

# MIRRORS™

The Infinite Macabre™

the World of Darkness

Space Opera in the World of Darkness



Beyond the ring lurks a moon whose very shape—whose very essence—is formed of squirming thorns, tangled hedgerows, and alien trees.

Inside a defunct planetary outpost, a throng of self-made monsters fuses cable and hull scrap to one another's reanimated flesh, each powered by elements never seen by man.

Layered beneath this plane of existence is another: a place of dead stars and skull-ships, a wretched Otherspace, a haunted Underworld.

This is the Infinite Macabre.

This book includes:

- Suggestions and rules shifts on how to incorporate the World of Darkness into a space opera game
- Rules for starships and starship combat
- Guidance on making your own alien species

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# The Infinite Macabre: Space Opera in the World of Darkness

Chapter Three of *World of Darkness: Mirrors* kicked the World of Darkness in the center mass, cracking it into three different shards, three new Worlds of Darkness. Originally we planned on a science fiction section at the time we were developing it, but the concept of sci-fi ended up being too broad, too all-encompassing to cram in 15,000 words. But after the book launched, fans clamored for sci-fi worlds for their monsters to explore and terrorize.

So here's one of those Worlds of Future Darkness.

Think of this as a missing section of *Mirrors*, a slice of extra meat that we've written from the ground up in the spirit of that book. You don't need *Mirrors* to use this, but if you're familiar with it, these pages will feel like home.

Beyond the ring lurks a moon whose very shape—whose very essence—is formed of squirming thorns, tangled hedgerows, and alien trees.

Floating amidst the asteroids are the slaver ships, Byzantine chassis playing home to the grotesque feudalities of blood-hungry vampires.

Inside a defunct planetary outpost, a throng of self-made monsters fuses cable and hull scrap to one another's reanimated flesh, each powered by elements never seen by man.

Five Watchtowers sit hidden on distant planets, each ninety-nine parsecs from the next, each plotted on a map to form a perfect flat-planed pentagon in three-dimensional space—or an upside-down star. Each Watchtower has its pilgrims and proselytes, all with unparalleled power.

Spirits—some invisible, some so alien in their corporeality—flit from moon to moon, star to star, hunted in turn by men and women whose hearts are those of hungry wolves.

Layered beneath this plane of existence is another: a place of dead stars and skull-ships, a wretched Otherspace, a haunted Underworld.

This is the Infinite Macabre.

This is the World of Darkness cast forward in time—or so far backward it ceases to matter—and thrown deep into the bleakest, strangest recesses of unknown space.

## The Nature of Space Opera

This product endeavors to show you how you might transform the World of Darkness by thrusting it into the screaming maw of a whole separate genre: space opera.

Is it a strange fit? Hardly. Consider these characteristics which are sometimes considered the core elements of space opera:

- It's often a combination of fantasy and science-fiction. (The World of Darkness is very much a “dark fantasy and horror” roleplaying game.)
- It tends not to be hard sci-fi. (The World of Darkness relies more on magical realism than hard scientific principle.)
- It often features magical elements to go with the science-fiction. (The World of Darkness has magical elements in spades.)
- Adjectives that might be used to describe space operate include: Romantic, romantic (big R, small r, both), operatic, epic, political or astropolitical. (The World of Darkness plays well with all these adjectives: think of the florid and terrible politics of the vampire covenants, the grim romance seen in *Changeling*, the epic nature of the Forsaken versus the Pure or the fallen world nature found in *Mage*.)



Yes, your game will still be subject to certain fundamental alterations—for example, the World of Darkness tends to first be expressed on a local level (i.e. “What’s going on in your city?”), and here the scope of the game (and the canvas upon which it is painted) grows infinitely more epic. While a game like **Hunter: The Vigil** posits—with the conspiracy tier—a global horror, space opera blows even that out of the water and demands a galactic playing field. In fact, think of this as a “fourth tier” grafted onto the World of Darkness setting: the *galactic tier*.

But despite those changes, the base components remain the same. Instead of telling a story about the betrayal of the vampire Prince, you’re instead talking about the betrayal of a vampire Imperatrix. Instead of werewolves protecting their territory from spirit invasions, they’re chasing spirits across distant nebula. Mages can appear anywhere, and the witch hunters of the Malleus Maleficarum come hunting after them with ships that look like industrial cathedrals ripped out of the earth’s mooring and thrown into space.

## The Big Question

The one big question you really want to ask yourself before you dive into **The Infinite Macabre** at your game table is: has the veil of secrecy shielding the monsters been dropped? You have at your disposal two very different modes of play that branch off from the answer to this question.

On the one hand, if the answer is that the secrecy remains, then you are accepting that the conditions governing the societies of these nocturnal denizens remain firmly in place. In other words, the Masquerade is still in play, werewolves are still protected by Lunacy, a changeling’s Mask is ultimately lost to the mad beauty of the Mien, and so forth. Mankind is out there among the stars, and he still doesn’t realize that the parasites and goblins and immortal terrors are out there with him. This model leans toward *horror*.

On the other hand, your answer might be that the secrecy has been removed (or, depending on how you play it, it may never have been in place to begin with). More succinctly, mankind knows what monsters have come with him into space. He *knows* that the vampires could come to enslave him for his blood and drag him off to the farthest flung corners of known space. He *knows* that certain necromantic cults hide on distant moons hoping to reanimate dead tissue by fusing it with energy stolen from stars. Mankind is sure to fear the horrible long-limbed “astronauts” that come from within open vents and through rivet holes to steal them away to the place of thorns and bramble. Further, it demonstrates that some of your epic romance and planetary politics are driven by the monsters

as much as they are the humans—it allows for, say, a fringe empire of sorcerers or an armada of vampire cruisers stalking the space lanes. While this doesn’t do away with horror, this model leans toward *dark fantasy*.

This product is written with the second assumption in mind. We *want* the monsters out in the open because it creates more fantastical conditions. Instead of having to worry about bizarre-faced aliens wandering the market bazaar or space-dock, we get to have pale bloodsuckers, porcelain Prometheans, and the truly bizarre Lost rubbing elbows with humanity. In this mode, the monsters *become* the aliens so frequently seen in the various iterations of space opera. It is, in its own weird way, a mutation hybridizing **Star Wars** and Lovecraft (or, Heinlein plus **Doom**, or **Firefly** plus **Dead Space**). Sound fun?

## The Goal

Despite the title of this product, we do not have an infinite number of pages in which to grant you a fully-stocked space opera setting. As such, we’re trying to walk the balance beam between “giving you cool original material to drop into your game” and “encouraging you to answer the questions with your own awesome material.” The end result of this product is that you, as Storyteller or player, should be able to put together your own unique vision of what “World of Darkness space opera” means at your game table.

## This Wretched Universe

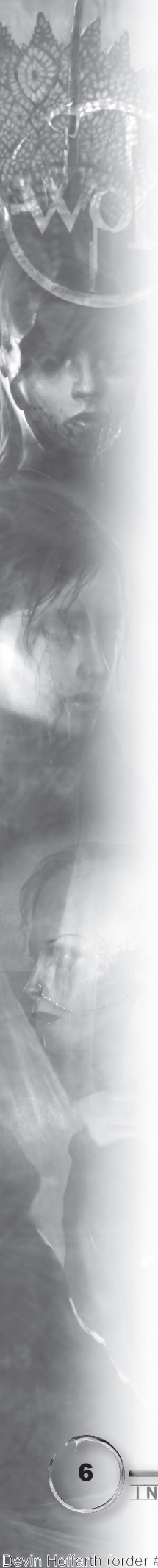
It’s a mad universe, a black tapestry held together by a million pinpricks of light, by bands of chromatic light, by solar storms and space lanes and rings of comet dust. People are out there, spread out across the stars—but so are the monsters. They once hid in the shadows, but to them, space is one big endless shadow—an infinite nighttime in which to wander.

So, you want to know how the universe out there could work for your space opera game?

## The Star Chart

Every good pilot worth his salt has a galactic star chart—shining bright on a monitor, or hanging on a wall, dusty and torn at the edges.





The way the universe *probably* works in your space opera game is just like you've seen in a number of films or video games: the universe features a number of charted galaxies separated by parsecs (*one parsec = 3.3 light years*). These galaxies are either star systems (a galaxy comprising only stars orbiting one another) or planetary systems (a galaxy where planets orbit one or several stars). These galaxies may have names that coincide with what we call them now (Procyon, Polaris, Sirius, etc), but since this is the World of Darkness, don't feel like you can't go with something more apropos to the mood (Black Mariah, Wolf Sun, Red Nebula, Blood Run). They also may be named after those who discovered them.

What's charted is only "known space." The universe is far bigger than what man and monster have yet discovered, thus giving the expanse of space an uncharted Wild West (or western expansion, or colonization) feel. Usually, the star chart is bordered by some kind of "Here There Be Dragons" line—past that border lies, well, who knows what? Space horrors? Distant aliens? Mad gods exiled from this universe? Ancient vampires who have gone beyond the fringe? The first Promethean? The True Oracles capable of galaxy-shifting sorcery?

For the record, we recommend giving that border a name—we happen to like the "Rubicon," but any name (the Line, the Edge, the Brink, the Bloodline) that evokes a *point of no return*. Characters should know that when they cross it, it's time to worry.

A star chart may also chart the Empires of Man, as noted below (p. 10).

Each galaxy is likely separated by between 100,000 and 3,000,000 parsecs—conventional spacecraft cannot make the journey between galaxies in a timely fashion (i.e. before everybody on board perishes from old age or from madness born in the rigors of space). Thus, traveling between systems requires use of the Stygian Gates found below (p. 8).

