uses it to impose her other Lair Traits (she doesn't impose Downpour, though; she wants everyone to see her). Using Wings of Shadow, she leaps high in the air, and then dives straight down and lands on Allain, crushing him. With the crowd in a panic, she takes to the air, gives a cry that shatters windows for blocks, and flies out over the river.

The Storm

If the characters have talked to Esmee and convinced her that the explosives are unnecessary, she still takes the stage but calls upon her Storm-Lashed Atavism and strikes Allain with a lightning bolt, killing him. She then uses the Atavism to call up winds, doing minor damage to the area, and takes flight, again becoming the Beast Incarnate.

No Target

If Allain is already dead, Esmee attends the concert, but has no one to attack. The wind picks up, but she simply stands in the crowd and listens to the music, and then approaches the characters. She might nod understandingly, give them a warning glare, or simply shrug, depending on the nature of their relationship and why and how Allain died. In any case, she returns to her shop to plan another method of achieving her Inheritance (and might well call on the characters for assistance).

More Heroics

If Rhonda is alive and uninjured, she appears and attacks. She isn't hunting Esmee, though, and so she targets whichever of the characters has her attention. She might distract Esmee long enough for Allain to take a shot at her. Remember that if Esmee takes any damage, she cannot achieve her Incarnation from killing Allain (or Rhonda, for that matter), and might simply leave in disgust.

Character Goals

Help Esmee reach the Incarnate Inheritance. Minimize the damage to the French Quarter. Make sure Rhonda is dead. Enjoy the concert.

Consequences

Once the concert is over and the characters have mitigated (or profited from) the chaos in whatever manner they wish, go to Aftermath.

AFTERMATH

The party is over. Now the characters have to clean up. Esmee is, in all probability, gone from New Orleans, which means the Primordial Dream has lost a powerful hunter. Who is the new Apex? Do the people of the Quarter sleep easier? Are the residents more likely to rise as Heroes due to years of her predations?

Depending on what happened at the concert, the characters could be in for a rough time. Supernatural allies might blame them for the chaos, and the city might suffer an influx of hunters (not Heroes, necessarily) looking to kill the "Storm Crow," or whatever other monsters they can find. Supernatural creatures with organized societies (vampires, mages, changelings, etc.) might want to have a not-so-friendly chat with the characters. The brood members might be leaning on their Kinship fairly hard in the days to come. That's not even considering mundane authorities — the local police, the FBI, or even more exotic agencies like VASCU or Task Force: VALKYRIE might be paying close attention to the Quarter.

But on the other hand, the character might come away with some good property in the Quarter (Esmee's mask shop), a new friend (Ghist, possibly even Olmos), a dead Hero or two, and a new understanding of how they can grow and change their own Legends. They have to clean up following the party, but they can look forward to more fun in the Big Easy.

Appendix Two: Conditions and Tilts

The list below includes a range of common Conditions that can be applied to characters through events in the story.

Satiety Conditions

These five Conditions represent the different levels of Satiety.

Gorged
(New Persistent Condition)

Your character has a high Satiety (seven, eight, or nine dots). She is beyond sated, and her Horror becomes lethargic and complacent as result. The Horror doesn't slumber, though, it just picks a Chamber in the Lair and rests. The Beast is better able to focus the power of her Lair, leading to greater efficacy from her Nightmares.

Systems: The Beast is vulnerable to persuasion and suggestion since her Horror lounges happily. While Gorged, the Beast does *not* apply her Lair as Supernatural Tolerance to any supernatural power attempting to change her behavior or influence her mind or emotions.

However, her Horror's lethargy works to her advantage in some ways. Because her Horror lounges in a Chamber, the player receives a +2 modifier to open Primordial Pathways to or from that Chamber.

Resolution: Reduce Satiety to six or fewer dots, or increase it to ten.

Beat: At any time, you may choose to automatically fail a roll because of your character's complacent, sloth-like attitude. This should only be used on rolls where your character is attempting to be proactive and engaged. It should also only be used on rolls with clear consequences. If you do so, take a Beat. You may opt to make this failure into a dramatic failure for an additional Beat. Also, if the character falls victim to a supernatural power that forces her to take some detrimental action, take a Beat.

Ravenous
(New Persistent Condition)

Your character has lost all Satiety and is beyond starvation. Her Horror is nothing but a pit of rage and hunger, and everything the Beast feeds it simply vanishes into its maw. The Beast struggles to consider anything outside her own Hunger, and bringing the Horror back from this state is difficult.

Systems: The Beast cannot spend Willpower except in pursuit of Satiety. When faced with a chance to regain Satiety, she must comply, but she finds that easy, low-Satiety meals don't fulfill her. The character does not regain Willpower normally. She may only regain Willpower by taking actions that would replenish Satiety at low to moderate level (Satiety potential 1–6). When the character feeds at this level, no roll is required; the character simply regains a point of Willpower.

Every day that passes without replenishing a dot of Satiety causes her one level of lethal damage. She cannot heal lethal or aggravated damage while Ravenous (though magical healing from a third party works normally).

Finally, the Beast cannot use Nightmares while Ravenous.

Resolution: Regain a point of Satiety. This can be accomplished by fulfilling her Hunger in an action with Satiety potential of 8 or more. The player doesn't roll the dice poll as usual but simply takes one point of Satiety. The Beast can also regain a dot of Satiety by killing a Hero. The Horror can feed through inflicting nightmares as described on p. 99, but the player rolls a chance die.

Beat: When your character commits an action that would normally fill her Hunger at Satiety potential 1–3, take a Beat (though she does not regain Satiety).

Sated
(New Persistent Condition)

Your character has medium Satiety, which means four, five, or six dots. The Horror wants more but doesn't *need* more. The Hunger still gnaws but isn't overpowering. This is a state of equilibrium between the power of desire and the need for sustenance.

Systems: Being Sated doesn't confer any mechanical bonuses; the Beast is content, and the Horror rankles at contentment. The Horror's discomfort and desire for change makes it possible for a Hero to place Anathemas on the Beast.

Resolution: Reduce Satiety to three or fewer dots, or increase it to seven or more dots.

Beat: When your character pursues further Satiety at risk of personal harm, take a Beat. When your character frivolously spends Satiety (meaning to accomplish something she could just as easily accomplish without the expenditure), take a Beat. If a Hero places an Anathema on the character, take a Beat.

SLUMBERING
(NEW PERSISTENT CONDITION)

Your character has fully sated her Horror (she has ten dots of Satiety). The Horror retreats to the Heart of her Lair, curls up, and goes to sleep. At this point, the Beast is functionally human but knows what she has lost — she is uncomfortable and depressed until she can reawaken her Horror.

Systems: She loses access to all her Atavisms, Nightmares, Beast-specific Merits, and Birthrights. She does *not* lose access to Kinship abilities, but cannot spend Satiety to power them. She does not gain an Integrity trait but is otherwise human. She cannot spend Satiety for any reason and does not naturally lose Satiety, no matter how many dots of Lair she has.

Resolution: Her Horror needs a significant shock (and a loss of Satiety) to awaken from its slumber. A near-death experience can do this (filling all Health boxes with lethal damage), but easier methods exist. She can collapse one of the Chambers in her Lair (p. 100), which rouses the Horror — it comes charging out of the Heart to investigate. The player rolls 10 dice and subtracts 1 Satiety for every roll that *doesn't* come up as a success (10-again does not apply to this roll). The Beast can also enter her Lair, make her way to the Heart, and wake the Horror manually. The Beast does *not* merge with her Horor as usual while the Slumbering Condition is in effect, and can attack and damage the Horror normally. Anything causes a three points of bashing damage works; the Horror awakens, loses a point of Satiety for each point of damage it suffers, and merges with the Beast. Before this happens, however, the Beast is not immune to her own Lair Traits. Should the Beast die with this Condition, the Horror undergoes the Retreat (p. 234).

Beat: Experiencing a meaningful failure due to human limitations or weaknesses (at Storyteller discretion) grants a Beat, as does being rejected or left behind by supernatural kin.

STARVING
(NEW PERSISTENT CONDITION)

Your character has a low Satiety (one to three dots). At this point, the Hunger is a consuming compulsion she cannot "just shake." It's always in the back of her mind. The character is raw and dangerous, teetering on the edge of Ravenous.

Systems: The Horror is restless, wandering through the Lair. This prevents the Beast from accessing the Lair as easily; it is in a constant state of flux and harder to pin down. The player suffers a –2 to any attempt to open Primordial Pathways.

If the Beast does manage to open the Lair, though, the Horror rushes to join with the Beast, hoping that a feast will follow. While the Beast is in her Lair or otherwise joined with her Horror, add her Lair rating to her Power.

Resolution: Increase Satiety to four or more dots.

Beat: If the character takes an irrational, clearly dangerous, or deeply risky behavior in pursuit of Satiety, take a Beat. As well, if your character hurts a loved one, broodmate, or a character with the Family Ties Condition in pursuit of Satiety, take a Beat.

Common Conditions

The following Conditions can be applied by exceptional successes, Nightmares and other supernatural powers, and various other circumstances in the game.

ABRUPTION

Your character's supernatural gifts are hobbled. Each time he attempts to use a power, whether inherent or learned, he loses a number of *successes* equal to the inflicting Beast's Lair plus one. If the power isn't rolled, it simply fails. If multiple Beasts caused this Condition, the penalty is equal to their combined Lairs. This Condition fades at the end of the scene.

Possible Sources: Magical effect disrupting supernatural powers.

Resolution: Your character accepts her inferiority and takes the Beaten Down Tilt (p.327) or an appropriate Condition.

Beat: n/a

ADDICTED
(PERSISTENT)

Your character is addicted to something, whether drugs, gambling or other destructive behaviors. Some addictions are more dangerous than others, but the nature of addiction is that it slowly takes over your life, impeding functionality. If you are addicted, you need to indulge your addiction regularly to keep it under control. A specific addiction should be chosen upon taking this Condition; characters can take this Condition multiple times for different addictions. Being unable to feed your addiction can result in the Deprived Condition (see below).

Possible Sources: Alcoholism, substance abuse, Vitae Addiction.

Resolution: Regain a dot of Integrity, lose *another* dot of Integrity, or achieve an exceptional success on a breaking point.

Beat: Your character chooses to get a fix rather than fulfill an obligation.

AGORAPHOBIC

Your character is deeply disturbed by open spaces and large crowds. In any situation when more people are present than the character's Resolve + Composure, you suffer a –2 penalty to Initiative, perception rolls, and any action requiring careful focus or attention. In addition, any time your character encounters an extremely large crowd (e.g. a riot or at a major sporting event), you must roll Resolve + Composure. If you fail the roll, your character seeks to avoid the crowd and get away from the area. Any action not related to finding a safe, close, private space suffers a –3 penalty until the end of the scene.

Possible Sources: Certain Nightmares.

Resolution: Regain a dot of Integrity, lose a dot of Integrity, or achieve an exceptional success on a breaking point roll.

Beat: n/a

AMNESIA
(PERSISTENT)

Your character is missing a portion of her memory. An entire period of her life is just gone. This causes massive difficulties with friends and loved ones.

Possible Sources: Physical or psychological trauma, the Dominate Discipline.

Resolution: You regain your memory and learn the truth. Depending on the circumstances, this may constitute a breaking point.

Beat: Something problematic arises, such as a forgotten arrest warrant or old enemy.

BROKEN
(PERSISTENT)

Whatever you did or saw, something inside you snapped. You can barely muster up the will to do your job anymore. Anything more emotionally intense than a raised voice makes you flinch and back down. Apply a –2 die penalty to all Social rolls and rolls involving Resolve, and a –5 die penalty to all use of the Intimidation Skill.

Possible Sources: Tremendous psychological trauma, the Nightmare Discipline, some Ghoul Merits.

Resolution: Regain a dot of Integrity, lose *another* dot of Integrity, or achieve an exceptional success on a breaking point.

Beat: You back down from a confrontation or fail a roll due to this Condition.

CHARMED
(PERSISTENT)

You've been taken in by a Beast's character's force of personality. You don't want to believe that anything he says is a lie, and you can't read his true intentions. The Beast's Manipulation rolls against you gain the rote quality, and any Wits + Empathy or Subterfuge rolls you make to detect his lies or uncover his true motives suffer a penalty equal to his Lair dots. Using supernatural means to detect his lies become a Clash of Wills.

You want to do things for the Beast, to make him happy. If he asks, you'll do favors for him like he was one of your best friends — giving him a place to crash, lending him your car keys, or revealing secrets that you really shouldn't. You don't feel tricked or ripped off unless you resolve the Condition. It expires normally (without resolving) after one hour per dot of the Beast's Lair.

Possible Sources: The Alien Allure Atavism.

Resolution: The Beast attempts to seriously harm you or someone close to you; you make a significant financial or physical sacrifice for him.

Beat: You divulge a secret or perform a favor for the Beast.

CONFUSED

Your character cannot think straight, either because of some mental power or good old-fashioned cranial trauma. You take a –2 die penalty on all Intelligence and Wits rolls.

Possible Sources: A blow to the head, some Nightmares.

Resolution: Take half an hour to focus and clear your mind. Take any amount of lethal damage.

Beat: n/a

CURSED

Your character is (or believes he is) suffering from a supernatural curse that brings him ill fortune. Choose a particular area in which the curse manifests (the victim's love life, perhaps, or his safety on the job); any failure in that field becomes a dramatic failure. The victim may spend 1 Willpower to negate this effect for one action.

Possible Sources: Some Nightmares.

Resolution: Remove the source of the curse (if it's a real supernatural effect) or undergo therapy to break the delusion (if it's psychosomatic).

Beat: n/a

DELUSIONAL
(PERSISTENT)

You believe something that isn't actually true — maybe you think that someone is poisoning your food, that a doppelganger has replaced your daughter, or that something lives in the shadows of your apartment. You don't actually hallucinate images that reinforce your delusion; you may believe that you're covered in spiders, but just looking at yourself is enough to clarify matters. Germs, on the other hand....

You can't truly repress your belief, but spending a point of Willpower lets you come up with an explanation (albeit one that sounds psychotic when you explain it to someone else) as to why your delusion does not apply to a specific situation.

Possible Sources: Certain Nightmares.

Resolution: You completely disprove your delusion or destroy the source of your paranoia.

Beat: You adhere to your paranoid belief despite evidence to the contrary.

DEPRIVED

Your character suffers from an addiction. She is unable to get her fix, however, leaving her irritable, anxious, and unable to focus. Remove 1 from her Stamina, Resolve, and Composure dice pools. This does not influence derived traits; it only influences dice pools that use these Attributes.

Possible Sources: Your character is Addicted but cannot get a fix.

Resolution: Your character indulges her addiction.

Beat: n/a

DISTRACTED

Constant confusion and distractions buffet your character from all sides. She cannot take extended actions, and suffers a –2 die penalty to all rolls involving perception, concentration, and precision.

Possible Sources: Being in a highly confused environment, certain Nightmares.

Resolution: Leaving the environment.

Beat: n/a

ENERVATED
(PERSISTENT)

The character is in the second stage of soul loss. Her instinctive efforts to shore up her Willpower by giving into her urges have failed, her Integrity has gone, and her Willpower is now fading. In addition to the effects of Soulless, she can no longer regain Willpower through her Virtue, only her Vice. Indulging herself brings diminishing returns — whenever she does so, her permanent Willpower drops by one dot before she regains Willpower points to the new maximum.

Possible Sources: Soul loss.

Resolution: The character regains her soul.

Beat: Lose a dot of permanent Willpower.

FAMILY TIES
(PERSISTENT)

Your character has become closely bonded to a Beast and finds great (if sometimes grudging) strength in that connection. While in his immediate presence, she may use the Beast's relevant Resistance trait value instead of her own when defending against supernatural powers. In return, both she and the Beast receive a +1 on any rolls made to directly assist each other, or as part of teamwork actions undertaken together. You may have this Condition with multiple Beasts simultaneously.

Possible Sources: A Beast

Resolution: Your character severs her association with the Beast.

Beat: Your character encounters trouble with others of her kind or forsakes an important obligation to her supernatural culture, due to her connection with the Beast.

FATIGUED

You've never been so tired in all your life. Your eyelids are like millstones, your brain a cobwebbed mass of exhaustion. You've reached that point where fatigue becomes a physical thing, and all you can think to do is close your eyes and rest, just for a moment. Every six hours, you must make a reflexive Resolve + Stamina roll to remain awake. If you fail, you pass out. Even if you succeed, you suffer a cumulative –1 penalty to *all* dice pools (including your rolls to stay awake). Long periods of strenuous activity, like cross-country hiking, fighting, or heavy labor increase the penalty to –2 or – 3. Even then, a normal person can only go a number of days without sleep equal to the lower of his Resolve or Stamina, at which point he passes out. Once a Fatigued character passes out, he remains asleep for 8 hours plus 1 additional hour for every six-hour period he stayed awake. Attempts to rouse him during this period suffer a penalty equal to the highest penalty the Fatigued character suffered before passing out.

Possible Sources: Staying awake for 24 hours, being dosed with a sedative or anesthetic.

Resolution: Sleeping, as described above.

Beat: n/a

FRIGHTENED

Something's scared you to the point where you lose rational thought. Maybe you've just looked down at a hundred-story drop, or seen a tarantula the size of your fist crawling up your leg. Whatever the case, you need to leave right now. Your only priority is getting the fuck away from the thing that's frightened you — the hell with your stuff, your friends, and your allies. If anyone tries to stop you from escaping, you'll fight your way past them. You can't approach the source of your fear or act against it — and if the only way out involves going near the source of your fear, you'll collapse on the ground in terror. Supernatural creatures prone to loss of control, including vampires, must roll to avoid frenzy. This Condition lasts until the end of the scene; suppressing its effects for a turn costs a point of Willpower.

Possible Sources: The You Will Never Rest Nightmare, coming face to face with a phobia.

Resolution: The character escapes from the source of his fear.

Beat: n/a

FUGUE
(PERSISTENT)

Something terrible happened. Rather than deal with it or let it break you, your mind shuts it out. You are prone to blackouts and lost time. Whenever circumstances become too similar to the situation that led to the character gaining this Condition, the player

rolls Resolve + Composure. If you fail the roll, the Storyteller controls your character for the next scene; your character, left to his own devices, will seek to avoid the conflict and get away from the area.

Possible Sources: Psychological trauma, encountering a breaking point, some Ghoul Merits.

Resolution: Regain a dot of Integrity, lose *another* dot of Integrity, or achieve an exceptional success on a breaking point.

Beat: You enter a fugue state as described above.

GUILTY

Your character is experiencing deep-seated feelings of guilt and remorse. This Condition is commonly applied after a successful breaking point roll (p. 155). While the character is under the effects of this Condition, he receives a –2 to any Resolve or Composure rolls to defend against Subterfuge, Empathy, or Intimidation rolls.

Possible Sources: Encountering a breaking point, some Nightmares.

Resolution: The character confesses his crimes and makes restitution for whatever he did.

Beat: n/a

INSPIRED

Your character is deeply inspired. When your character takes an action pertaining to that inspiration, you may resolve this Condition. An exceptional success on that roll requires only three successes instead of five and you gain a point of Willpower.

Possible Sources: Exceptional success with Crafts or Expression, the Inspiring Merit.

Resolution: You spend inspiration to spur yourself to greater success, resolving the Condition as described above.

Beat: n/a

INTOXICATED

Your character is drunk, drugged, or otherwise dulled to the world around her. While she's probably not hallucinating, her inhibitions and reactions are both lower than they should be. Your character suffers a –2 die penalty to all Dexterity and Wits dice pools. Characters using Social maneuvering against her face two fewer Doors than usual.

Possible Sources: Heavy drinking or drug use.

Resolution: You sleep it off or face a breaking point.

Beat: n/a

LETHARGIC

Your character is drained and lethargic, feeling the weight of sleeplessness. With this Condition, your character cannot spend Willpower. As well, for every six hours he goes without sleeping, take a cumulative –1 die penalty to all actions. At every six-hour interval, make a Stamina + Resolve roll (with the penalty) to resist falling asleep until the sun next sets.

Possible Sources: Extreme fatigue.

Resolution: Sleeping a full day.

Beat: n/a

LEVERAGED

Your character has been blackmailed, tricked, convinced, or otherwise leveraged into doing what another character wishes. You may have the Leveraged Condition multiple times for different characters. Any time the specified character requests something of you, you may resolve this Condition if your character does as requested without rolling to resist.

Example Skills: Empathy, Persuasion, Subterfuge

Resolution: Your character may either resolve the Condition by complying with a request as above, or if you apply the Leveraged condition to the specified character.

Beat: n/a

LOST

Your character has no idea where she is, or how to reach her target. She cannot make any headway toward her goal without first navigating and finding out where she is. This requires a successful Wits + Streetwise action (in the city) or Wits + Survival action (in the wilderness).

Resolution: Abandoning the goal, successfully navigating.

OBSESSION
(PERSISTENT)

Something's on your character's mind and she just can't shake it. She gains the 9-again quality on all rolls related to pursuing her obsession. On rolls that are unrelated to her obsession, she loses the 10-again quality. Obsession can be a temporary quality per Storyteller approval.

Resolution: The character sheds or purges her fixation.

Beat: Character fails to fulfill an obligation due to pursuing her obligation.

Beat: n/a

PARANOID

Your character is certain that no one can be trusted, that vast conspiracies are moving against her, and that random coincidences are the signs of a greater plan. She removes 1 die from all Composure-based dice pools. In addition, when the Condition is applied, choose one thing the character fixates on as a sign of the forces moving against her (a common turn of phrase, a color, a particular corporation/government entity, etc.) Anyone she associates with that sign is regarded as a threat.

(If a conspiracy actually *is* out to get her, choose something that actually represents that conspiracy.)

Possible Sources: Certain Nightmares.

Resolution: The character is confronted with conclusive proof that no one is out to get her, or she exposes the conspiracy.

Beat: n/a

SHAKEN

Something has severely frightened your character. Any time your character is taking an action where that fear might hinder her, you may opt to fail the roll and resolve this Condition.

Possible Sources: Facing a breaking point.

Resolution: The character gives into her fear and fails a roll as described above.

Beat: n/a

SPOOKED

Your character has seen something supernatural — not overt enough to terrify her, but unmistakably otherworldly. How your character responds to this is up to you, but it captivates her and dominates her focus.

Resolution: This Condition is resolved when your character's fear and fascination causes her to do something that hinders the group or complicates things (she goes off alone to investigate a strange noise, stays up all night researching, runs away instead of holding her ground, etc.).

Beat: n/a

SOUL SHOCKED

Your character has been killed while on a sojourn outside her physical body, resulting in a shocked sense of self. Upon gaining this Condition, roll her current Willpower points (not dots) as a dice pool. Ignore 10-again on this roll, and do not roll a chance die if she has no Willpower left. She keeps 1 Willpower point per success and immediately loses the remainder. While this Condition is in effect, your character does not regain Willpower from Virtue, Vice, or equivalent traits. She still regains Willpower from rest, surrender, and any other means of regaining Willpower.

Possible Sources: Killed in the Primordial Dream.

Resolution: Regaining full Willpower.

Beat: n/a

SOULLESS
(PERSISTENT)

The character is in the first stage of soul loss. Without a soul, she can't attempt abjuration, warding, or binding (see **The**

God-Machine Chronicle, p. 231). She is also more susceptible to possession — any dice pools to resist being taken over by another entity are at a –2 die penalty. The effects on Integrity and Willpower, though, are more severe. For as long as she has this Condition, she does not regain Willpower through surrender or rest, and her use of Virtue and Vice is reversed — she may regain one Willpower point per scene by fulfilling her Virtue without having to risk herself, and regains full Willpower once per chapter by fulfilling her Vice in a way that poses a threat to herself. Regaining Willpower through Vice, though, is now a breaking point with a –5 die penalty unless the character has reached Integrity 1.

Possible Sources: Soul loss.

Resolution: The character regains her soul.

Beat: The character loses Integrity because she indulged her Vice.

STEADFAST

Your character is confident and resolved. When you've failed a roll, you may choose to resolve this Condition to instead treat the action as if you'd rolled a single success. If the roll is a chance die, you may choose to resolve this Condition and roll a single regular die instead.

Possible Sources: Encountering a breaking point

Resolution: Your character's confidence carries him through and the worst is avoided; the Condition is resolved as described above.

Beat: n/a

SWOONING

Your character is attracted to someone and is vulnerable where they are concerned. He may have the proverbial "butterflies in his stomach" or just be constantly aware of the object of his affection. A character may have multiple instances of this Condition, reflecting affection for multiple characters. He suffers a –2 die penalty to any rolls that would adversely affect the specified character, who also gains +2 die bonus on any Social rolls against him. If the specified character is attempting Social maneuvering on the Swooning character, the impression level is considered one higher **(maximum of perfect; see p. 162)**.

Possible Sources: Be on the receiving end of an exceptional success of a Persuasion or Subterfuge roll, have another character help you fulfill your Vice (if mortal).

Resolution: Your character does something for his love interest that puts him in danger, or he opts to fail a roll to resist a Social action by the specified character.

Beat: n/a

THRALL
(PERSISTENT)

The character has fully succumbed to the effects of soullessness. She may not spend Willpower points for any reason, may not use her Defense in combat, may not spend Experiences, and suffers all the effects of the Broken Condition **(p. 322)** as well. The player should only continue playing a character with this Condition if there's a chance of regaining the soul.

Possible Sources: Soul loss.

Resolution: The character regains her soul.

Beat: The character is victimized as a result of her Condition.

WANTON

Your character wants for the sake of wanting. He's distracted with temptations of excess and indulgence. Any Composure or Resolve rolls to resist temptation suffer a –2 die penalty. As well, the character that brought forth this Condition achieves exceptional success on three successes instead of five when making any rolls to tempt your character.

Possible Sources: Certain Nightmares.

Resolution: Indulge in something that constitutes a breaking point.