## Massive Space Objects

Within the galaxies—and, in some cases, between them—are the massive space objects found commonly in space opera properties.

## Planets

In space opera, planets are rarely so realistically defined as having different climates, temperate zones or biomes; in fact, they're pretty simplistic in definition. Desert planet. Ice planet. Forest, jungle, tundra, and so forth. Again, not realistic, but that's the nature of space opera: hard sci-fi, this is not.

Curiously, every galaxy has a few planets that feature breathable air. Further, those that *don't* have breathable

air still have habitable temperatures (meaning, temperatures that don't automatically sear humans to a crisp or blast-freeze them into bloodsicles).

Some planets likely have a "biome" that is explicitly human—in other words, instead of tundra or grassland, the whole planet is one giant metropolis. (And those that are so-called "city planets" might make use of **The Infinite Macabre's** sister product, **Bleeding Edge**.)

As above, planetary names in this mode are those best suited when they're grim, moody, and bound up in the feel of the World of Darkness. (The planets in **Firefly/Serenity** are not a bad example: Whitefall, Osiris, Persephone, Shadow.)

## Moons

Moons, like planets, are often defined by a single biome: "Oh, this is an ocean moon," or, "We are cleared for a landing on the Veldt."

Moons tend to be wilder, less colonized, often home only to outposts, farms, or industrial faculties (strip mines, weapons manufacturers, work camps).

## Stardocks

In those systems without planets, one is likely to find a stardock and space stations. They can look like anything: turning wheels, cathedral-like structures, cubes, shimmering solar fans hundreds of miles wide, spheres, cylinders and so forth.

Stardocks are often home to a permanent population—low as a thousand, high as a hundred thousand—but see far greater numbers coming through the station as traffic.

The purpose of each stardock is driven by those who created it: as a refueling station, marketplace, military base, research and development lab, ore refinery, spacecraft construction depot or ammo dump. Many are a mix of these elements: most stardocks, for instance, have some kind of trading bazaar and refueling capabilities.

The feel, form and function of an individual station is determined by its keepers and creators. If a militaristic empire serves as shepherd, expect Spartan design, an autocratic feel and function that is clearly driven toward war and conquest (fighter bays, martial training facilities, heavily defensible).

## Spacecraft

For us, the key word in *space opera* is "space." Characters are going to spend a lot of time in the deep recesses of outer space, flitting between the stars, traveling from planet to moon, from stardock to Stygian Gate. This necessitates one of the most awesome parts of space opera: the spaceships.



The section below will help you determine the stats on a spaceship and, more specifically, how players might buy them for their characters. However, note that the dots do not fully comprise all aspects of the ship in question. Does the ship have a name? What does it look like? Do you find any value in considering how the crafts of different monster types might look? Is the ship of a Ventrue vampire “family” a regal, almost stately affair, decked in chrome, titanium or even brass? What does the floating library of a number of Atlantean mages look like? Or that of a series of dream-scourging changelings (or worse, the True Fae)? Is a Promethean ship as cobbled-together as they are? Could the whole ship “go nuclear” and turn into some kind of living Pandoran lurching its way through the dark void?

### Merit: Spaceship (• to •••••)

**Effect:** The character owns, or has part-ownership of, a spaceship. This vessel may be a small, short-range, single-person fighter or interplanetary transport. It could be a large cargo vessel capable of faster-than-light travel. It might even be an intended-for-decommission military starship that the character has pulled some strings to obtain.

The usefulness of a ship depends upon how big it is, how fast, how much cargo (or how many passengers) it can support, and how well armed or defended it is. In game terms, dots spent on the Spaceship Merit need to be distributed among four categories: Size, Speed, Weapons, and Armor. The nimble short range fighter may thus have no dots in Size, four dots in Speed, and two dots in both Weapons and Armor. The cargo ship *Tranquility* may have three dots in Size, two dots in Speed, no dots in Weapons and three dots in Armor. The Task Force: Valkyrie destroyer *Odin* may have five dots in Size, one dot in speed, five dots in Weapons, and five dots in Armor.

**Spaceship Size:** The actual size of the ship, it determines the number of points of Structure a given ship has (for *Starship Combat*, below) and the amount of cargo it can carry (either in a hold or as cargo containers attached to or towed by the vessel).

– Very tiny: either a one- or two-seat fighter or personal shuttle. Not comfortable or useful for carrying cargo. This ship has 20 points of Structure.

• A small ship that can hold four people comfortably, or a couple more with less comfort. Crew hot-rack (squeeze in more than one member per bunk), as the ship has only enough sleeping space for half the crew. There might be a small room to eat meals, and cargo space for a couple of tons of cargo (about 10 feet by 10 feet). This ship has 40 points of Structure.

•• A small-to-mid-sized ship, with cabins for each crew member (up to eight or ten) and cargo space for up to fifty tons of cargo. This ship has 60 points of Structure.

••• A mid-size vessel, probably carrying a dozen crew members and the same again as paying passengers. The ship is capable of carrying a few hundred tons of cargo. This ship has 80 points of Structure.

•••• A large vessel. It can carry a couple of thousand tons of cargo, dozens of passengers and might be quite luxurious. It can contain a hundred plus crew members. This ship has 100 points of Structure.

••••• The largest capital ships and most lumbering cargo vessels, capable of carrying hundreds of thousands of tons of cargo, or thousands of crew and troops (and even smaller vehicles). These are the largest ships capable of traveling between stars. This ship has 120 points of Structure.

**Spaceship Speed:** An abstract representation of how fast a ship can accelerate, decelerate and change heading. It's a mixture of agility and raw speed, handy to use to compare with other ships, especially if using the optional *Starship Combat* rules below. The Speed rating is equal to the ship's Handling rating (for combat purposes).

– This ship is effectively a big space slug: low acceleration, poor maneuverability.

• These vessels change speed slowly, but it's enough to get them from one place to another. Ships with this Speed do not need to flit about nimbly. Passenger shuttles and huge, lumbering ships may have only one dot in Speed.

•• These ships move around star systems at a slow and steady rate, taking a few hours to move between a planet and its moons and days or a week to get to the outer worlds. They aren't especially quick or nimble.

••• These ships are faster than average and more agile. The vast majority of fighters and police/military ships move with this level of swiftness. Cargo vessels this fast are used for courier duties or to carry perishable goods.

•••• A ship this fast is almost certainly a military, police or pirate vessel (cargo ships this fast are probably smuggling illegal goods past blockades or security perimeters).

••••• Only the fastest, most expensive fighters are this agile and fast. Private vessels with this Speed rating may be racers or corporate couriers and any cargo ship this fast is going to attract attention immediately.

**Spaceship Weapons:** indicate the ship's weapons capabilities. Most ships are armed, though only cursorily, enough to distract a pirate and get out of sight. Still, the ships that characters possess might potentially be armed to the teeth. Dots in this Merit determine how advanced



a ship's weapons systems can be. At each level comes a Damage rating: this rating is added to all attack rolls in starship combat. (How these weapons function is up to you and your imagination: cannons, modified mining lasers, missile batteries, EMPs, etc.)

- The ship has no weapons system installed.
- A single dot of Weapons indicates a small laser or mass driver used for short-range or point defense. (+1 attack)
- Most military fighters have this Weapon rating, as do most police and security vessels. (+2 attack)
- The ship's Weaponry systems are advanced, and may include missiles and plasma cannons, for both short and long range destructive power. The majority of warships have this rating. (+4 attack)
- Weaponry systems at this level are highly advanced and quite devastating, capable of badly damaging starships with a single burst, but also ravaging targets on a planet's surface. (+8 attack)
- At this level, weapons systems become truly annihilating: orbital nukes, lasers that can bisect most ships, swarm missiles. (+16 attack)

**Spaceship Armor:** This indicates how well-defended the ship is from attack, both in defensive systems (chaff, misdirection, hacking opponent's weapons systems) and in terms of actual armor. Each dot adds up to one point of Durability (one dot is Durability 1, three dots is Durability 3, and so forth). While Durability *technically* only measures physical resistance, here it also represents the ship's countermeasures. Any attack successes must exceed a ship's Durability to actually do damage: the rest meet the hull, force fields, or are otherwise countermanded by defensive systems.

## Starship Combat

In terms of starship combat, the vehicle rules in the **World of Darkness Rulebook** (p. 141) still roughly apply.

A ship's Structure is defined by Size, above.

A ship's Acceleration is five times the Speed rating. This is measured in miles-per-turn (which, if you care, means that a ship with Speed five moves at about twenty-five miles per turn or eight miles per second, and the speed of light is about fifty miles per second).

Commanding a ship's weapons systems necessitates a Dexterity + Computers roll with a Specialty in Weapons Systems. Without this Specialty, the roll is subject to a -3 penalty. A character cannot pilot and use weapons systems at the same time (which is why most starships have multiple crew members). Only one character may make attack rolls on behalf of the ship in a given turn of combat. The ship's Weapons rating allows the character to add a number of dice to the attack.

Piloting the ship requires a Dexterity + Drive roll. Add in the Handling as a modifier (Handling is equal to dots in the Speed rating).

As with traditional vehicular combat, when accumulated Structure damage exceeds Durability, a -1 penalty is imposed upon all Pilot rolls. Likewise a -1 penalty is applied to all other ship's system rolls (Weaponry, Engineering, etc). However, when the Structure is reduced to the last three points available, this penalty increases to -3 to any skill checks using ship systems. Moreover, the ship's Speed is reduced by half. When only one point of Structure is left, this indicates that the ship is losing life support: characters only have enough oxygen equal to twice the ship's Size rating in minutes. Unless the crew has spacesuits, they are going to suffocate.

Pilots can take evasive maneuvers during combat. Such a maneuver costs one Willpower point on the pilot's behalf. No characters may make any ship attacks during that turn. The evasive maneuvers roll is the same as the Pilot roll (Dexterity + Drive + Handling). Successes on that roll subtract from any attack rolls made subsequently in that turn.

Repairing damage necessitates a Craft roll. Each check represents one hour's worth of work and each success repairs one point of Structure damage. A character *can* attempt to repair a ship in the middle of combat using an emergency repair maneuver, but doing so necessitates expending a Willpower point *and* accepting a -5 penalty to the roll. However, this significantly moves up the time frame: the down-and-dirty repairs take only one minute to execute. Only five points of Structure damage can be repaired in this way (such brutal repair only gets the mechanic so far), but it might be the line between life inside the ship and death in the unforgiving vacuum of space. Repairs can be the result of a teamwork roll (p. 134, **World of Darkness Rulebook**). In the case of emergency repairs, only the primary actor must spend the Willpower point, but all actors suffer the -5 penalty.

## Stygian Gates:

### The Dread Doors

Space is not without its scars. It has a history that goes back millennia, to before mankind ever ventured into the great beyond. What man found in the deepest recesses of space are tremendous gates, each a different shape—this one a ragged womb, that one a jagged star, a third another a gently-turning halo, and so on. All are made of stone, as if shaped by an artist: sigils have been carved into the stone which have significance to few humans but to many monsters—the mages believe it to be some proto-Atlantean script while the Forsaken





believe it to be a language penned by star-faring spirits. Vampires believe them to be the words uttered by their most nightmarish forbears, while changelings believe that they've seen these symbols before: tattooed on the flesh of the True Fae that took them.

Not every system has one, but most do. The surfeit of black holes out there in the void leads many to believe that these gates were once black holes, harnessed and made to serve the needs of some ancient—and possibly alien—antecedent.

Since no Faster-Than-Light (FTL) travel is yet possible (outside of mages can manage), these gates are the only way to travel between galaxies. Accessing the gate is simple, but piloting a ship through the gate is not enough. Someone on board must give up a point of Willpower (and in doing so, can feel the point being psychically leeched from them, as if the gate is suddenly *very aware* of them) or, alternately, accept one point of lethal damage (which manifests as a wound in the shape of the gate itself).

It would be most desirable for a ship to enter at one gate and exit immediately at another—but, sadly, that is not the case. The gates don't work like that; they are not “jump stations.” Rather, the gates (or as they're sometimes called, Dread Doors) transport ships into an alternate dimension, one where time is slowed and space

is contracted (further lending credence to the notion that the Stygian Gates are, or were once, black holes).

## The 10% Rule

Upon entering a Stygian Gate, the Storyteller should roll one die out in the open for all to see.

If the die shows up 2 through 10, the standard effects apply (see *Between Space*, below).

If the die comes up as a 1, well, things don't necessarily go as expected. In most cases, the ship is still teleported into *Between Space*, but something goes awry along the way (Storyteller's choice). Consult the list below, or make up your own:

- Characters all suffer a minor derangement for one week (though like with all derangements, the effects can be subdued or resisted).
- All characters lose a point of Vitae (incurring a point of lethal damage in all non-vampire characters).
- Shapeshifting characters are forced to shape-shift.
- Characters begin to suffer horrible nightmares.
- Characters begin to suffer horrible hallucinations.
- Ship doesn't enter *Between Space*, but rather, appears in the atmosphere of a Thornworld (see the section on Changelings, p. 19).





## Between Space:

### The Dismal Void. The Underworld

They call it “Between Space,” but anybody who knows shit about shit recognizes that this is the Land of the Dead, except out here in the awful vacuum of space.

Out here, space isn’t black so much as... gray. Or, at times, jaundiced (the color of a sickened bile duct). Ship systems suffer havoc: they fritz out, they show inconsistent readings, they capture strange transmissions and frequencies from ships gone missing (or ships that never existed in the first place). Most worrisome are the ghosts and doppelgangers: Out a porthole window, characters might see ghost ships or even lone individuals floating out there in the void, sometimes fully-fleshed, other times spectral and diaphanous. If it’s not ghosts, it’s the doppelgangers, or duplicates: ships and characters made to mirror their own. (Sometimes these apparitions even try to hail the characters and communicate with them. Most recognize that this is an unwise course of action and simply ignore such communications.)

So, why do this at all? Why traverse this dead void, this place beyond the galactic curtain? Because this is the only way to travel between galaxies without cryogenically freezing a ship’s inhabitants (or, instead, allowing whole generations of pilots to rise and fall, to live and die).

Time is telescoped while space is contracted. Every 100,000 parsecs traveled only requires a reasonably short travel time (assume that it takes five hours minus the ship’s Speed rating to travel 100,000 parsecs, to a minimum of one hour). A ship with a Speed of 5 traveling to the farthest-flung galaxy some 3,000,000 parsecs away will only necessitate a 30-hour journey.

Problem is, out here, every hour is a troubling one. After the ninth hour, characters begin to lose Willpower points at a rate of one per hour. Once they reach zero Willpower, they feel truly listless—at the Storyteller’s discretion, the characters may even have a hard time deciding to *leave* Between Space, or they may be more likely to answer communications from sinister specters or mad doppelgangers. (And some say that once you answer those calls, you’ve earned their attention and cannot escape them until you give them what they want or destroy them.) Further, characters cannot regain Willpower points while in Between Space.

However, once they exit via another Stygian Gate, they return to “normal” space and time.

## Denizens of the Deep Dark Nowhere

Of course, what really sets **The Infinite Macabre** apart from any other iteration of the space opera subgenre are the denizens of the World of Darkness: monsters dragged from their terrestrial shadows and thrown into the yawning abyss of outer space.

This section takes a look at the various supernatural character types found in the World of Darkness setting and how you might use them (or play them) in **The Infinite Macabre** setting shard. Each character-type is broken out into three sub-sections: *System Shifts*, which explains any notable rule changes you might want to consider in terms of using these creatures in **The Infinite Macabre**; *Story Considerations*, which endeavors to provide cool story hooks and narrative ideas in order to provide inspiration for your Infinite Macabre game; and *New Toy*, where each new character-type gets a new “toy” to play with (meaning, some kind of power or fresh mechanic) in the playground of **The Infinite Macabre**.

## Humans and Hunters

### System Shifts

- Even the most stalwart human mind cannot always handle the rigors of deep space travel. Assume that any human who spends more days in space (without landing and setting foot on some surface, be it planet or stardock) than the dots possessed in his Willpower score will be subject to possible mental illness. That illness plays out similar to how a mild/severe derangement might: Isolation (mild) and Alienation (severe). Every day that the character spends in space beyond his Willpower score, the player must roll that character’s Resolve + Composure pool. Success means that no ill mental effects are felt. Exceptional success indicates that the character may go another three days without making the roll. Failure invokes a mild mental breakdown: the character begins to suffer from the effects of Isolation, meaning any Social rolls are penalized by -3 dice for the remaining 24 hours (at which point the character may once more attempt to resist the effects of this “space madness”). Dramatic failure means the character suffers the severe version, Alienation, for the remaining 24 hours; Alienation ups the Social penalty to -5 dice, and the character may also not regain Willpower during this time.

• Another new derangement: Sleepless (mild) / Insomniac (severe). This plays out like a regular derangement (as in, a character possesses it until it is cured). Ever move to the city, then take a night and sleep in the country? All that *screaming silence*? All that *impenetrable darkness*? This is like that, but a thousand times worse. Space is quiet. Cold. Distant. No day and night cycles, either, which means busted-up Circadian rhythms. Some characters find it very hard to sleep, and so they suffer from this derangement. Whenever a character tries to get eight hours of sleep, roll Resolve + Composure. Success means sleep (and the proper regaining of Willpower in the morning). Failure, if Sleepless (mild), means a restless and uncertain sleep, and no Willpower in the morning. Failure, if Insomniac (severe), indicates that the character literally does not sleep at all—he awakens without regaining Willpower *and* he suffers a -3 penalty to all dice pools during the subsequent “day.” This penalty lasts until the character sleeps eight hours straight.

For further ramifications, see “Fatigue” in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 179-180. (Note that this is built for characters who aren’t used to space travel. For characters who *are* acclimated to traversing the stars you might reverse this to a degree – they suffer madness when forced to rest their heads while on a terrestrial body.)

• If you’re looking for a quick solution in terms of arms and armor, you don’t need to look beyond the weapons already provided in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. Use the same stats and effects except instead of saying “.44 Magnum,” it’s now a “Phaser.” Or a “Photon Repeater.” Or an “Ion Cannon.”