Beat: n/a

TILTS

Tilts are a unified way of applying circumstances to both characters and scenes. Tilts are mechanically similar to Conditions, but they affect characters and scenes in combat. Out of combat, use Conditions instead. They provide a way of handling drugs, poisons, sickness, and environmental and weather effects, but *only as they apply to combat*. Out of combat, use the normal rules for these effects.

Tilts do not give characters Beats when they end, but the effects of a Tilt can very easily cause a Condition. For instance, a character in a fight gets a handful of road salt flung in his eyes and receives the Blinded Tilt. When combat ends, this shifts to the Blind Condition. Resolving this Condition will give the character a Beat. If the character enters combat again before the Condition is resolved, the Blinded Tilt applies again.

Tilts come in two forms: Personal and Environmental. Personal Tilts only apply to one character and include ways that character can overcome the effect. Environmental Tilts affect the whole scene and offer ways for individual characters to mitigate their effects.

ARM WRACK

Personal

Description: Your arm burns with pain and then goes numb. It could be dislocated, sprained, or broken, but whatever's wrong with it you can't move your limb.

Effect: If your arm's broken or otherwise busted, you drop whatever you're holding in that arm and can't use it to attack opponents — unless you've got the Ambidextrous Merit, you suffer off-hand penalties for any rolls that require manual dexterity. If this effect spreads to both limbs, you're down to a chance die on any rolls that require manual dexterity, and –3 to all other Physical actions.

Causing the Tilt: Some supernatural powers can cripple a victim's limbs or break bone with a touch. A character can have his arm knocked out by a targeted blow to the arm (–2 penalty) that deals more damage than the character's Stamina. A targeted blow to the hand inflicts this Tilt if it does any damage.

Ending the Tilt: If the Tilt is inflicted as a result of an attack, mark an "x" under the leftmost Health box inflicted in that attack; the Tilt ends when that damage that caused it has healed. If the damage that inflicts this Tilt is aggravated, the character loses the use of his arm (or straight up loses his arm) permanently.

AVALANCHE

Environmental

A rockslide, mud slide, or veritable wall of snow or similar material is careening down a mountainside or other incline toward you.

Effect: Each turn your character is within the avalanche's reach, he takes a point of lethal damage from the force. Unless he also succeeds in a Dexterity + Athletics roll, he's also moved along by the wave of material, at the avalanche's Speed. This may have its own detrimental effects — if you get swept off a cliff, for instance, you have a lot more to worry about than some rocks rolling down a mountain at you.

Causing the Tilt: A loud noise in a snowy pass might break enough snow loose, or selecting the right boulders on a rocky slope may do the trick.

Ending the Tilt: Avalanches continue until they run out of momentum or material.

BEATEN DOWN

Personal

Description: The character has had the fight knocked out of him.

Effect: The character cannot take active part in the fight without extra effort. The player must spend a point of Willpower *each time* he wants the character to take a violent action in the fight. He can still run, Dodge, and apply Defense. If he wishes to take another action, the Storyteller should judge whether the action is aggressive enough to require the expenditure.

Causing the Tilt: The character suffers bashing damage in excess of his Stamina *or* any amount of lethal damage.

Ending the Tilt: The character surrenders and gives the aggressor what he wants. At this point, the character regains a point of Willpower and takes a Beat, but can take no further action in the fight. If the aggressor's intent is to kill or injure the character, obviously surrender isn't a good option.

BLINDED

Personal

Description: The character's eyes are damaged or removed.

Effect: The character suffers a –3 penalty to any rolls that rely on vision — including attack rolls — and halves his Defense if one eye is blinded. That penalty increases to –5 and losing all Defense if both eyes are affected.

Causing the Tilt: The normal way to inflict the tilt is to deal damage to the target's eyes — a specified attack with a –5 penalty (see Specified Targets, above). A successful attack normally damages one eye. It takes an exceptional success to totally blind an attacker. An attacker can inflict temporary blindness by slashing at her opponent's brow, throwing sand into his eyes, or kicking up dirt. This requires an attack roll of Dexterity + Athletics with a –3 penalty; the victim's Defense applies to this attack. If it succeeds, the target is Blinded for the next turn.

Ending the Tilt: If an attack against the character's eye does any points of damage, mark an "x" under the leftmost Health box inflicted in that attack. If the damage inflicted is aggravated the character loses vision in that eye permanently. Otherwise, the condition ends when the damage that caused the Tilt is healed.

BLIZZARD

Environmental

Description: Heavy snowfall carpets the ground and just keeps falling, whipped by howling winds into a barrage of whirling white.

Effect: Blizzards make it very hard to see for any real distance. Rolls to see things close to the character's person, out to arm's length away, suffer a –1 penalty. Each additional ten yards inflicts an additional –1 penalty (cumulative) on all visual Perception rolls. This penalty also applies to ranged attack rolls. Moving through snow is difficulty. Every four inches of snow applies a –1 penalty to appropriate Physical rolls, including combat rolls, Athletics, and the like. The Blizzard Tilt rarely applies by itself — the Storyteller may also inflict any or all of the Extreme Cold, Heavy Winds, or Ice Tilts (all found below).

Causing the Tilt: For the most part, the weather is out of the characters' control — the Storyteller should telegraph an incoming blizzard before it hits, but it's ultimately up to her. Some supernatural powers might grant a character the power to create a blizzard.

Ending the Tilt: Without supernatural powers, characters can't "end" a blizzard. The best they can manage is to escape the weather or waiting for it to stop. Proper equipment (such as goggles and snow boots) can add +1 to +3 to a roll, offsetting some of the penalties. If someone is causing this Tilt through a supernatural power, it's possible that the characters could disrupt his concentration.

DEAFENED

Personal

Description: The character can't hear. Maybe he's suffering intense tinnitus or can only hear the roaring of blood in his ears, or he just plain can't hear.

Effect: If the character is deaf in one ear, he suffers a –3 penalty to hearing-based Perception rolls. A character who is struck deaf in both ears only gets a chance die on hearing-based Perception rolls, and suffers a –2 penalty to all combat-related dice rolls — suddenly losing the ability to hear the people around you is tremendously disorienting.

Causing the Tilt: A particularly loud noise within 10 feet of the character may cause temporary hearing loss, as though the character were deaf in both ears. Alternatively, a targeted attack on the ear — at a –4 penalty — can deafen a character. Supernatural creatures with heightened senses can be deafened by loud noises at greater distances.

Ending the Tilt: Deafness from loud noises causes fades after 10 – (victim's Stamina + Resolve) turns. If an attack against the character's ear does any points of damage, mark an "x" under the leftmost Health box inflicted in that attack. If the damage inflicted is Aggravated the character loses hearing in the ear permanently. Otherwise, the condition ends when the damage that caused the Tilt is healed.

DROWNING

Environmental

You're surrounded by more water than you can presently cope with. Either you're in some sort of container or room filled with liquid, or you're simply exhausted by swimming through a large body of water. Regardless, your lungs are starting to fill with water, which is a losing proposition for most.

Effect: Your character suffers one point of bashing damage each turn he spends drowning, as oxygen loss takes its toll on your body.

Causing the Tilt: Any form of immersion in a liquid is enough to cause the Tilt.

Ending the Tilt: Getting to a source of air and removing any liquid from your lungs is sufficient to end the ongoing damage from this Tilt.

DRUGGED

Personal

Description: The character's mind is addled by mind-altering substances, such as drink or drugs.

Effect: The effects of specific drugs are detailed in the on p. 177 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. A generic narcotic can be represented with one set of modifiers: the character suffers a –2 modifier to Speed (and static Defense, if used) and a –3 penalty to all rolls in combat, including Defense and Perception. The character also ignores wound penalties.

Causing the Tilt: If the character has chosen to take drugs, then he suffers the effects. To administer drugs to another character is a Dexterity + Weaponry attack, suffering a –1 modifier for the improvised weapon. If the drug has to go in to a specific body part (such as an arm or mouth), it requires an attack against a specified target.

Ending the Tilt: Each drug in the **World of Darkness Rulebook** explains how long a high lasts. A generic narcotic

lasts for 10 – (victim's Stamina + Resolve) hours. Medical help, such as pumping the victim's stomach or flushing his system, halves this time.

EARTHQUAKE

Environmental

Description: Everything shudders and shakes, and rents tear the ground wide open.

Effect: Earthquakes don't last long, but they don't have to. When the quake's actually occurring, all Dexterity-based dice pools (and Defense) suffer a –1 to –5 penalty depending on the quake's severity. Characters take between one and three points of lethal damage per turn of the quake's duration, though a reflexive Stamina + Athletics roll can downgrade that damage to bashing — or cancel it entirely on an exceptional success.

Causing the Tilt: Without tremendous supernatural power, it's almost impossible to cause an earthquake. A character who detonates a powerful explosive underground might simulate the effects over a city-block for a few seconds.

Ending the Tilt: Earthquakes are fortunately very quick events. It's very rare for one to last more than a minute (20 turns), so waiting them out is the best course of action.

EXTREME COLD

Environmental (sometimes Personal)

Description: Bone-chilling winds bite through the character, or trudging through knee-deep snow takes all of the sensation from his limbs. Any time the temperature gets down below zero degrees Celsius (32 degrees Fahrenheit), a character can suffer from the cold's effects. This Tilt can sometimes be personal, as a result of a medical condition like hypothermia or a supernatural power.

Effect: When the temperature's below freezing characters can't heal bashing damage — the extreme temperature deals damage at the same rate normal characters heal it (a cut might turn to frostbite, for instance). Supernatural beings and characters who heal faster than normal instead halve their normal healing rate. For every hour that a character is continuously affected by this Tilt, he accrues a –1 penalty to all rolls. When that penalty hits –5 dice, he instead suffers a point of lethal damage per hour.

Causing the Tilt: A character can suffer this Tilt from being in a frozen environment — whether he's outside in the Arctic tundra, or in a walk-in freezer. Inflicting the Tilt is reasonably straightforward: throw the victim into a freezing lake or lock him in a freezer for long enough, and he'll develop hypothermia.

Ending the Tilt: The best way to escape the freezing cold is to find a source of warmth — either a building with working heating, or warm bundled clothing. A character who has hypothermia requires medical attention.

EXTREME HEAT

Environmental (sometimes Personal)

Description: The character might be stumbling through the desert with the sun beating down on him, or running through the steam-tunnels surrounding an old boiler room. This Tilt can also be personal, the result of a debilitating fever that spikes his temperature far above the norm. Extreme heat is normally anything above 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) — this includes the temperature of the environment, or the temperature of a fever.

Effect: When the temperature is far above normal characters can't heal bashing damage — the extreme temperature deals damage at the same rate normal characters heal it (a cut might heal, but it's replaced by sunburn or sunstroke). Supernatural beings and characters who heal faster than normal instead halve their normal healing rate. For every hour that a character is continuously affected by this Tilt, he accrues a –1 penalty to all rolls. When that penalty hits –5 dice, he instead suffers a point of lethal damage per hour.

Causing the Tilt: This Tilt is usually caused by environmental factors — being out at noon in the desert, or spending too long in a sauna or forge. Even a fever is the result of an infection, rather than something that an opponent can force on a character. It's possible to create this Tilt on a given character: securing someone to a chair right next to an old, inefficient boiler, or stranding them in the desert far from any shade.

Ending the Tilt: The key to ending this Tilt is simple: get out of the heat. In a desert or similar environment, finding shade is paramount. Elsewhere, the character needs to escape whatever is causing the abnormal temperatures.

FLOODED

Environmental

Description: Some liquid — brackish water, mud, gore, or raw sewage — is high enough to impede the character's progress.

Effect: Each foot of liquid inflicts a –2 penalty to all Physical dice pools. If the water goes up over her head, a character has to swim (Dexterity + Athletics) with a penalty appropriate for the speed of flooding. Alternatively, she can try to hold her breath ("Holding Breath," p. 49 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) if she cannot get her head above the rising waters.

Causing the Tilt: Normally, this Tilt is the result of heavy rain, sudden snowmelt, or a broken water main. Characters can cause this Tilt by smashing up a water heater, or blowing up a small dam. Some supernatural creatures may be able to call floods down onto a region.

Ending the Tilt: Characters can escape flooding by getting to high ground, which is enough to mitigate this Tilt. A long-term fix would require draining the floodwaters, but each flood requires its own solution.

HEAVY RAIN

Environmental

Description: Torrential rain lashes down in knives, bouncing high off the sidewalk. The sound of rain on the ground is a constant hammering rumble that goes on without end, like dropping ball bearings on a tin roof. Thick gray curtains of water obscure vision.

Effect: Heavy rains — approaching tropical storm levels or worse — cause a Perception penalty of –3 dice to both vision and hearing. Rain's hard to see through, but it's also *loud*. If the rains carry on for an hour or more, the Flooded Tilt will soon follow. This Tilt is often accompanied by Heavy Winds; a character trapped out in Heavy Rains might come under the effects of Extreme Cold.

Causing the Tilt: Short of supernatural power or a fleet of cloud-seeding aircraft, Heavy Rain is the result of natural weather patterns.

Ending the Tilt: The best way out of the rain is to get indoors. Unless it's the start of some sodden apocalypse, the characters can wait for the weather to ease.