However, you might also want to create new weapons that are sci-fi appropriate and evoke different system reactions. This following chart offers a handful of new weapons, but you are as always encouraged to make up your own (and once more we advise you not to be too married to actual *science* given the fantastical nature of space opera):

Type	Name	Damage	Size	Strength	Ranges	Clip	Cost	Special
Melee Weapon	Vibro-Knife	1(L)	1	n/a	n/a		••	Vibrates through particles; ignores Durability
Melee Weapon	Hydraul Maul-Gloves	1(B)	2	n/a	n/a		••	Grants the wielder a +2 Strength when worn
Ranged Weapon	Cheiron Systems Bio-Rifle	3(L)	3		20/40/80	5	••••	In addition to damage also causes bacterial infection (one lethal point per hour, Sta + Resolve only allowed with antibiotic injection)
Ranged Weapon	Enervating Null Gun (3-Shot Pistol)	4(L)	2		30/60/120	3	•••	Fires energy pulse; any time it does damage, it also siphons one Willpower point
Explosive	Ion Grenade	0	1	1	n/a	n/a	••	Blast Area 2/ Throwing Mod +1, does no damage but shorts-out electrical systems and weapons for a number of turns equal to five + successes on roll



• Just as the universe is home to awesome new weapons, it is home to incredible new drugs, too—though, in the spirit of the World of Darkness, none should be without consequence. Consider the following new drugs in play:

**Nebula:** Hallucinogen. One tends to see “through walls,” and often hallucinates cosmic or celestial images (nebula, supernovas or borealis effects, even in the comfort of one’s own sleeping pod). Amps up Mental ability, offering +3 to any Mental rolls, but also does a number on one’s ability to communicate, incurring a -5 penalty to all Social rolls. Lasts for eight hours unless one takes a Vitamin B shot to end its effects prematurely.

**Red Tar:** Red Tar doesn’t just make everybody look more desirable (the “Tar Goggles” effect), but it also increases the character’s own attractiveness by causing him to both emit a pheromone and to gain a flush to his cheeks. The character gains +2 to all Presence rolls unless that character has the Lust Vice, in which case the bonus increases to +4. However, once the “high” wears off (two to three hours later), the character cannot regain Willpower for the next 24 hours.

**Crater Dust:** Anybody who inhales a puff-pod of crater dust will feel immortal. And it’s partially true: a character gains three dots to his Stamina Attribute for one hour. During this time, he also suffers from the effects of the Megalomania derangement (severe, p. 97, **World of Darkness Rulebook**). After the hour is up, the character must sleep for eight hours immediately or gain a headache that incurs a -3 Physical penalty.

## Story Considerations

• Definitely consider the survival (and “survival horror”) nature of space: sure, some ships might have incredible greenhouses or even livestock pens, but alternately, what if you’re a rag-tag cargo ship? Or a pirate ship that needs to fly under radar? Not a lot of room for food or clean water (though one hopes that the ship properly processes the urine of those on board and recycles it). What happens when characters get stuck in deep space with no food? No water?

• In space opera, mankind is often fragmented into various empires, civilizations and races. Each group is defined by certain traits, as if they are complete monocultures—the Halcyon Empire is militaristic; the People’s Republic of Ariadne suffer under a matrilineal police state; the Tiresians are a race of psychic berserkers who claw their eyes out at puberty, and so on.

• Consider, too, the governmental nature of the universe. In space opera, one often finds that there is an oppressive majority and a rebellious (even anarchic) minority like those found in **Star Wars** or **Firefly**. On which side do the characters find themselves? Alternately, the universe might be cast into a Civil War (once

on the same side, now fighting amongst themselves) or a full-bore Galactic War (every empire against every empire). Once more, the question: do the characters choose a side? Are they forced to one side? Can they play all sides against the middle?

• Did you know that, if you take a normal strain of Salmonella and expose it to the rigors of space it becomes more deadly? If you think the Cheiron Group is not excited by this, you’re nuts; space to them is an exciting new playground. Every planet has new flora and fauna to examine (read: exploit). Plus, more diseases to cure (which sometimes necessitates *manufacturing* the diseases, first.) The monsters are different, too, out there—the properties of vampire blood may work differently in Zero-G, the bile ducts of a werewolf grow black and puckered when exposed to atmospheric re-entry, and so on. Hell, rumor says that Cheiron is out there taking over whole *moons* for their experimentation, all without accountability.

• Consider reimagining a number of the hunter compacts and conspiracies:

**Aegis Kai Doru:** The galaxy is home to countless ancient and/or alien artifacts—not just the Stygian Gates, either. What about the Black Dais found on the northernmost archipelago of the Hephaestus moon? Or those jagged crystal-studded “teeth” found on planets thousands of parsecs apart? Or the eerie Watchtowers, the ones that aliens purportedly built, the ones which those *mares* seem so goddamn interested in?

**Ascending Ones:** Religious ascetics who eschew high technology whenever possible. They’ll travel on ships but won’t pilot them. They use old technology: knives, swords, pistols. They search space for mythic creatures and reagents for their bizarre Elixirs.

**Ashwood Abbey:** A secret club traversing the planetary systems—a hellfire group whose membership consists only of the richest and most eccentric ladies and gentlemen. The galaxy is home to countless pains and pleasures, and they seek them all out. Capture an alien and snort the ashes of its burned flesh? Sure.

**Cheiron Group:** Potent pharmaceutical and medical conglomerate found in most major systems—as powerful as any empire, rumors exist of the Field Project Division, a small army of Cheiron-paid mercenaries, soldiers and scientists who range far and wide to confirm Cheiron’s agenda. So many monsters, so many aliens, so little time.

**Long Night:** Zealous fundamentalists who believe that the universe must be “made clean” by God’s intervention. They predict universal cataclysm: a series of supernovas and black holes that render the universe inert and create a kind of “reverse genesis.” They seek to destroy the Stygian Gates, believing them to be the product of ancient devils.

**Loyalists of Thule:** So many dark corners of the universe demand a light—the Loyalists see themselves as that light. They have to. Long ago, the founders ignored the rise of a terrible galactic empire and were even complicit in its ascent. Now they have a debt to pay: find the places where the worst among us have gone and rout them. Along the way, they seek to learn the troubling secrets the universe hides.

**Lucifuge:** These bounty hunters with the Devil's blood travel alone or as part of mixed-conspiracy cells. When a Lucifuge shows up on your stardock, you know there's going to be trouble: administrators either give them full clemency or work to make life as hard for them as possible.

**Malleus Maleficarum:** The Church is out there amongst the stars, building cathedrals on the spots of ancient worship and sending missionaries to the farthest, weirdest corners of space. These hunters know that the monsters have come to the stars with mankind, and recognize that the devils and demons will oppose man's devotion to God and encourage sin. They destroy such monstrous influence with fire... and photon rounds.

**Network Zero:** Signal-pirates extraordinaire. Hijack every subspace frequency known to man to transmit their anti-monster propaganda *and* to spy on anybody who might be harboring some wretched creature out there in **The Infinite Macabre**.

**Null Mysteriis:** Monsters do not exist; they are just people who have been changed by their experiences out there among the stars. Could it be a xenobacterium that has caused the vampire plague? A rogue DNA infecting the shapechangers? They seek the truth—the *scientific truth*—in labs and through expeditions from system to system.

**Task Force VALKYRIE:** Once an off-shoot of the World Government, VALKYRIE is now a rogue agent out there in the universe, broken away from the squabbling empires and oppressive regimes, funded by various mysterious sources in order to hunt down and capture the galaxy's most notorious supernatural criminals.

**The Union:** They're everywhere. You just don't realize it. That nameless mechanic who fixes your moisture vaporator? That smuggler who brings in illicit goods to the families that need them? The janitor on board the space frigate? They're all hunters. A *union* of secret hunters found in every corner of the world—half “neighborhood watch,” half “mafia,” all “monster killer.”

## New Toy: Stygian Bezoar (• to •••••)

This pebble-sized hunk of strange smooth stone—etched faintly with the whorling sigils found on the Stygian Gates and made of the same unidentifiable material—are highly sought after by the planet-hopping Relic hunters of the Aegis Kai Doru.

**Cost:** one lethal damage as the character swallows the stone and 1-5 Willpower any time the character activates the Relic

**Benefit:** A character with the bezoar sitting in his stomach can teleport himself great distances depending on how potent the stone happens to be (i.e. according to dots purchased):

Dots	Range
•	100 ft.
••	500 ft.
•••	One mile
••••	One hundred miles
•••••	One parsec

The character must expend Willpower with every use—a number of Willpower per dot/distance used (so, if the character wants to travel under 100 feet, only one point is necessary, while between 200-500 feet would necessitate two points, and so on).

The character expels the bezoar after a number of hours equal to his Resolve + Stamina dice pool. And by “expel,” we mean *uncomfortably*.

## Vampires

### System Shifts

- Vampires have *incredible* power out in the abyssal maw of space. Consider: no sunlight (vampires are burned by the sun that shines on *Earth*). No day-night cycle. Not a lot of wood from which to make stakes. And, finally, vampires don't need to breathe. They can set foot outside a spaceship to do repairs without concern and can wander happily onto the surface of a gaseous planet (provided the temperature wouldn't sear them to a crisp or freeze them to the ground). This doesn't mean you can't (re)institute some weaknesses for space-faring blood-suckers...

- A vampire's vulnerability to sunlight is a supernatural one, not a biological one. So it's up to you to determine the nature of a vampire's aversion to sun or starlight. Is the vampire harmed only by the light of those stars orbited by habitable planets (tying it to the vibrancy of human life and how the sun sustains those naturally living and burns those who are unnaturally undead)? Is the vampire vulnerable to *all* starlight? Or, again, is it only the light of our own sun that burns the vampire? If a vampire is Embraced on a different planet—or moon, or stardock—is he burned by the sun in *that* system only?

- Consider too the nature of what happens when a vampire enters the vacuum of space. Now, technically, all the dramatic things you see in movies (exploding bodies, frozen flesh, eyes popping out of head, implosions) wouldn't happen. But, hey, this is space opera, so have fun with it. A vampire's Vitae might freeze (meaning





it cannot be spent for one hour per minute of space exposure). The vampire herself might start to seize up, suffering a -1 Physical penalty per minute of exposure. Or the vampire might simply start to accrue damage: her undead flesh cannot suffer the rigors of the ever-hungry vacuum and its icy teeth.

### Story Considerations

- Blood, like food and water, is hard to find out there in the vacuum of space. It's for this reason that most vampires must remain close to the "human herd" to survive. Some go wild and feral, hiding in the ducts and passages of a darkened ship (think of the xenomorph from *Alien*, except a slaving bloodsucker). Others have to up their game in terms of aping human life and pretending to be "part of the herd" instead of one of the wolves. Some are pirates and slavers: they make raids on human ships, plaguing distant space-lanes, thieving cargo and stealing warm bodies to sustain them in the long trips between planets and galaxies. Rumors even exist of vampires who have whole "farms" of humans out there: distant outposts where the humans are ensconced in tubes, made fat by

protein slurry and drained of their blood slowly enough so that they always make more.

- What happens if vampires become viable political forces in the universe? As in, they're no longer bound to the Danse Macabre, and now engage in political battles with human empires on potentially equal footing?

**Daeva:** Narcissistic spiders in the center of a cosmic web, the Daeva are *everywhere*. Pleasure seekers. Pimps. Dilettantes. Artistes. They rarely work with other Daeva (the ego battles often end in clumps of blood and hair stuck to the walls), but they cannot operate alone, either (for who would appreciate their genius when designing a new spacecraft or selecting the perfect harem brood for a wealthy banker?).

**Gangrel:** When they show up on your space station, everybody scatters. They are the wild-men. They are the blood-beasts. They travel in packs. Sometimes they show up to drink a couple blood-shots down at the vampire bar. Sometimes they want information. But a lot of the time? They want to hunt. They want to *feed*. And feed, they shall.

**Mekhet:** You don't find a Mekhet. The Mekhet find *you*. Maybe they want information. Maybe they want to

give you information. Or worse, maybe they think you're a fit for one of their myriad cults cast across the stars. When they grab you from the light and drag you into shadow, will you scream? Or, like many, will you acquiesce?

**Nosferatu:** They build nests and warrens in the bleakest, blackest parts of the universe. They lash together garbage scows, derelict spacecrafts, satellite arrays—anything that will form their labyrinthine star-docks (or, as they call them, “scumdocks”) where they trap and hunt prey for both food and amusement. Some go to them unbidden, seeking enlightenment from the blind worm-oracles floating out in the void.

**Ventru:** They have consolidated powers and are themselves a powerful political empire—the “Vampire Nation,” the humans call them. They attempt to show a less monstrous face, but everyone knows what goes on in their blood-soaked moonbases...

## New Toy: Blood Propulsion (Devotion)

(Celerity •, Resilience •, Vigor •)

Imagine it: a vampire is ejected into the cold maw of space and just... floats there. Nowhere to go but nowhere, it seems. Unless, of course, the vampire could let fly with a propulsive jet of blood to provide momentum...

**Cost:** 1 Vitae

**Dice Pool:** This power involves no roll to invoke.

**Action:** Instant

The character hisses and vomits a jet of Vitae from her mouth, which offers her propulsion in the dark void of space at Speed 1. The vampire can do this in normal gravity and at normal oxygen levels as well, and can even *aim* it with a Dexterity + Athletics + Celerity roll. *Alternately*, the vampire can add in Crúac if it is possessed (replacing the Celerity in the roll), and by spending an additional Vitae, turn the sprayed blood into hot, acidic Vitae jet that does a number of points of lethal damage equal to successes rolled. The spitting blood has a range equal to the vampire's Blood Potency in yards.

## Werewolves

### System Shifts

- A werewolf's relationship to Luna is a critical one—and in the far-flung reaches of space, an almost non-existent one. Luna—the spirit presiding over the moon that orbits Earth alone—can no longer gaze upon her wild-hearted children from such a distant vantage, and to many Forsaken that is a terrifying consideration. What does this mean in terms of rules changes? First, it means that Lunacy is less effective: all humans are considered to have +2 Willpower when determining Lunacy effects (p. 176, **Werewolf: The Forsaken**).

Second, determining an Auspice becomes... well, tricky. Assume that all Forsaken experience their First Changes on Earth. Those who are destined to become werewolves but do not change on Earth become—you guessed it—Pure. And yes, this only confirms the “Pure greatly outnumber the Forsaken” mode of the game, but given space opera's general parameters (oppressive majority versus rebellious minority), that's totally in-theme. (Alternately, consider the possibility that werewolves can bond with other lunar spirits—i.e. the patron or matron spirits bound to other orbital moons. However, you might want to reserve this for alternate shapeshifters, like those found in **War Against The Pure**).

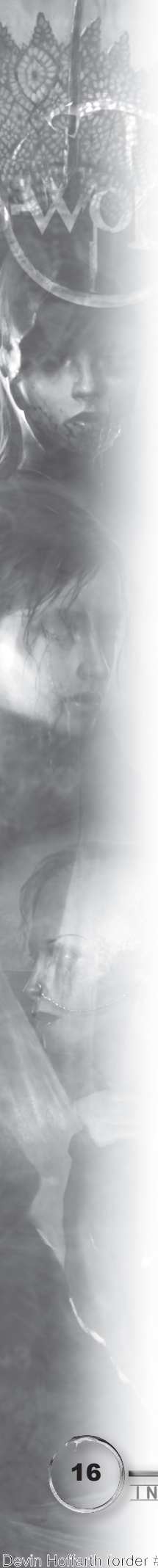
- Prey's Blood (p. 179, **Werewolf: The Forsaken**) allows a werewolf to taste the blood of a foe and track it with almost supernatural clarity—yet that should still necessitate a smell of the blood. So what happens to this ability when a werewolf tracks prey across the gulf of space? Normal tracking rolls do not apply, however, by the tenets of Prey's Blood, a werewolf may still attempt a Wits + Survival roll with a -5 dice pool. Seems like an extreme penalty—until you realize that the werewolf shouldn't even be able to *make* that roll in the first place. However, their tracking skills are genuinely supernatural—why not catch a whiff of blood on the solar winds, a coppery tang despite the thickness of the hull, despite the vastness of the void?

- What, then, is the Shadow? If you're comfortable with multiple cosmologies playing together, it can remain separate from Between Space and still be exactly as it is on Earth, except, well, in outer space and on other planets. Forsaken still step sideways the same way (**Werewolf: The Forsaken**, pp. 250-251), and yes, it still requires one to be at a locus. Loci are still foci of spiritual energy, and can be anything out in space: an asteroid where a pleasure cruise crashed (killing all aboard), a blood-soaked bunk on a derelict military battleship, a gnarled and twisted tree at the heart of some forest moon. If it's actually out there in space, the Gauntlet is truly low, granting werewolves +3 dice to the stepping sideways roll. One modification: consider the possibility of allowing a werewolf pack's spaceship to enter the Shadow if the werewolves have a totem bound to the ship (see below).

- Alternately, if you care to combine cosmologies for ease of use and memory, feel free to make Between Space a cosmological combo-pack of the Underworld, the Astral Realms, the Shadow, and any other “interstitial plane” you care to layer upon it.

- Finally, a totem can be bound to a pack's spacecraft at a Totem point cost of one per dot spent in Spaceship Size (p. 7). The totem can add its Attributes to the ship. Its Power gets added to any attack rolls. Its Finesse gets added to any piloting rolls. And finally, its Resistance is





added to the ship's Durability (at a 1:1 basis). The only restriction is that the totem's Ban should be in some way related to the ship itself (a certain ritual performed on board; the ship cannot enter atmosphere; the ship must power down once a week and float inert in the blackness of space; etc). More information on spacecraft in **The Infinite Macabre** can be found on p. 6 of this product.

## Story Considerations

- At its core, the essential mode of **Werewolf** is that the characters—the werewolves—are the guardians of a broken world, a world under assault by alien spirits. This can remain largely the same in terms of **The Infinite Macabre**, except replace “world” with “universe.” To create a more “cosmic” feel, don’t hesitate to increase the size of a pack’s territory: no longer talking about just a few square miles of farmland, we’re asking what if a pack guards a planetary ocean, an entire moon, a whole *tract* of known space? Could they chase spirits across a parsec littered with space debris and broken craft refuse? What if they’re the lone shepherds of a moon under assault by a tidal force of wretched hybridized spirits, as alien as one could imagine?

- We said it above, but it bears repeating: The Pure can serve the role of The Empire. The Forsaken can fit the mold of the Rebel Alliance. Just sayin’.

- Also consider a Forsaken pack as the crew of a starship. Look to the crew of **Firefly** and see how, despite their dysfunction, they work together, and then model a werewolf pack after that same dynamic. A pack works together—it must, or it will die. The crew of a star-faring craft is much the same: everyone must be attuned to the task at hand, to the ship around them, and to one another. It can create an awesome—if claustrophobic (in a good way) story experience. Then again, we also think it’d be cool to have a starship crew comprising one each of the various types of supernatural denizen (Forsaken mechanic, changeling pilot, vampire diplomat, Promethean weapons officer, etc.).

- What happens to the Forsaken tribes when you thrust them into **The Infinite Macabre** shard?

**Blood Talons:** Berserkers and warrior-monks, the Blood Talons rove far and wide following the scent of battle: the universe is no stranger to war, and in every corner of every rot-fuck planet or distant moon waits a battle to be had. The Blood Talons find the battlefields, be they terrestrial or cast across open space, and there they move in on the side they choose as the Choosers of the Slain—and, when it’s all done, they find those grotesque spirits born of the carnage and end their aspirations for greater terror.