HEAVY WINDS

Environmental

Description: Howling winds buffet at the characters, whipping street furniture into the air, tearing the roofs from buildings. Powerful winds can toss cars around like toys. Anyone out in the winds feels like they're taking a beating just for walking down the street.

Effect: Heavy winds are loud, so characters suffer a –3 modifier to aural Perception rolls. Also the wind inflicts a penalty to all Physical rolls when out in the winds — including Drive rolls. Grade the wind from one to five — one is tropical storm level (around 40 MPH), three is hurricane level (around 80 MPH), and five is tornado level (150+ MPH). This is the penalty applied to Physical dice rolls. Characters outside in the maelstrom take damage from flying debris, taking bashing damage each turn equal to the wind's rating. Characters can make a reflexive Dexterity + Athletics roll to avoid damage.

Causing the Tilt: Heavy winds are a fact of life, from siroccos in the desert to tornados in the Midwest to wind shears everywhere.

Ending the Tilt: Getting out of the wind is the best way to end this Tilt. Sometimes that's as easy as sheltering in an automobile — as long as nobody tries to drive. Buildings provide more permanent shelter.

ICE

Environmental

Description: The ground's covered in a mirror-smooth layer of ice that sends wheels spinning and people's feet flying out from under them. The ice could be so thin as to be nearly invisible, or a thick layer that's the only thing keeping the characters from sinking into a frozen lake.

Effect: When a character can't trust her footing, divide her Speed in half and all Physical rolls (and Defense) suffer a –2 penalty. Attempting to move at full Speed increases the Physical penalty to –4. Any dramatic failure on a Physical roll inflicts the Knocked Down Tilt. Driving on ice is a real pain — halve Acceleration, and characters suffer a –5 penalty to Drive rolls.

Causing the Tilt: This Tilt doesn't just apply to icy conditions, but to any surface that's slick and slippery, including a spill of industrial lubricant or just a really well-polished wooden or linoleum floor. Characters can use a Dexterity + Crafts roll to cover an area in industrial cleaner or mix up cleaning chemicals into a lubricant. If the Extreme Cold Tilt is in effect, even covering the area with water would do the trick.

Ending the Tilt: "Get off the ice" is good advice, but that can take work. Characters can use heat or fire to melt ice, or throw down copious quantities of salt or grit to increase traction.

IMMOBILIZED

Personal

Description: Something holds the character fast, preventing him from moving. This could be a grappling opponent, a straightjacket wrapped with heavy chains, or a coffin secured on the outside with a padlock.

Effect: The character can't do anything but wriggle helplessly. He can't apply Defense against incoming attacks, and can't take combat-related actions. If someone's holding him down, he can spend a point of Willpower to deliver a head-butt or similar attack, but even that might not free him.

Causing the Tilt: The usual way to inflict this Tilt is through the Restrain grappling move. This often uses material means to prevent the victim from moving, such as binding limbs with duct tape or zip-ties, tossing the victim into a car trunk or similar tight space, or applying painful holds and joint locks.

Ending the Tilt: An Immobilized target can break free by escaping from a grapple or snapping whatever binds her. If grappled, the character can struggle as normal but can only select the Break Free move on a success. If held by an item, the character must make a Strength + Athletics roll penalized by the item's Durability. If a character's arms and legs are both bound, he suffers a –2 penalty; this increases to –4 if he's hog-tied. On a success, he snaps the bindings or breaks free. Each roll, successful or not, deals a point of bashing damage.

INSANE

Personal

Description: The character suffers from a panic attack, sudden imbalance, or a full-on psychotic break. Her pulse races and her mind cannot focus on what she wants. The world's an unstable place, and she's unable to keep her balance.

Effect: Someone suffering a psychotic break isn't the sort of person to go down without a fight. Her stated intent might be irrational or just plain impossible, and she might have fewer ethical problems with using extreme violence to get what she wants. The character gains a +1 bonus to all combat rolls, but takes actions after everyone else (if two characters suffer from the Insane Tilt, both act after everyone else but compare Initiative as normal). A character suffering from this Tilt cannot spend Willpower in combat, and suffers a –3 penalty to all Social rolls.

Causing the Tilt: Faced with extraordinary circumstances, any character with an appropriate Condition may gain the Insane Tilt. The Storyteller can call for a Resolve + Composure roll to resist a general anxiety that gnaws at the character's mind; if the character fails, he gains the Tilt. If the character witnesses something truly horrific — a daughter watches her father walk to the end of the garden and shoot himself in the head, smiling all the while; a man stumbles into the wrong office at work and sees his co-workers feasting on the intern's organs; a solder sees her unit gunned down by a sniper while she can do nothing — the Storyteller can rule that the Tilt is unavoidable.

A character can work to *inspire* another character's madness in order to cause this Tilt. She could orchestrate events that she hopes will provoke a psychotic break, but that's amateur hour. A professional swaps out her victim's meds, giving stimulants just as his bipolar cycle ticks into mania, or dosing a paranoid or schizophrenic with hallucinogenic drugs.

Some supernatural creatures possess mind-affecting powers that can apply this Tilt, even to characters who do not have an appropriate Condition.

Ending the Tilt: The specific effects of this Tilt don't normally last beyond the end of the scene. A character can try to force her mind to a state of balance, but it's not easy. She must sit and focus on blocking out the craziness. She rolls Resolve + Composure as an instant action, contested by a dice pool of (10 – her Willpower). She can't take any other actions that turn, and doesn't apply Defense against any attacks.

INSENSATE

Personal

Description: The character shuts down, either due to extreme fear or sudden pleasure. He may huddle in a corner, cringe away from sudden noises, or stare into space as waves of pleasure lap over him.

Effect: The character can't take any actions until the Tilt is resolved. He can apply Defense to incoming attacks, and if he takes any damage from an attack, he's knocked free of whatever fogged his brain.

Causing the Tilt: Several supernatural powers can leave their victim in a trance-like state of heightened emotion, whether it's a vampire's mind-affecting tricks or the pants-shitting terror of witnessing a werewolf take on an inhuman form. A truly heroic amount of alcohol or a hallucinogenic drug might have similar effects; administering such a drug is a Dexterity + Weaponry attack, suffering a –1 modifier for the improvised weapon.

Ending the Tilt: The Tilt wears off at the end of the scene. The victim can spend a point of Willpower before then to act normally for one turn. A successful attack will also end the Tilt. If a character has been knocked insensible by drugs, when this Tilt ends it is replaced with the Drugged Tilt.

KNOCKED DOWN

Personal

Description: Something knocks the character to the floor, either toppling her with a powerful blow to the chest or taking one of her legs out from under her.

Effect: The character is knocked off her feet. If she hasn't already acted this turn, she loses her action. Once she's on the ground, a character is considered prone (see "Going Prone," pp. 164-165 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). The character can still apply Defense against incoming attacks, and can attempt to attack from the ground at a –2 penalty.

Causing the Tilt: Some weapons list "Knockdown" as a special effect of a damaging hit. Otherwise, a melee weapon with a damage modifier of +2 or greater, or a firearm with a damage modifier of +3 or more can be used to knock a character down with the force of the blow. Alternatively, a melee weapon or unarmed attack can knock an opponent down with a targeted attack against the legs (–2 modifier). The attacker declares that he wants to knock his opponent down, and halves the total damage done (rounding down). On a successful attack, the target is knocked down.

Ending the Tilt: The easiest way to end this Tilt is to stand up, which takes an action. A character who hasn't yet acted can make a Dexterity + Athletics roll, minus any weapon modifier, instead of her normal action. If successful, she avoids the effects of this Tilt altogether. On a failure, she falls over and the Tilt applies as normal.

LEG WRACK

Personal

Description: Your leg feels like it's going to snap clean off whenever you move; when you stop moving, you feel a burning numbness that encourages you to avoid moving.

Effect: If your leg is broken, sprained, or dislocated, halve your Speed and suffer a –2 penalty on Physical rolls that require movement (and Defense). If both of your legs are wracked, you fall over — taking the Knocked Down Tilt — and cannot get up. Your Speed is reduced to 1; if you want to move at all, you cannot take any other action. Physical rolls that require movement are reduced to a chance die.

Causing the Tilt: Some supernatural powers can cripple a victim's limbs or break bone with a touch. A character can have his leg knocked out by a targeted blow to the leg (–2 penalty) that deals more damage than the character's Stamina.

Ending the Tilt: If the Tilt is inflicted as a result of an attack, mark an "x" under the leftmost Health box inflicted in that attack. The Tilt ends when that damage that caused it has healed. If the damage that inflicts this Tilt is aggravated, the character loses use of his leg permanently.

POISONED

Personal

Description: You've got poison inside you. It's tearing you apart from the inside; burning like acid in your gut and making your head swim.

Effect: This Tilt applies a general sense of being poisoned to a character without worrying about Toxicity during combat. For the purposes of this Tilt, a poison is either "moderate" or "grave" — a moderate poison causes one point of bashing damage per turn of combat, while a grave poison ups that to one point of lethal damage per turn. If the Storyteller cares to continue the effects of the poison outside of combat, he can apply the standard rules for handling poisons and toxins when combat is complete.

Causing the Tilt: It's possible for a character to not know that he's been poisoned. It could be as innocuous as switching drinks with a pretty girl who is the target of a mob hit, or as simple as walking into a house with a carbon monoxide leak. That said, the main time poison comes up in combat is when one combatant inflicts it on another. Injecting your opponent with a syringe full of drain cleaner or snake venom is a Dexterity + Weaponry attack, suffering a –1 modifier for the improvised weapon.

Ending the Tilt: Short of immediate medical attention — and how many fights take place in an emergency room? — all a victim can do is struggle on. Roll Stamina + Resolve as a reflexive action each turn that your character is poisoned. If your character intends to act (meaning, takes a non-reflexive action), the roll suffers a –3 penalty. Success counteracts the damage for one turn only.

SICK

Personal

Description: Your stomach churns. You retch and heave but only succeed in bringing up bile. Sweat beads on your brow as you spike a fever. Your muscles ache with every movement. You're wracked with hot and cold flushes as a sickness gnaws away at your insides.

Effect: This Tilt applies a general sickness to a character without worrying about the specific illness. For the purposes of this Tilt, a sickness is either "moderate" or "grave." A moderate sickness, such as a cold, asthma, the flu, or just a bad hangover, causes a –1 penalty to all actions during combat. That penalty increases by one every two turns (the first two turns, the character suffers a –1 penalty, the next two turns the penalty is –2, and so on up to a maximum of –5 dice on turn 9). A grave sickness, such as pneumonia, heavy metal poisoning, or aggressive cancer, inflicts the same dice pool penalties as a mild sickness. In addition, the physical stress of fighting or even defending oneself from an attacker while gravely ill inflicts a point of bashing damage per turn of combat.

Causing the Tilt: It's not easy to deliberately make someone sick. Sure, if you can get your hands on a vial of smallpox, or deliberately use a disease you've got to make someone sick (a breaking point, especially in the case of grave diseases like AIDS) then you've got a reasonable chance. Some supernatural creatures have abilities that can inflict diseases on others. Aside from that, you've just got to expose your opponent to the sickness long before you fight and hope for the best.

Ending the Tilt: This Tilt reflects the effects of sickness as it specifically applies to combat. Outside of combat, use the existing system for diseases (p. 171). The penalties inflicted by this Tilt fade at a rate of one point per turn once the character has a chance to rest, but any damage inflicted remains until the character can heal.

STUNNED

Personal

Description: Your character is dazed and unable to think straight. Maybe her vision blurs. If she's stunned as a result of a blow to the head, she's probably got a concussion.

Effect: A character with the Stunned Tilt loses her next action, and halves her Defense until she can next act.

Causing the Tilt: A character can be stunned by any attack that does at least as much damage as her Size in a single hit. Some weapons have a "stun" special ability. These double the weapon modifier only for the purposes of working out whether the attacker inflicts the Stunned Tilt. Attacks against the target's head (see "Specified Targets," p. 166) count the character's Size as one lower for the purposes of this Tilt. The Storyteller might determine that additional effects cause this Tilt, like being caught in the blast area of an explosion.

Ending the Tilt: The effects of this Tilt normally only last for a single turn. The character can end the Tilt during her own action by reflexively spending a point of Willpower to gather her wits, though she suffers a –3 modifier to any actions she takes that turn.

Appendix Three
Chart Quick Reference

Ranged Weapons Chart

Type	Damage	Ranges	Clip	Initiative	Strength	Size	Availability	Example
Revolver, lt	1	20/40/80	6	0	2	1	• •	SW M640 (.38 Special)
Revolver, hvy	2	35/70/140	6	–2	3	1	• •	SW M29 (.44 Magnum)
Pistol, lt	1	20/40/80	17+1	0	2	1	• • •	Glock 17 (9mm)
Pistol, hvy	2	30/60/120	7+1	–2	3	1	• • •	Colt M1911A1 (.45 ACP)
SMG, small*	1	25/50/100	30+1	–2	2	1	• • •	Ingram Mac-10 (9mm)
SMG, large*	2	50/100/200	30+1	–3	3	2	• • •	HK MP-5 (9mm)
Rifle	4	200/400/800	5+1	–5	2	3	• •	Remington M-700 (30.06)
Assault Rifle*	3	150/300/600	42+1	–3	3	3	• • •	Stery-Aug (5.56mm)
Shotgun**	3	20/40/80	5+1	–4	3	2	• •	Remington M870 (12-gauge)
Crossbow***	2	40/80/160	1	–5	3	3	• • •	

Damage: Indicates the number of bonus successes added to a successful attack to determine the amount of lethal damage dealt.

Ranges: The listed numbers a short/medium/long ranges in yards/meters. Attacks at medium range suffer a –1 die penalty. Attacks at long range suffer a –2 die penalty.

Clip: The number of rounds a gun can hold. A "+1" indicates that a bullet can be held in the chamber, ready to fire.

Initiative: The penalty taken to Initiative when wielding the gun.

Strength: The minimum Strength needed to use a weapon effectively. A wielder with a lower Strength suffers a –1 penalty on attack rolls.

Size: 1 = Can be fired one-handed; 2 = Must be fired two-handed and can be hidden in a coat; 3 = Can be fired two-handed but not hidden on one's person

Availability: The cost in Resources dots or level of Social Merit needed to acquire the weapon.

* The weapon is capable of autofire, including short bursts, medium bursts, and long bursts.

** Attack rolls gain the 9-again quality

*** Crossbows take three turns to reload between shots. A crossbow can be used to deliver a stake through the heart (–3 die penalty to attack rolls; must deal at least 5 damage in one attack)

Combat Summary Chart

STAGE ONE: INTENT

- The players and the Storyteller describe what their characters want out of the fight.
- Decide whether characters can surrender and become Beaten Down.

STAGE TWO: INITIATIVE

- If the attacker springs an ambush or otherwise strikes when the defender isn't able to counter, the defender rolls Wits + Composure contested by the attacker's Dexterity + Stealth. If the defender fails, she doesn't act on the first turn of combat and cannot apply Defense against attacks.
- Everyone rolls Initiative: the result of a single die roll + Dexterity + Composure. If the character has a weapon readied, apply its Initiative Modifier.

STAGE THREE: ATTACK

- **Unarmed Combat:** Strength + Brawl - opponent's Defense
- **Melee Combat:** Strength + Weaponry - opponent's Defense
- **Ranged Combat:** Dexterity + Firearms
- **Thrown Weapons:** Dexterity + Athletics - opponent's Defense

A character's Defense is normally subtracted from any attack dice pools where it applies. If she chooses to Dodge, the defender rolls *double* her Defense as a dice pool against each attack. Each success reduces the attacker's successes by one. If the attacker is reduced to zero successes, the attack does nothing. If the attacker has successes remaining, add any weapon modifier to the number of successes to determine how many points of Health the target loses. All weapons deal lethal damage.

Stage Four: Description

The Storyteller describes the attack and wounds in narrative terms.

POSSIBLE MODIFIERS

- Aiming: +1 per turn to a +3 maximum.
- All-Out Attack: +2 with Brawl or Weaponry attack; lose Defense.
- Armor Piercing: Ignores amount of target's armor equal to item's rating.
- Autofire Long Burst: 20 or so bullets, no target limit pending Storyteller approval. A +3 applies to each attack roll; -1 per roll for each target after the first.
- Autofire Medium Burst: 10 or so bullets at one to three targets, with a +2 to each attack roll; -1 per roll for each target after the first.
- Autofire Short Burst: Three bullets at a single target with a +1 to the roll.
- Charge: Move at twice Speed and attack with Brawl or Weaponry in one action; lose Defense.
- Concealment: Barely -1; partially -2; substantially -3; fully, see "Cover."
- Cover: Subtract Durability from damage; if Durability is greater than the weapon modifier, the attack has no effect.
- Dodge: Double Defense, roll as a dice pool with each success subtracting one from the attacker's successes.
- Drawing a Weapon: Requires instant action without a Merit and could negate Defense.
- Firing from Concealment: Shooter's own concealment quality (-1, -2, or -3) reduced by 1 as a penalty to fire back (so, no modifier, -1, or -2).
- Offhand Attack: -2 to attack roll.
- Prone Target: -2 to hit in ranged combat; +2 to hit within close-combat distance.
- Pulling Blow: Target gains 1 Defense; the attack can't deal more than chosen maximum damage.
- Range: -2 at medium range, -4 at long range.
- Shooting into Close Combat: -2 per combatant avoided in a single shot (not applicable to autofire); -4 if grappling.
- Specified Target: Torso -1, leg or arm -2, head -3, hand -4, eye -5.
- Surprised or Immobilized Target: Defense doesn't apply.
- Touching a Target: Dexterity + Brawl or Dexterity + Weaponry; armor may or may not apply, but Defense does apply.
- Willpower: Add three dice to a roll or +2 to a Resistance trait (Stamina, Resolve, or Composure) in one roll or instance.

Melee Weapons Chart

Type	Damage	Initiative	Strength	Size	Availability	Special
Sap	0	–1	1	1	•	Stun
Brass Knuckles	0	0	1	1	•	Uses Brawl to attack
Baton	1	–1	2	2	n/a	
Crowbar	2	–2	2	2	•	
Tire Iron	1	–3	2	2	• •	+1 Defense
Chain	1	–3	2	2	•	Grapple
Shield (small)	0	–2	2	2	• •	Concealed
Shield (large)	2	–4	3	3	• •	Concealed
Knife	0	–1	1	1	•	
Rapier	1	–2	1	2	• •	Armor piercing 1
Machete	2	–2	2	2	• •	
Hatchet	1	–2	1	1	•	
Fire Ax	3	–4	3	3	• •	9-again, two-handed
Chainsaw	5	–6	4	3	• • •	9-again, two-handed
Stake*	0	–4	1	1	n/a	
Spear**	2	–2	2	4	•	+1 Defense, two-handed

Type: A weapon's type is a general classification that can apply to anything your character picks up. A metal club might be an antique mace, a metal baseball bat, or a hammer, while a hatchet might be a meat cleaver or an antique hand-ax.

Damage: Indicates the number of bonus successes added to a successful attack to determine the amount of lethal damage dealt.

Initiative: The penalty taken to Initiative when wielding the weapon. If using more than one weapon, take the higher penalty and increase by 1.

Strength: The minimum Strength needed to use a weapon effectively. A wielder with a lower Strength suffers a –1 die penalty on attack rolls.

Size: 1 = Can be hidden in a hand; 2 = Can be hidden in a coat; 3+ = Cannot be hidden.

Availability: The cost in Resources dots or level of Social Merit needed to acquire the weapon.

Concealed: A character who wields a shield but doesn't use it to attack can add its Size to his Defense, and uses its Size as a concealment modifier against ranged attacks.

Grapple: Add the chain's damage rating to your dice pool when grappling.

Stun: Halve the victim's Size when aiming for the head with intent to stun.

Two-handed: This weapon requires two hands. It can be used one-handed, but doing so increases the Strength requirement by 1.

* A stake must target the heart (–3 die penalty to attack rolls) and must deal at least 5 damage in one attack.

** The reach of a spear gives a +1 Defense bonus against opponents who are unarmed or wield weapons of Size 1.

Environment Levels

Level	Example Environs
1	Safe environment
2	Light snow, heavy storms; too cold to sleep safely; air pressure causes shortness of breath; sweltering sun can cause first-degree burns
3	Heavy snow; cold causes physical pain and potential hypothermia; sun quickly causes first-degree burns, can cause second-degree burns with time; minor radiation poisoning
4	Desert exposure; heat rapidly causing second-degree burns; moderate radiation exposure
5	Desert sandstorm, severe hurricane, tornado, tsunami

Armor Chart

Type	Rating	Strength	Defense	Speed	Availability	Coverage
			MODERN			
Reinforced clothing*	1/0	1	0	0	•	Torso, arms, legs
Kevlar vest*	1/3	1	0	0	•	Torso
Flak Jacket	2/4	1	–1	0	• •	Torso, arms
Full Riot Gear	3/5	2	–2	–1	• • •	Torso, arms, legs
			ARCHAIC			
Leather (hard)	2/0	2	–1	0	•	Torso, arms
Chainmail	3/1	3	–2	–2	• •	Torso, arms
Plate	4/2	3	–2	–3	• • • •	Torso, arms, legs

Rating: Armor provides protection against normal attacks and Firearms attacks. The number before the slash is for general armor, while the number after the slash is for ballistic armor.

Strength: If your character's Strength is lower than that required for her armor, reduce her Brawl and Weaponry dice pools by –1.

Defense: The penalty imposed on your character's Defense when wearing the armor.

Speed: The penalty to your character's Speed when wearing the armor.

Availability: The cost in Resources dots or level of Social Merit needed to acquire the armor.

Coverage: The areas of a character protected by the armor. Wearing a helmet increases the armor's coverage to include a character's head.

* This armor is concealed, either as normal clothing (e.g. biker leathers) or being worn under a jacket or baggy shirt.

Feeding Modifiers

Modifier	Circumstances
+4	Victim died
+3	Particularly abundant consumption in the scene
+2	Multiple instances in a scene
+2	The meal fulfills an Aspiration for the Beast
+1	Unique example
+1	Fitting with your Beast's specific preferences
+1	Hunt required an extended chase
+1	Feeding in your Lair
+1	The meal directly relates to an Aspiration
+1	Spent Satiety in the hunt
–1	Meal does not fit with the Beast's specific preferences
–1	Target is a supernatural being and Beast has Family Ties with another being of the same type
–2	Target is a supernatural being with whom the Beast has Family Ties
–2	Someone else procured the meal for you

Expanding the Lair

Modifier	Circumstance
–5	Integrity loss occurred within the last five years
–4	Integrity loss occurred within the last year
–3	Integrity loss occurred within the last three months
–1	Integrity loss occurred within the last week
+1	Beast's Satiety is below 5
+1	Integrity loss occurred since the last sunset or sunrise
+2	Beast has encountered a supernatural being of the same type that caused the Chamber
+3	Beast has encountered this particular being (knows its name, has spoken with it directly)
+3	Supernatural being that caused the Integrity loss was a Beast
+4	Beast has encountered the mortal who lost Integrity in the location
+5	Beast has the Family Ties Condition with this supernatural being

Satiety

- Who are your kin? No matter who they might be, a Beast frequently has someone she can call family, whether it's her human family, fellow Children, or another supernatural creature with whom she shares Kinship. These individuals understand her on a deeper level. She trusts them as confidantes, even if they don't reciprocate that same trust in her. Those she considers family are worth fighting (and possibly killing) for; an easy way to catch her off-guard is to threaten her family. Beasts with supernatural cousins as close kin also have an easier time feeding, due to Family Dinner (p.90).

  If your character considers another supernatural creature kin (that is, non-Beast), take a point of Satiety, as they provide an additional source of Satiety beyond the normal hunt.

- Does your belly fill easily? A Beast can sate his Hunger in many ways, either keeping it in check for long periods of time before devoting himself fully to one sitting with drastic results, or seeking multiple outlets at any given time. Preying on multiple individuals provides greater risk of discovery, but larger, less-frequent feasts that leave the Beast full to bursting risk the character's Horror falling to lethargy.

  If you strive to sate your Hunger with small bites, as it were, take a point of Satiety, since you strive to consistently keep your Satiety at a steady level.

- Are you a social predator? Every Beast hunts differently. Some prefer solitary pursuit of their prey, if only because their methods work best with only one predator involved. Others require the kind of silence that only one of the Children can provide. Still, hunting with a partner or a Brood makes a feast more likely and provides more opportunities to find the fears they crave. This works especially well for Beasts whose Hungers complement each other.

  If you sate your Hunger in the company of other Children, take a point of Satiety. A full hunting party frequently has a higher success rate than hunting alone, and safety in numbers mitigates trouble later on, especially if a Hero takes notice.

- How frequently do you show your true self? Sometimes, the Children find that showing bits and pieces of their true selves makes accomplishing their goals that much easier. After all, if one has an advantage, why not use it? Of course, this advantage does not come for free. Beasts who frequently activate Nightmares and Atavisms find themselves depleted more regularly, and thus have to hunt more frequently to maintain high Satiety.

  If you save the manifestations of your true nature and showy displays of power (using the Satiety expenditure abilities of Atavisms and Nightmares) for rare occasions when you have little other choice, take a point of Satiety, as this behavior helps you conserve what you do have.

- How drawn to your Lair are you? The longer a Beast lingers in the world, the more power she gains. Once she has her Homecoming, she cannot deny the instinctual draw of her Lair, no matter what she does. If her Homecoming was recent, she still feels a draw to her human self, however, and might be less inclined or even reluctant to let her inner self out.

  If you start with a Lair of 1 (as opposed to spending Merit dots to increase it), take a point of Satiety, as the Children tend to become more active as they grow more powerful, and thus expend more Satiety.

Feeding

Base Potential	Examples
1	A simple, easily found method of fulfilling the Hunger, something the Beast put no time or effort into (low Satiety examples below).
3	A more elaborate or complex example, something requiring at least a scene of preparation or pursuit (moderate Satiety examples below).
5	A highly complex example, something the Beast has tracked or set up over the course of at least one chapter (high Satiety examples below).