**Bone Shadows:** The galaxies are home to myriad

new spirits, all as alien as the worlds they call home. The Bone Shadows go to these spirits to learn, to be submissive, and ultimately (and ironically) to master such spiritual strangeness. Those who know of the *Hirfathra Hissu* also know that they are powerful prognosticators and, further, know where the most potent loci await.

**Hunters In Darkness:** The name is literal: these wolves are the greatest trackers space has ever known, and they will hound their prey across the blackest void. And yet, they remain technologically unrefined: they are simple, almost ascetic, requiring little more than their fangs and claws to find those enemies (spirits, Pure, Azlu) that have wronged the Uratha.

**Iron Masters:** If anybody is attuned with their spaceships (and, even moreso, has a totem bound to the craft), it’s the Iron Masters. Sure, some run bars on city-planets and others set up garages on those waystation moons that get a lot of passing traffic, but really? Most of them love the gearhead nature of owning, piloting and repairing their own spacecraft.

**Storm Lords:** Storm Lords are political entities. They have to be; the universe is increasingly diced up into troubling empires, and those empires spawn wars and terror and crass diplomacy, and all of those things further stir the spirits. And so the Storm Lords must involve themselves. At least, that’s what they *tell* themselves. It surely can’t be because of the addictive nature of politics, right? Or the taste of power it provides?

## New Toy: The Lodge of The Strangers’ Exodus (All Tribes)

The Forsaken do not belong. Not in space. Not on ground. They are grotesque mutations of man and wolf, with souls that lie somewhere in-between.

This lodge purports to put together those of the Uratha who feel truly like outcasts and freaks—“strangers” to man and beast and spirit—and exhorts all lodge members to travel together into the harshest, strangest regions of space.

The purpose of this exodus is twofold: first, to escape the known universe and plague it no more; when a wolf is too sick to live he goes elsewhere to die, and this is like that to a degree. The Uratha do not belong to any moon or planet and so they go seeking a place where they *do* belong. Second, it is to speak to the most bizarre, alien-like spirits out in deep space. By communing with such entities, the Strangers hope to find some kind of understanding of their origins and condition—after all, finding a place where they do belong is more than just mere physicality and geography. They seek a *spiritual* place, as well.

**Prerequisites:** Wisdom ••, Crafts ••, Science ••

**Membership:** The lodge is open to any member of any tribe, but they don't recruit—they won't come after *you*. You have to go after *them*. And, since they're rarely easily accessible, finding and joining the lodge often requires quite a pilgrim's journey across the known universe in an effort to dig up the trail to follow.

**Benefits:** The Strangers of this lodge know that they do best in strange places and when confronting truly alien beings: any time a member of this lodge meets a spirit type she has never before encountered, she may add her dots in Wisdom to any Social dice pools used in dealing with that spirit. Further, members of this lodge feel quite at home with the Occult Skill (as that Skill deals with the margins and fringes of knowledge)—when rolling a dice pool that uses the Occult Skill, the werewolf can reroll all failed dice (once) by spending a Willpower point.

## Mages

### System Shifts

- In theory, mages—like vampires—find that their supernatural abilities are opened up quite a bit by a journey into outer space. In the setting of space opera, the laws of reality are a little... *looser* than you'll find in the standard World of Darkness setting (or in a harder sci-fi shard). Not only is science running rampant, thus allowing a much wider variety of acceptable results, but humanity is aware of magic to some degree, too (in much the way that the denizens of the **Star Wars** universe knew about the Force). Humans are far more willing to accept the strange things they see because they know magic is real and that true monsters travel the stars. So, what does that mean for Paradox and vulgar magic? Consider these three options:

**No Change:** Same rules apply. In the setting, of course, mages are likelier to act outside the view of Sleepers.

**Paradox, Castrated:** In the base Paradox dice pool (p. 123, **Mage: The Awakening**), remove one die (to a minimum of one).

**Paradox, Eradicated:** Paradox, begone. Get rid of it entirely. In effect, because the belief in magic is so widespread, the leash (or rather, safety valve) on magic and those who use it is gone, thus giving them unparalleled powers in this age of space opera.

### Story Considerations

- One of the great issues with traversing and colonizing outer space is the lack of breathable air (which often goes hand-in-hand with a lack of flora and fauna, food

supply and clean fresh water). Mages might be able to fix that, or at least help the process. Consider that terraforming *potentially* takes between ten and a hundred years to make a moon or planet habitable by human beings. (Now, in your space opera, it might instead be something that can happen in the course of seven days if you want it—some super-fast “God Seed” that dramatically transforms the planet's surface.) Mages, though, can accelerate the process. In fact, a relatively small number of powerful sorcerers with capabilities across all the Arcanum could literally create their own world—spawn oxygen, accelerate (and even direct) evolution, create ecological diversity amongst plants, birth different biomes, and so on and so forth. That's scary powerful. Worse, what happens when that group of mages decide that they don't want to relinquish this place that they built? What if they decide that they are the planet's new keepers? And overlords?

- Mages are easily obsessed with the past and with anything that registers as “Atlantean.” So it is that many mages are deeply fascinated by the presence and origin of the Stygian Gates, all of which seem to be marked with Atlantean runes (both tiny and massive). What does it mean? Many have posited that the so-called Dread Doors were built by early oracles, perhaps indicated that Atlantis was never on Earth and was always out *here*... somewhere. Some further suggest that if the gates could be linked magically, they might create one *big* gate. And that gate would either lead mages to Atlantis... or lead Atlantis back to this reality.

- What about the Abyss? Sure, technically the Abyss is the yawning gulf between the Supernal and the Fallen, but outer space itself sure has an abyssal quality, does it not? Is there a magical sympathy between the void of space and the oblivion of the Abyss? Do Abyssal entities lurk out there in the deepest darkest channels and forgotten tableaux of space? What do mages think of what happens when they go through a Stygian Gate? Is Between Space even closer to the true Abyss? Do the deepest, maddest Abyssal gods lurk in that interstitial void?

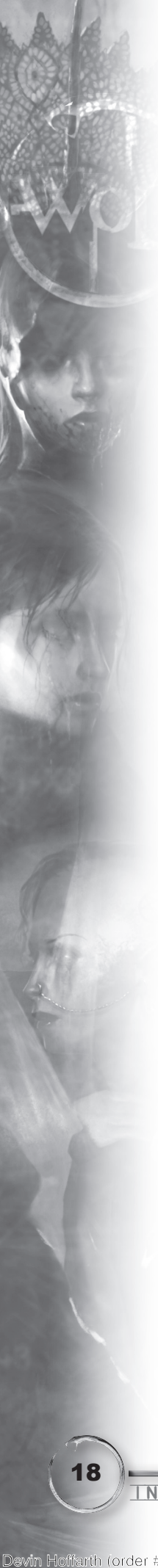
- And what about the mage orders? How do they fare in the space opera revamp?

**The Adamantine Arrow:** These mystic warrior-monks are advisers to the many empires of man. They advise them on matters of war and diplomacy, and further, they train the princes and soldiers in whatever martial way suits the students. And, when necessary, the Arrow mages step onto the fields of war and wage a campaign of battle magic against the enemies of their empire—even if that means bringing magic to bear against others in their order.

**The Free Council:** The universe is a swiftly-changing thing. How could it not be? If one mind is strong,







what about a billion? Ten billion? A hundred billion, across the stars? How wonderful if all those means were bent toward enlightenment, toward the Awakening of magic? But they're not. It's the same as it's always been: war, petty squabbles, entrenched beliefs, extremism. The Free Council wants to change all that. They don't like that the other mage orders contribute to the oppression of magic and enlightenment ("keeping it all for themselves," the old Council heads say). And so, they represent magical anarchists out on the galactic fringes, freeing people's minds (even if the people don't want them freed).

**Guardians of the Veil:** If the Free Council consists of magical anarchists, the Guardians comprise those mages who think magic should be kept secret, practiced only by an elite few. Frankly, they're trying to put the snakes back in the can because magic is already out there, no longer secret. That doesn't stop them from trying, though—think of them as a well-intentioned *secret police*, tracking down those exploiting magic and, well, *punishing them*.

**The Mysterium:** Those mages in the Mysterium are equal part "cosmic mystagogue" and "alien archaeologist." They believe that before mankind came out here to colonize the stars, the stars had other inhabitants, maybe as long as a million years ago. And, in fact, the Mysterium accepts that those previous "tenants" may have been the original Atlanteans. That means planet-hopping to find any artifacts or writings that lend credence to this theory and shine light on the original Atlantis. It also makes the Mysterium the self-proclaimed expert on the Stygian Gates. (And yes, if you're thinking, "Gosh, this puts them into serious competition or coordination with the Loyalists of Thule, the Bone Shadows and maybe even the Mekhet," you wouldn't be wrong.)

**The Silver Ladder:** The Free Council likes to claim that the universe is "home to magic," but that's bullshit. The Silver Ladder knows the truth: *mages* are the ones who keep the magic, and that puts mages in a particularly powerful position. And they're happy to ascend to their predestined rank as Rulers of Everything They See, thank you very much. Mages of the Silver Ladder aren't content to serve as diplomats or strategists to the various empires. No, they'd rather be the emperors. They deserve to rule, and they can claim that rule easy—as a result, more than one empire, civilization, army or mega-corp has a Silver Ladder sorcerer at its head.