Lair

Lair	Max. Number of Chambers	Lair Traits (/ Scene)	Attribute/ Skill Limit
1	3	2(/1)	5
2	3	3(/1)	5
3	4	3(/2)	5
4	4	4(/3)	5
5	5	4(/3)	5
6	5	5(/4)	6
7	6	5(/4)	7
8	6	6(/5)	8
9	7	6(/5)	9
10	7	7(/6)	10

Influence Effects

Level	Effect
• Strengthen	The entity can enhance its sphere of influence; it can add to the Defense of a loved one, make an emotion stronger, an animal or plant healthier, or an object more robust, gaining the entity's Rank in Health or Structure. This Influence can shift the Anchor, Resonant or Infrastructure Condition to Open for its duration. The cost is one Essence.
•• Manipulate	The entity can make minor changes within its sphere of influence, such as slightly changing the nature or target of an emotion, or making minor changes to an animal's actions, a plant's growth or an object's functioning. The cost is two Essence.
••• Control	The entity can make dramatic changes within its sphere of influence, twisting emotions entirely or dictating an animal's actions, a plant's growth or an object's functioning. This Influence can shift the Open Condition to Controlled for its duration. The cost is three Essence.
•••• Create	The entity can create a new example of its sphere of influence; creating a new anchor, instilling an emotion, creating a new sapling or young plant, creating a young animal or brand new object. The entity can cause a temporary Anchor, Infrastructure, or Resonant Condition in a subject for the duration of the Influence. The cost is four Essence.
••••• Mass Create	The entity can create multiple examples of its sphere of influence; triggering emotions in multiple people; creating new copses of trees, small groups of animals, or multiple identical items. The cost is five Essence. The number of examples of the Influence created is equal to Rank. Alternatively, the entity may create one instance of its sphere of influence — including creating the base Condition for its type — permanently, although an ephemeral entity can't permanently alter the mind of a sentient being.

Influence Durations

Level	Duration	Cost
0	One minute per success	No additional Essence cost
•	Ten minutes per success	No additional Essence cost
••	One hour per success	1 additional Essence
•••	One day per success	2 additional Essence
••••	Permanent	2 additional Essence

Inflicting Nightmares

Lair	Time at Starving	Time at Ravenous
1–3	1 week	1 day
4–6	4 days	6 hours
7–9	2 days	1 hour
10	1 day	immediate

Primordial Pathways

Modifier	Situation
+1	The external end of the Pathway is the physical location corresponding to the Chamber in which the Beast is located.
+1	The external end of the Pathway is under the effect of a Lair Trait. Multiple Traits (including those imposed by the Beast by using Lair resonance) apply this bonus on a cumulative basis.
+1	The external end of the Pathway is in the Primordial Dream (e.g., another Beast's Lair, the nightmares of an unDevoured Beast, or an unclaimed Chamber.)
0	The external end of the Pathway is in the Temenos.
–1	The external end of the Pathway is in the Anima Mundi or Oneiros.
–2	The external end of the Pathway is in the Shadow, Hedge, or Underworld.
–3	The external end of the Pathway is in the material world (other than the area corresponding to the Chamber).
–3	The character has specified a world, but not a precise location.

KICKSTARTER BACKERS

ARMY OF THE NIGHT

Allyson Fanning
Andrew Hauptman
Bryan Allen Hickok
Dheyrdre Machado
Gareth Hodges
Issa Kabeer (The Hero)
Kris Leeke
Lisa "Hazmat" Treadway
Loki Ashaman
Malcolm Lee
Matt M McElroy
Rodrigo Cuevas Espinoza
Rowan Alison Milne
Somalucard
Walter F. Croft
Wayne Seeger

Dean Evans

BROODLING

Aaron Scott
Adam "Karpomatic" Karpolorich
Adam Krump
Alan-Michael Havens
Andrew
Andrew Hendricks
Andrew Peregrine
Andrew Wilson
Andrew Zickafoose
Archbishop Julian Delgado
Ben Bonds
Bobby
Braden Kanipes
Brent Nellis
Calder Rooney
Calvin D. Jim
Caroline Berta
Charles Wulff
Chris Allen
Chris Avery
Chris Michael Jahn
Chris Sackman
Connor McGann
coraxbio
D.W.
Damonet
Daniel "Arista"
Daniel Arbuckle
David Dalton
Diego Rivera
Duane Tomlinson
Edward Morland
Enzo Christiano
Eric Brenders
Eric C. Magnuson
Eric Liebl
Erin Short
Erwin Burema
Fernando Autran
Franzmeister
Gábor Horváth
gabriel heraldstorm
Genevieve Cogman
Gideon Kalve Jarvis
Gregory Eburn
Grimm
Gruff J
H. H. Michael Huber
Hank Driskill
Hsieh, Wei-Hua
J.E. McKeever
J.T. Mahany
Jack Never
Jae Walker
Jake Waltier
James Finton
Jamie Eccles
Jasmine Mullin
Jennifer Rigby
Jeremy Seeley
Jesse Rodriguez
João Magalhães
João Pedro Rodrigues
Joe "Kindred of the East Coast" Coyle
Joe Silva
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Jonathan McMonigle
Jordan Lennard
Jordan Springer
Joseph Marshall
Joseph Robertson
Josh "dalarpguy" Parrish
Josh Kubat
Josh Lampel
Julia Robison
Julius Müller
K
Kajimatt
Karol "WyrdHamster" Litwińczuk
Katie P
Kellanved
Kevin Lawler
Krister M. Michl
Lark Cunningham
Link Hughes
Lissa T.
Mallory Musker
Marc Margelli
Mark Peters
Markus Malmo Lange
Martin Trudeau
Matthew Earlywine
Matthew Gollschewski

Melissa Houston
Michael Agapeyev
Michael Brazier
Michael Brewer
Mike Bowie
Naked904
Nancy Feldman
Neall Raemonn Price
Nick Pilon & Sasha Dillman
Nicola Went
Nirnel
Nix
owen
Paul I. H.
Paul M. Anderson
Perverseness
Peter Steponaitis
Phil Hattie
Phillip L Johnston
Rachael Peters
Rebecca Williams
Richard Libera
Rick Jones
Robert Bass
Robert Wyatt
RocJol
Ryan Phillips
S.E. Stone
Sam Billington
Sarah Roark - After Daylight
Satchel
Sean and Katherine Handcock
Sean McGarry
Sebastian Roth
Shadeheart, mage of shadows
Silvio Herrera Gea
Simon Kunz
Steve Lord
Taejix
Tathel
Ted Ludemann
Teddy GERAN
Tememn
The King of Shadows - Reality Checkpoint
The Masseys
Tishariel
Tom Ladegard
Tug Brice
Vera Vartanian
Vince Pasko
Vito D.
Walter Mecham
William Powers (Aiden)
Yes
Zeb Altoon
Zhivko Yakimov

VAMPIRE ALLY

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Aaron Buttery
Aaron Pothecary
Abigail Reese
Abubakar Bello
Adam J. Solis
Adam Mertes
Al Gonzalez
Alianora dell'Aquila
Allan Kilroy-Glynn
Almonihah
Amanda "Cajeck" French
Anonymous
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Arden Inc
Beate Amsel
Bob Ooton
Brent Naylor
Breon Halling
Carlos Martin
Cherry Mint
Chow Matthew
Christian Jensen Romer
Christopher A. Barney
Christopher Hauschild
Colin Meller
Cora Anderson
Craig 'AncientSwordRage' Stone
Cristiano Leishmaniose DeLira
Curt H. Doernberg
Daimon
Dale Pahls
Darkshifter
Dave "Wintergreen" Harrison
David Ehlen
Derek "Pineapple Steak" Swoyer
Derek Semsick
Deyel Bokor-Charlier
Draca Rose
Eoin Maloney
Esteban LaSalle
Flession
Florian Küsener
Fuad Kuliev
Glamoodlelumfoowicketore
Grace Mitchell
Graeme Lewis
H.C.K., from Taiwan
Imperious Karnij
Iván Boquerini
J "Turtledove" Murphy
Jacob
Jake Foster
Jake Mandel
James Hightower
Jan Bernd ten Berg
Jason Westbrook
Jeff Pedersen
Joe Rixman
John Veltman
Joshua "Max" Lauer
Kail Frostmourne
Karl Larsson
Kenny "Krivvin" Bailey
Kiith
Kody Atkinson
Kyotita
Logan H
Logan Worm
Lokiel
Lorne Zavereau
Luke K. Johnson
Marc-Andre "Laughing Goblin" Levesque
Marianne Pease
Matt Russo
Matthew Dunne
Matthew Molineaux
Matthew Swinburne
Megan Greathouse
Meghan "Alastor" Fitzgerald
Michael Pichon
Nathan "Froyd" Ward
Nicholas Peterson
Ninjar
Olivier Bérubé-Fortin
Paul Hayes
Petrov Dmitry
Phillip Trad
Rich Warren
Richard Addy
Rick Wilson
Rob Andre

Robert Christmas
Robert G. Male
Robert Rittenhouse
Robert Thomson
Roxane Tourigny
Ryan Perrin
Seon Arikale
Sheila Z
Simon
Steven Saksa
Steven Thesken
Stuart Martyn
Syrena Best
TheHapticHobbit
Tim Bogosb
Vladislav Lazarov
Warr Byrd
Weltwandler
William Ornstein
Ziv Ragowsky
Zoe Pence

BEAST-KIN

"Dumuskir-Nir" -
Pedro César Díez Ramón
"Skaves"
(D. B. Rosengard)
A. Leslie
Aaron Woodside
Absalom Yoshiba
Adam Mock
Adam R. Woods
Adam Rice
Adam Zielinski
Aidan Jace Cox
Alasdair Watson
Alex Brown
Alex Nealy
Alex Robertson
Alex Sticinski
Alexander Ducharme
Alim Kattan
Allen Aguillard
Allison Kvern
Almoni
Aly C
Alysia O'Rourke
Amanda Costigan
Amanda Lea Green
Andara Shadowfang
Anders Mejstrick
Andreas "Zanity" Bengtsson
Andreas G Schramm
from the House of Future Secrets
Andrew Bradley
Andrew Comb
Andrew Hebert
Andrew Heston
Andrew Portner
Andrew Whitby
Andrey Yamamoto
Andrzej Kubera
Andy Evans
Andy Zeiner
Angus Bartlett
Anonymous
Anthony Damiani
Anthony J. Pirri
Antonio Borrani
Apophis
Archcanni
arthexis
Ash & Theo
Aurély Sabourin Messina
Austin "Wir sind die Jaeger" Loomis
Austin Haught
be7e4px
Beachfox
Beestmeester
Belinda Healy
Ben McKenzie
Ben Quo
Benjamin Bernoulli
Benjamin Byers-Ferrian
Benjamin Dircks
Benjamin J. Quintana
Benoit Devost
Bob Bonsall
Bombril
Brad Bazor
Brandon Kight
Brandon Lambert
Brandon Stanbrough
Brandon Urey
Bret & Wendy Neeld
Brett Anderson
Brett Weidman
Brian Ebertowski
Brian Griffith
Brian Koonce
Brian Parrish
Bruce Lee Simon
Bruno Pereira
Bryan Borders
Bryan C. Smith
Bryan DeWalt
Bryan Fowler
Bryan Hunsberger
Bryce Family
Buscador
C.W.Richeson
Caitlin Eckert
Cantoredombre
Casey Corbin
Cat of Many Faces
Catastrophe
Chad and Christine Geraghty
Chad Berger
Chad Hastings
Chadwick Shinabargar
Charles
Charles Crowe
Charles Siegel
Chazz Kellner
ChickenMaker
Chimera
Chris Aumiller
Chris Butler
Chris Handley - Darker Days Radio
Chris Horsman
Chris Johnson
Chris Mawford
Chris 'Stitches' Upton
Chris Sturdy
Chris Wong
Christian Smucker
Christina Shirley
Christophe the Diablerist
Christopher Partin
Chuck Childers
Claire Thompson
Clara Harper Darbee
Claus M Larsen
Cleverest of Things
Colin "Mephit James" Wilson
Colin Urbina
Connor Goldsmith
Cory Bonifay
Courtney Alexander
Craig Oxbrow
Cristián Schultz
Cyrus Steadman

D Clegg
D Sonderling
Damien Hunter
Damien Starlurker
Dan Brugman
Dan Cordell
Dan Dillon
Dan Hagy
Dan Schindler
Dani Moran
Daniel "Fox" Sculler
Daniel Ellis
Daniel HP Campbell
Daniel Lewis
Daniel Rabinovich
Daniel W. Throckmorton
Darker Days Radio
Darth Sciuridae
David "Scutarii" Last
David "Yoda" Odie
David and Julie Scott
David Baity
David Chart
David DuMont
David Fergman
David Hayes
David Homola
David Mendiola
David Rose Fraser
David W. Kaufman II
Dawngreeter
Dennis Lowrey
Derek Guder
Devilskebab
Dirk Walbrühl
Doctor Evil
Dom Ellis
Douglas Bramlett
Douglas Johnston and Rosie Patterson
Drake Theron
Drew "Industrial Scribe" Scarr
Drew Clowery
Drew Collins
Dusal
Dustin Garcia
Edwin Ab Enion
Emile de Maat
Emily G
Ernie Sawyer
Ethan Zimmerman
Eugene Parker
Evan "Cenobite" Johnston
Evan Snow
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Felipe de Amorim
Filip Van Huffel
Finder
Florian Hofmann
Floyd Tarrant
Franco Frare
Frank Hayden
Frank Marcelli
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Fredrik Lyngfalk
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Gabriel Miller
Gabriel Perez
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Gedaiel
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Glenn Clifford
Greg Berry
Gregory Faber
Grolorm
Gustavo Tenorio
Gustavo Tertoleone Sorg
Guy Reece
Guy Stridsigne
Gwendolyn Dunsmuir
H. Rasmussen
Håkan Ståby
Halvor Groenaas
Hamatsa Dancer Huk-huk
Harrison "Merlinhawk" Furmidge
Hayley Margules
Heath Banyai
Henrik Augustsson
Herman"ooooooooouiiiii" - chevalier de la guirlande épineuse
Hiryo, Kitsune Legend
Hroth'ger
Ian "cheapshot" Kimmell
Ian "Squee" Sargeant
Ian Grey
Imran Inayat
Ivo Goudzwaard
ixokai
J. Gallows
J. H. Frank
J.R. Cillian Green
Jack McLardie
Jack Stephenson-Carr
Jackson Brantley
Jacob Bush
Jacob Ian Hiatt
Jacob S. Svensson
Jaime S Pettit
James Alan Gardner
James Chatham and Amy Ray
James F Tillman
James Ristig
James Unick
Jamie Denholm
Janich son of the Midgard Serpant
Jared Cassady
Jared Koon
Jared Tibbs
Jasik
Jason "Jadasc" Schneiderman
Jason "Obi" Whitcomb
Jason Barbare
Jason Freston
Jason Inczauskis
Jason Jackson
Jason 'Jaynay' Hewett
Jason Jordaan
Jason Leisemann
Jason Marks
Jason Martinez
Jason Pitre
Jason Stone
Jay "Doughnut" Richards
Jay Lapham
Jayna Pavlin
Jeff Dieterle
Jeff Holland
Jeff Palmer
Jeffrey Dahl
Jeffrey J. Craig
Jeffrey Taylor
jeg
Jeremey David Walker
Jeremy "Transcendent Entity" Miller
Jeremy Handler
Jeremy Kostiew
Jeremy Miller
Jeremy Quinn
Jeremy Shaffer
Jeremy Zimmerman
Jesse Breazeale
Jesse Jacobs
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Jessica Orsini
Jesus "Arvandus" Rodriguez
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John Mathys
John Morel
John P. Baggett
Jon Huss
Jon McKeown
Jonathan and Tesla Peltzer
Jonathan Palm
Jonathan Zucker
Joonas Teurokoski
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Josephine Wicker
Josh Pietrok
Joshua Gage O'Neill
Joshua Machonga
Joshua R. Pitre
Joshua Ramey
J-S Boisvert
Julien "Selpoivre" Rothwiller
Justin A. McKenney
Justin Brasfield
K.NAKAMA
KaiLaharl
Kaitlyn Pickett
Kalian Hiew
Karoly Kopataki
Kathryn Tucker
Katrina Bainbridge
Kebhab
Keenan Parker
Ken Sandy Brandon Boyer
Kennedy Jones
Kergonan
Kevin Ashmun-McCray
Kevin Bishop
Kevin Caldwell
Kevin DeVormer
Kevin Wine
Khren Phyros
Kim Horne
Kisuke
Kjell Kenneth Moens
Komstedt
Krellic
Kristine Roper
Kristopher Deters
Ksinin (Dario Giardini)
Kyle Rimmer
Kyle Wende
Lance LeDuc
Lauri Hirvonen
Lawrence Thrall
Lee Tate
Leonard Helding
Levi Williams
Liam Murray
Lileas Brighttree
Lisa Padol
Lloyd Eley-Smith
Lou Silvers
Lucille Thompson
Lucy Dark
Łukasz Rączkowski
Luke Foster
Luke Moran
Lyttleton L. Callender
Malien the Black
Mandavar the Seeker
Marc de Diego
Marc Seidel
Marcelo "Primal Pecs" Caraballo
Marcin 'Qendi' Sztomberski
Marcin Rozycki
Margarete Strawn
Mark Lewis
Mark Moore
Markus Kostarczyk
Martin Blackwell
Mason Jones
Master Baetz
Matias Valenzuela
Matt and Geri Bartz
Matt Carman
Matthew Dawkins
Matthew Dive
Matthew Galloway
Matthew Horoszowski
Matthew Johansen
Matthew M. Middleton
Matthew McCalpin
Matthew McClure
Matthew Robert Tansek
Matthew Skillings
Matthew William Jones
Matthew York
Matthieu "Nepher" Mestepes
Maya Mary Kennon
Melanie Newcomb
Melinda Hawes
Melum
Menno Rieff
Methandrela
Michael "Monghani" Watkins
Michael "Storyteller" Holland
Michael & Danielle Beekman
Michael and Brian Goubeaux
Michael Bolitho
Michael Buchheim
Michael David Stein
Michael Ehrhardt
Michael Feldhusen
Michael Holt
Michael Kelly
Michael Maggs
Michael Mooney
the Tyranny of Books
Michael Parker
Michael R. Smith
Michael Richards
Michael Tully
Michał Syroka
Michele "Mighty" Masala
Mike Wells
Mitch Robinson
Morgan Robinson
Myke Diemart
Mythos
Nathan Ballard
Nathan Budd
Nathan Luster
Nathan Sundberg
Neil Lovell
Nicholas Berkeley
Nicholas Cler
Nicholas Garrison
Nicholas Vessey
Nicholaus Weber
NIck Davis
Nicole Porter
Nil
Nishan Aznavorian
Nistine
Octavio Arango
Olli Matilainen
Omer Ahmed
Ömer Aybars Yurdun
Orin Spiess
Orphnoch
Owen Wesley Kerschner
Ozark Goliath
P Schaefer
Pablo of the Ivory Claws
Panos "Popovich" Apostolidis
Pascal Alexander

Pat Murphy
Path Eccles
Patricia A. Perras
Patrick Knowles & Tyler Lominack
Patrick McGeachie
Patrick Walters
Paul Anderson
Paul Garrett
Paul Grindrod
Paul H. Wise
Paul McBride
Paul Round
Paul Watson
Paul Yurgin
Peter
Peter Gates
Peter Holland
Phil "Herr Direktor Funranium" Broughton
Phil Blouin
Phil Edwards
Phil McCrum
Phil Smith
Philip Jaques
Phillip Koffman and Joseph Zehnacker
Pierre Coppet
Pip Padden
Pirate King Zim,Lord of the Dark Water.
Preston Poland
Priapus Palindrome
Qlippoth
Quinn
R. Sean Callahan
R.A. Mc Reynolds
R.T. Warner
Rabid Southern Cross Fan
Randall Crawford
Rasmus Lyngkjær
Rasmus Nicolaj West
Raspathir The Great Blue Dragon
Ray Gonzalez
Ray Heyberger
Riccardo Zampieri
Richard Tighe
Roarii T Anderson
Rob Hall
Robert "Luca" Tucker
Robert and Amanda Daley
Robert C. Allen
Robert Crinklaw
Robert Smith
Robert Thompson
Roberto Hoyle
Robin (Drac) Martin
Robin Longhurst
Rod Powell
Roger Alderman
Rohel Terrazas
ROMzombie
ron beck
Ron Szameitpreuss
Rose Bailey
Ross Ramsay
Roy Berman
Ryan H
Ryan Junk
Ryan L. Van Every
Ryan-O, Lord of the Thunderbats
S T Tan
Saleem Halabi
Sam Gregory
Samuli "Hertzila" Hannuksela
SANTO! (♂д♂)
Sarah
Sarah Perry-Shipp
Scott Johnson
Scott Kendrick
Seamus Davidson
Sean Hadley
Sean K.I.W. Steele/Arcane
Sean Moulson
Sean Smith
Seana McGuinness
Sergi Cortés Abadia
Seth Rutledge
sev
Shaun Wykes
Shawn Polka
Shelby "D.J." Babb
Shelby Mehl
Shiame
Simon "Red" Kujala
Sinellil
son of ahriman
Søren b. Holm
Stephen Gawrit
Stephen Gulyas
Steve Hefley
Steve Huntsberry
Steve Vaughn
Steven Fader
Stoney the Gray
Stuart "Spider" Adam
SwiftOne
Sylvain "Sly" Pronovost
T.J. Smith
Tabicat
Tangelo Crabapple
Taylor Zee Cooper
Ted A. Sanne
Teresa Oswald
The Dark Mother
The Duke of Rawsome
The Fowler Family
The Jessels
The Lurker At The Threshold
The Mageling of Team Library
The Vuldyne Corperation
The Warburton
The Wyzard
Third Soul
Thomas "Radium" Sowik
Thomas Faßnacht
Thomas Haakinen
Thomas Kisselbach
Thomas Sticka
Tiago Barão
Tiberius Nazamir
Tim "Dach Kludde" Vettel
Tim D.
Tim Poultney
Tim Soholt
Tim Wehrs
Tividar Bishopsson
TJ Pippin
Tobias Schulte-Krumpen
Tom Lutz
Tommy svensson
Tracy Pinkelton
Travis Carpenter
Trevor Hunt
Tricia Connell
Trisha White
Tyler Brunette
Tyson 'Daji' Pink
Ty-Thaddeus Gilmer
Unigames UWA
Vasily "Halfbeard" McCausland
Victor Wandsworth
Vincent Gonsalves
Vistani Radanavic
Wade Geer
Wade Jones
Wajanai Snidvongs
Waroth Kel'dire
Will and Melissa Wise
Will May
Will Munoz
William Cappelletti
William Greystone
William Teebay
Wim De Cat
Wolfgar Amadeus Malcolm Lyles

WTP
YamiB.
Yeah
Yes
Zachary Brassea
Zodiac Empires

(un)reason
@hamildong
[!!!] Rainbow Stalin
A Guy Named Bill
Aaron Golish
Adam Pecar
Adam Reik
Adrien "Tydesson" Lochon
Alan Bahr
Alan McNevin
Alec Humphrey
Alec McClain
Alex Hatzberger
Alex Robin
Alex Rollosson Halbhuber/Critter
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Andrew Head
Andrew Laliberte
Andrew Vandervelden
Andrew Waterfall
Angelborn
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Anton "Baphomet" Gisler
Ari Suntioinen
Ashley Polikoff
Avram Lytton
bastsbreath
Ben Bogaerts
Benjamin "BlackLotos" Welke
Bentley W. Chism
Bilous "Exploding Frogs" Slick
BJ McManus
Bjørn Kobæk Søndergaard
Björn S
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Brendan Carrion
Brett Easterbrook
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Caleb Harris
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Carlos "ChecaWolf" Checa Barambio
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Ceridwyn Sylvanas Jedi Coker
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Chaos Rex
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Cortese
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David Gearhart
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David Mortensen
David Stoddard
Davin Wärter
Dawid "Dievas" Wojcieszynski
Deinqaal the obsidian-toothed
Dennis Lugo-Coll
Dimitrae Keetan
Doctor Alfons Von Grawitz Ph.D.
Dolan Ross Scherfel
Dominic Parent
Donnie "Lord Aludian" Roos, Jr.
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Dwelfman
Edouard Contesse
El_Kitteh
EmanantVolition
Emily McCabe
Entrope
Erez Shomron
Eric Gordon
Eric Haste
Erica "Vulpinfox" Schmitt
Etienne Gagnon
Evan "JabberWokky" and Sarah Edwards
Evandil Silverwalker
Ferdinand von Schenk
Florent 'Killerklown' Didier
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Frank Janik
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Guillaume "Lenny" Asset
Henrietta Ravensong
Hudson de Jesus Borges Guimarães
Hunter Crawford
I.M. "Under" Yer, B.E.D.
Ian McFarlin
Ian S Smith
Inspector Joe Bear
ipsi
Ismael Souza Kenig
J Desaulniers - Alberta