## New Toy:

### Attuned Weapon (Merit: • to •••••)

**Effect:** Whether true or not, mages are considered to be mannered and elegant—champions of old ways and ancient methods. (The Free Council balk at this

suggestion, but it doesn't make it any less assumed.) As such, many mages build their own Attuned Weapons: melee-style hand-held weapons that reflect their magic and speak to a time before photon repeaters and laser-lancers.

Choose a melee weapon that best suits the character's persona (sword, knife, axe, spear, staff, etc.). The character must have built this weapon herself (cut the staff from an alien tree, hammered the meteor-forged sword, chipping away volcanic moonstone to form a glass-sharp knife).

The weapon must be attuned to *one* of the mage's Ruling Arcana (determined by Path, see p. 68, **Mage: The Awakening**).

The weapon gains Damage (as attack bonus) equal to the dots purchased in the Merit. Damage on these is considered lethal regardless of the weapon (e.g., staves do bashing normally, but an Attuned Staff does lethal) unless a special effect below notes otherwise.

Further, the weapon also gains a *special ability* based on the Ruling Arcanum:

**Death:** This weapon can be used to attack ghosts (manifest or otherwise) directly. In addition, it gains +1 dice against vampire targets.

**Fate:** On a successful attack, roll a single die. If that die comes up a 10, then double the damage done. If that die comes up a 1, then the attack was successful, but only does bashing damage. If it comes up 2-9, no effect takes place beyond normal attack and damage resolution.

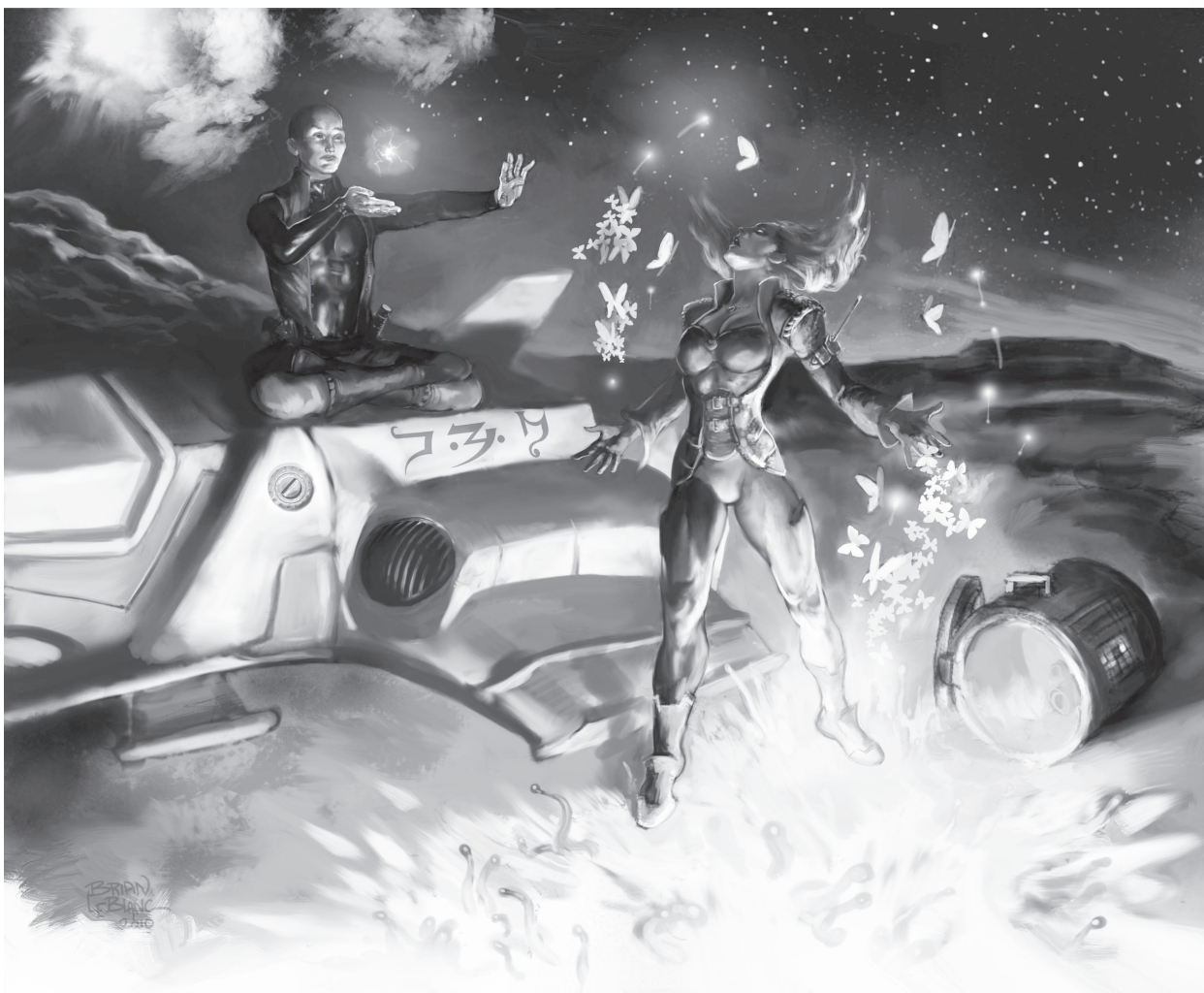
**Forces:** The mage can, once per scene, turn the weapon into the embodiment of a particular "force" (fire, lightning, light, etc.)—this lasts for a number of turns equal to the character's Gnosis score, and each turn it does one bashing damage to the character while it remains in her grip (this cannot be prevented with protective gloves or other gear). However, during this time the weapon does aggravated damage to targets.

**Life:** Once per game session, the mage can use this weapon in a way opposite of its intent: to heal instead of damage. Make an attack as normal, and successes gained instead *heal* that number of points of lethal (or bashing) damage. The weapon does not heal aggravated damage.

**Matter:** The weapon ignores Durability as a factor when making attacks on any material and inorganic object. In addition, it gains +1 dice against Promethean targets.

**Mind:** If the weapon makes a successful attack on a sentient creature and does at least five points of lethal damage, then the weapon *also* robs the victim of one Willpower point and the point is transferred to the mage.

**Prime:** If the weapon makes a successful attack on a creature possessing Essence or Mana and does at least



three points of lethal damage, then the weapon *also* robs the victim of one Essence or Mana point and the point is transferred to the mage (Essence is transferred as Mana). In addition, it gains +1 dice against Awakened targets.

**Spirit:** This weapon can be used to attack spirits (manifest or otherwise) directly. In addition, it gains +1 dice against werewolf targets.

**Space:** If the mage makes a successful attack on the target *and* draws blood, the mage may scry into the weapon at any point over the subsequent 24 hour period and see the victim and her location (though the only sense experienced is sight).

**Time:** The mage always goes first in Initiative. In addition, it gains +1 dice against changeling targets.

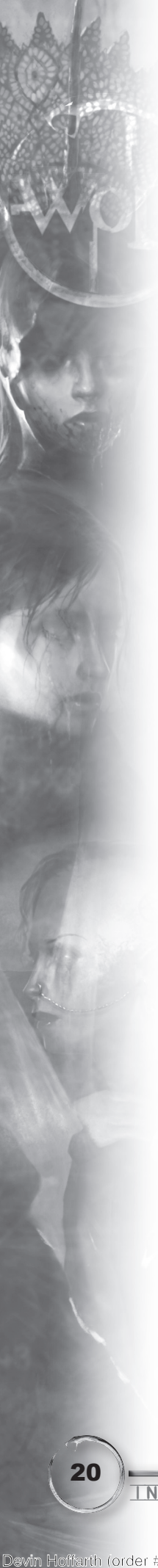
## Changelings

### System Shifts

- For the most part, the rules that govern changelings on Earth don't need to change much in terms of putting the Lost into the space opera shard. However,

the Hedge merits serious consideration. The Hedge can be opened as normal by any changeling going through a portal or reflective surface—and yes, that means a supply closet on board a frigate, through a reflective surface on a solar array, or in the trapdoor at the bottom of a lunar ore harvester. The question becomes: where does the changeling go when she enters? The Hedge, yes, but what and where is the Hedge? If we reimagine the Hedge as something that is less linear (i.e. walking down a Hedge trod) and far more three-dimensional (a spheroid maze where changelings can travel up, down, or sideways through the labyrinth), we can then imagine that changelings in turn can take more than just themselves in: they can take whole spacecraft inside to navigate the tangle. ( This leads to images of faceless hobgoblins leaping onto the wings of the ship, chewing through cables, throwing themselves bodily into the engines.) This means that changelings can use the Hedge to bypass Stygian Gates if they so desire: either using the gates or even docking bay doors as pathways into the Hedge. To determine how long the journey takes in the Hedge, assume that the Navigation system on p.





219 of **Changeling: The Lost** still applies, except now the journey takes (in hours) 20 minus the Wyrd rating rather than 10 minus Wyrd.

- It might seem that Contracts require special consideration, but for the most part, they should work as designed—it's just that, some changelings are going to be more comfortable on a planet's surface rather than floating out in the middle of space since the Contracts of the Lost are so often attuned to natural features (elements, animals, sunlight). That's not to say, however, that a changeling couldn't have a dog or two on board a spacecraft, or that it's not valuable to be able to control fire and temperature and grow plants on board a ship—in fact, in this way, changelings can become incredibly useful on a long spacefaring journey. One question is: do Contracts of Fang and Talon work if geared toward alien fauna (or Contracts of Spring on xenomorphic flora)? Well, why not? Even if they're not terrestrial, why put in place unnecessary limits? You might also want to expand the Elemental Contracts to, say, Ether—or even the empty Void of space.