J. W. Bennett
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Jacob "Jack" Guldbrandsen
Jade Hardy
James "Callidus" Foster
James Bossie
James Mendez Hodes
James Minot
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Kango Drakken
Karybdus Doomson
Kat Rhodes
Keith Lane
Ken Finlayson
Kenneth T Miller
Kerry Birmingham
Kevin C. Wong
Kevin Lama
Kevin R. Dombrowski
Kevin Turney
Khigt
Kidu
Kimberly Brown
Korusef
Lachrymite
Larry David Napier II
Lars Haymaker
Lars Lauridsen
Lauren and Benjamin Rieker
Leandro Raniero Fernandes
Libby Oborne
Lin Liren 林立人 "Valorous Dragon"
Lincoln Lee Barrett
Loki63
Luzbhel
Lynn Yin
Majdi Badri
Marc Collins
Marc Kuczborski
Marcos Almeida Leite Bomfim
Marcus Blankenship
Mark "Obscure Injoke" Hunter
Mark Garbrick
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Matt Ross
Matt Timm
Matthew Barker
Matthew Dames
Matthew McDonnell
Matthew Sanderson
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Mazarin
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Michael Cahoon
Michael Homola Jr.
Michael J Kuhn
Michael Kusternig
Michael Lenzo
Michael Pietrelli
Michael Spookshow
Michael V. Roberts
Micheal John Elliott
Michel Foisy Rueda
Michele "MKI" Beltramini
Mike Montgomery
Monica the Dragon
Monsieur Meuble
Morgan Weeks
N. Scott Jonas
Nack The Penguin
Nadia "Atarun" Cerezo
Nancy Calvert-Warren
Nate Nimh
Nathan "Moonbeast" Skank
Nathan Henderson
Nathan Hoskins
Nathan Raymond McNeill
Nerdpol, Hamburg
Nicholas Faust
Nicholas Muehlenweg
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Nick Curley
Nicolas Vandemaele-Couchy
Nik May
Nikika Giovanni
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peter peretti
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Robdog
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Robert Small
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Shawn Ellis
Shawn Gates
Shawn Kehoe
Shawn M.
Shawn Murphy
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Siege Whitehilt
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Simon Witheridge
Steel Thul
Steffen Thorbjørnson
Stephen Ciastek
Sterz Sebastian
Steve Hester
Steve Martin
Steven
Steven Lau
Stuart Mayo
Sylvain "OgGy" Tanguy
Taner Dutter
tarantasio
Terry Zimmerman
The Howard House
The J Club
The Mordak
Thomas "Afyon" Müskens
Thomas Martin
Thomas Martin Eifried
Thomas Maund
Tigress
Tim Boser
Tim Flannigan
Tim Redford
Tobyn Jonathan Andrews
Tom Boddy
Topher Ruggles
Tracy Cook
Trent Lindt
Tribute of a Dark Heart
Tristan Valentine
Vic Smith
violinjosh
Wade "max damage" patterson
Warren Seychell
Wes C.
William "Evil Midnight Lurker" Ashley
William F Scrimsher III
William Neil
Xillvule
Yann Krehl
Zawayix Falconer
Zen'akufuni
Zimo

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Alexander Rodriguez
Andy Thomas
Angus H H Young
Bellmoore
Brendan Sherlock
Catherine Stanford
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Everett Lo
Gayle Schoen
Gerald Baker
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Jared Wadsworth
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Jon-Alexander Gaudet
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Marc-André Laurence
Marques Haley
Matiukas
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Max Walterman
Melech Starbrow
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Michael Raymer
Mike Maxson
Monsieur Mal
Mor Meshulam
Nathan Stowes
Raymond Finch
Roland Deschenes
Ryan Tsandilis
SilverRyu
The Jellyfish
The_AIY
TJ Compton
Walker Pryor
Ziggy Ramone

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Andrew Ellis
Anonymous
Astute M. Serleid
Autumn Burning
Benjamin "Baine" Plumyoen
Bob Harrison
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Bruno Soares Jardim
Chris "Logris" Spiller
Chris Handforth
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Kirk Foote
Lance Hosaka
Lars Holgaard
Lars Sivesgaard Pedersen
Leo of Gilead
Livia von Sucro
Luke Brewer
Matt "Catapult" Wang
Maxime Lemaire
Mike Watson
Nat Kisa "Kizna" A
Pierre Chaloux
Rich Bream
Richard Clayton
Richard Neary
Richard Pleyer
Samuel Gordon Mitson
Steve Burnett
The Crazy Hermit
Tim Mushel
Tristan Smith

William Craig
Zyfram

Aaron Jacob Kelly & Eleanor Mae Kelly
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Akuma Daemonium, Alex Mercer
Bradley Yesko, Eric Harlacher
Cornelius Milertens & Svarogich
Daniel "Illuminos" Persson and Adam "Boman" Persson
Dean Nolan, Allan Leeson
Dragonwolf, Bethany Doherty
Ernesto Yip Valentin, Chok Hernández
Jason setlak, & sarah p reese
Jorden Varjassy, Ilya Etinberg
KJ Wall, M Eringsmark
Mithras
Mr. Red and Maleficent Wraith
Nicholas Dragisic, Tim Prisching
Rémi Teulière / David Santiago
Robbert Kivit; Seamus "Orphan souls taste like despair, so moreish" Butler
S3rv3r1n0 and Dante Alighieri
Sunshine Alley and Briar Station
Tanya Itkin and Ziv Plotnik
Taylor Jeude, Frank Allen
The Amazing Tim-Chang, Michael Ford
Victor Zammit & Ryan Karl Micallef
William J Schebler Jr. Trevor Lee

Alicia VanDyke, Falthen Viscera, Andrew Bouck, Jessica Locust, Morbis Lundria
Fabien Fernandez; Charles Trécourt; Louis Trécourt; Yannick Peyrède; Trollune
Lory "Boss Lady" Aitken, Steve "St. Evil" Lemberg, James "Joker" Nettum, Loyal PegaMinions, Loyal PegaCustomers

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Madison, Spectre, Quantum, No Deposit, Cassanova and Raelee Lucky Brison, Bobbie Whitelock

SHADOWY TERROR

Brian Carden
Brian G Kearns
Briar Price
Carl Bergstrom
Cassandra Cruhz
Christopher Wallace
cthos
Daniel Poulin
David Wolfenbrother
Dylan Siegenthaler
Frankie Mundens
Grimnack
Henry Alexander Perez
Jeffrey J. Laluc
John Haynes
Jonthulu
Julian Fontaine
Justin Rauckhorst
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Kevin Mueller
Kokiteno
Mal Y.
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Michael Jacobson
Mr. Junas
Nicholas A Barnett
Paul and Brittany Burns
Richard "The Great Riki" Goulart
Rory
Ruben L Catinchi
Scarecrow
Shad Scarboro
Shudder
Spencer Wilson
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Tomi Jackson

Aaron J. Schrader
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Aidenn Ossorio & Rain Pletcher
Andy Kwong
Ashes Hubbard
Chris Burnside
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Emmanuel "Tito" Betancourt
Evelyne Schreiner
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J. Angus "The Ref" MacDonald
Jared Fattmann
Jeffrey Gates
Joe Edge
Landi Garcia
Magus
Matthew "The Evil Dr." Karafa
Salvatore Frederick Sebastian Filios
Scynths
Togashi Tree
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Troy Lenze
waelcyrge
Wendy Guinevere

Aaron Sunder Schweitzer
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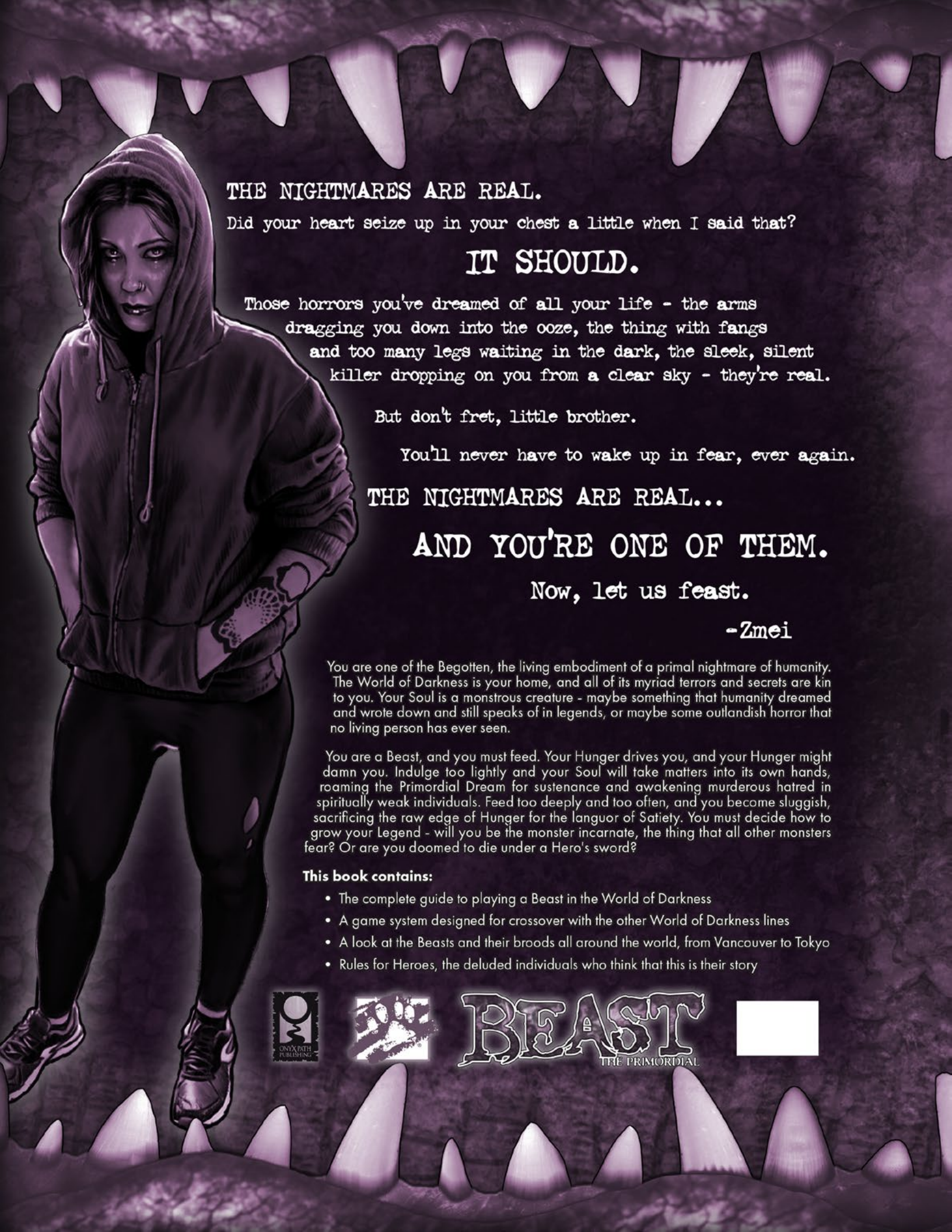
Brendan Whaley
Brian Jauch
Bruce
Bryce Undy
Corwyn Alambar
David Bryan
David Futterrer
Elijah Kautzman
Frank "The Ravager" Geopfert
Frédéri "Volk Kommissar Friedrich" POCHARD
Ian Dominey
Jason "aaaarrrggghhh" Best
Jason Van Pelt
Jeremy Siemon
Jim "Jericho Caine" Teeter
Keith E. Hartman
Kimberly Morris
Lucius Maximus
Mark Bussey
Micky Baker
Raphael Bressel
Rhett Cutts
Rian Sand
Richard 'Vidiian' Greene
Robert "The Tepesh"Stephenson
Rodger S Graham Jr
Ryan Moore
SamWong
Shadowblaze
Shawn P
Tawiscara Blackwing
Thause Hausend
Vesper Abaddon
Vicki Jones
Warden Tauros
Warren P Nelson
William Delmar III
Zander Catta Preta

ANCIENT HORROR

Bellwether Beast
Brian, "Mr. Darkpryce"

Alessandro Vario
Alexandrite Draconis
Brad Whitcomb
David Dickerson
Dhaunae De Vir
G Normington

Greyson Hoeppner
Lexi Luxe
TERRENCE "MAGI" MICHEAU
Zachary Thomas Tyler,
Makara Collector


THE NIGHTMARES ARE REAL.
Did your heart seize up in your chest a little when I said that?
IT SHOULD.
Those horrors you've dreamed of all your life - the arms dragging you down into the ooze, the thing with fangs and too many legs waiting in the dark, the sleek, silent killer dropping on you from a clear sky - they're real.
But don't fret, little brother.
You'll never have to wake up in fear, ever again.
THE NIGHTMARES ARE REAL...
AND YOU'RE ONE OF THEM.
Now, let us feast.
-Zmei
You are one of the Begotten, the living embodiment of a primal nightmare of humanity. The World of Darkness is your home, and all of its myriad terrors and secrets are kin to you. Your Soul is a monstrous creature - maybe something that humanity dreamed and wrote down and still speaks of in legends, or maybe some outlandish horror that no living person has ever seen.
You are a Beast, and you must feed. Your Hunger drives you, and your Hunger might damn you. Indulge too lightly and your Soul will take matters into its own hands, roaming the Primordial Dream for sustenance and awakening murderous hatred in spiritually weak individuals. Feed too deeply and too often, and you become sluggish, sacrificing the raw edge of Hunger for the languor of Satiety. You must decide how to grow your Legend - will you be the monster incarnate, the thing that all other monsters fear? Or are you doomed to die under a Hero's sword?
This book contains:
• The complete guide to playing a Beast in the World of Darkness
• A game system designed for crossover with the other World of Darkness lines
• A look at the Beasts and their broods all around the world, from Vancouver to Tokyo
• Rules for Heroes, the deluded individuals who think that this is their story
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BEAST
THE PRIMORDIAL