## Story Considerations

- A changeling's imprisonment by the True Fae can be a whole different experience, now: what if the Hedge is a ring of thorns surrounding an Arcadia planet, a ring navigable by spacecraft? What if, when humans are stolen away, they are dragged through rifts in time and space (or Stygian Gates) and taken to this Arcadian homeworld? Are the True Fae then not only figuratively alien, but truly extraterrestrial? Could a character's story involve a measure of planetary romance by falling in forbidden love with her Keeper—a relationship denied by the gulf of space after the character is unwittingly freed? Hell, consider rethinking the entire “majority oppression, minority rebellion” aspect of a lot of space opera: what if the True Fae are the oppressors, and the changelings represent an active rebellion looking to rout and destroy their oneiric overlords (which further complicates that “planetary romance” angle noted above, giving it a *Romeo & Juliet* in-wartime feel).

- Freeholds, the fundamental unit of larger Lost society, can get a pretty serious space opera makeover: a rebel lunar outpost, a fabricated village found on a comet and held fast by a Contract with the comet itself, an old cargo freighter thieved from its pilots. Freeholds might communicate with one another via a Subspace Frequency, a parsec-traversing signal (delayed by minutes or hours depending on how far apart the freeholds happen to be) that allows changelings to warn one another about the True Fae or coordinate attacks on the Keepers or on enemy Courts.

- Goblin Markets, too, are a new consideration. Do they only exist in whatever version of the Hedge

you prefer (a Hedge planet, a ring of thorns surrounding the Arcadian homeworld, or the Hedge as it stands in **Changeling: The Lost**)? Could you envision a solar flotilla out at the edges of space or found somewhere in Between Space?

- Finally, consider revamping the nature of the Courts. The Courts as they stand are seasonal, and space? Space has no seasons. On the one hand, you're obviously free to keep the Courts as seasonal, as some planets will either still *have* seasons or will have *one persistent* season. Example: a tropical jungle moon might make a great Summer Court kingdom, whereas a Hoth-like Arctic rock would make an ideal place for the gloomy palaces of the Winter Court. However, don't hesitate to get all *space opera* on its ass, either: what about Courts based off of celestial objects? The Court of the Comet, the Aurora Court, the Court of the Dead Star, the Court of the Void. This can work with the various noble entitlements, too: Knights of the Supernova, the Bishops of Occultation, the Royal Guardians of the Ring of Dust.

- And what of the seasonal Courts (if you're keeping them), cast in the dim light of **The Infinite Macabre**:

**The Spring Court:** Think of them as hedonistic galaxy-crossing Johnny Appleseeds—tromping across the planets and moons, looking for places to plant their seeds both figuratively and literally. They're terraforming freaks, drug-addled tricksters, and sex-addict space hipsters. They don't care what you want. They care about what *they* want, and that's it.

**The Summer Court:** The Summer Court cares little about the ways of man—they are warriors and soldiers, yes, but they don't involve themselves in mortal disputes or territorial pissing matches. Their armies march for the Lost, and the Lost alone. As such, the Summer Court carves out its own domains across the galaxy—forest moons, sun-baked space stations, distant islands on distant planets—to call their own. They offer protection to any who join with them: joining merely means a stint in the Summer Court's military service.

**The Autumn Court:** The universe knows no fear, it seems—it continues to expand ever-outward, mankind moving with the aggressiveness of an untreated disease. It's as if man is ignorant to the dangers—not just the dangers the stars offer, such as solar flares or supernovas, but the monsters that lurk out there in the velvet blackness. What of the True Fae and their homeworld, a planet that never shows up on any star-charts or surveys, a planet yet with its own kind of mad gravity—gravity that reaches out with invisible hands to clutch at those whom the Fae want to bring to heel. The Autumn Court serves to remind the universe that monsters exist by being monsters themselves: they are but a taste of the terror, a *vaccine* for mankind's unchecked spread. That is not to say they form an oppressive empire: no, even the

worst civilizations have a lot to fear from the Autumn Court. They are *equal opportunity* nightmares.

**The Winter Court:** The Winter Court, like their Autumnal counterparts, recognizes that the universe is filled to the brim with horrors—but their response is entirely different. Instead of acting as bellwether and warning system, the Winter Court escapes—and this universe is home to many hidden, forbidden and forgotten places. The Winter Courtiers flee to the farthest corners and there play out their mad games and courtly intrigue, becoming insular and inbred (metaphorically and literally) until some clash or crisis kicks over the log and drags them back out into the light. For while many places remain hidden in the universe, all of them can still be found by the most resolute True Fae (or humans, or Autumn Court, or whomever).

## New Toy:

### Doll's Heart Driveshaft (Token: •••••)

Peel back the metal door encasing the engine of a changeling crew's starship, and what might you find? You might find a creepy marionette or plastic doll wired up to the drive, that's what. And what does this doll *do*, exactly? Well, it takes the spaceship and literally, in the span of an instant, drops it out of space and into the Hedge—where it promptly becomes a Hollow. (The dots in the Spaceship Merit must be respent as Hollow dots while the ship remains in that form.)

**Action:** Instant

**Mien:** The doll wired to the heart of the ship is alive: squirming, writhing, babbling, screaming.

**Drawback:** First, the ship—once it becomes a Hollow—cannot re-engage and emerge as a ship again for a full 24 hour period. And when it does, it doesn't teleport anywhere; it must literally fly free of the Hedge through some gateway or door big enough to accommodate a ship. Second, the shift from "outer space" to "Hedge" is one that sends up all manner of signals—signals that may summon strange hobgoblins, demented changelings or mad Keepers.

**Catch:** The changeling must have burned her hand (for one or more lethal damage) somewhere on the ship during the previous eight hours.

## Prometheans

### System Shifts

- Prometheans have a sympathy with Between Space. While in the Dismal Void, the Promethean gains +3 dice to resist Torment, and can reduce the cost of activating any Bestowment by one point of Pyros (minimum of zero cost).

- You might consider upping the milestone Vitriol awards for Promethean characters walking the Pilgrimage: after all, tracking one's "humanness" is all the more difficult across the deep channels of space (where humans sometimes fear to tread). Adjustment needn't be dramatic: minor milestones are 1-5 Vitriol, major 5-10, superlative 10-15.

## Story Considerations

- Consider the possibility that the alchemy once put forth by various Demiurges to bring life to dead flesh (i.e. creating a Promethean) is actually "alien alchemy," as in, the inspiration for such creation on Earth came from the alien astronauts that once landed in Ancient Egypt. This also means that *new* methods of such extraterrestrial alchemy could lurk out there for those mortals or Prometheans who are intrepid enough to find them.

- File this under "Idea That Totally Won't Go Horribly Awry," but what would happen if the Prometheans actually had their own moon or planet to call their own? (Hell, call it Prometheus—apropos given how often the names of planets are cast after mythic figures.) No humans around, so no Disquiet. Branded throngs, ahoy. What could possibly go wrong? (What's that? You say it's a planet full of rage-filled monsters who long to be human?) Is it too abstract to suggest that so many Prometheans could somehow imbue the moon or planet itself with a kind of sentience and life? A "reanimated" Promethean planet broadcasting its mad signal into space? A signal that draws Disquiet from hundreds of parsecs away and captures passing ships in a tractor beam of pure disdain and simmering suspicions?

- Clones, a relative rarity in the World of Darkness, could be a lot more common in **The Infinite Macabre**. Clones are capable of manning spacecraft or acting as redundant failsafes—or, as we've seen already, they might be used to populate a moon-based mining operation or even act as a whole army of soldiers for an oppressive galactic regime. This could thrust clones into the light as either a major enemy for Promethean characters or it could put them front and center as playable characters.

- If you want a little *survival horror* mixed in with your *space opera*, look no further than the Centimani or Pandorans. Play a game like **Dead Space** and tell me that the pink, gibbering mutants in that game couldn't *easily* be something ripped out of the pages of **Promethean: The Created**.

### New Toy: Capacitor (New Electrification Transmutation; •••••)

The Created with this Transmutation can control and sense all aspects of a spaceship from within merely by touching some part of it.



**Cost:** 2 Pyros  
**Dice Pool:** None  
**Action:** Instant

Activating the Transmutation requires the Promethean to touch the spacecraft (from within or outside). The spacecraft gains power if it had none before. Further, the Promethean can pilot the ship, make attacks or even make repairs (see the Spaceship Merit, p. 7 of this product) without being near to the controls of those systems. Finally, the Promethean can take a turn and *sense* the goings-on within the ship, attaining all five senses as if the character is the craft. (This requires no roll.)

## Sin-Eaters

### System Shifts

- Gaining plasm might be a *little* bit harder in **The Infinite Macabre** given a Sin-Eater's propensity to spend time in space in transit from world to world, so consider

using Dead Spots: out there in the deep nowhere are spaces that are not only physical voids but *spiritual* voids, too. These are places where stars burned out or where ships died in the emptiness and the crew withered away to nothing. These places are home to ghosts both human and alien, and wise Sin-Eaters can use these out-in-the-void "haunts" to collect plasm from these low places.

- **The Infinite Macabre** demands a potential rewiring of the Underworld as it's written in **Geist: The Sin-Eaters** (Appendix starting on p. 258). First, assume the Underworld is no longer entirely autochthonic—meaning, it has a surface, and above it, a sky ("The Allochthonous Skies"). And above that sky is the wide open nothing of Between Space (aka the Dismal Void). Second, assume that every physical body that is or has been home to human beings has a representation in Between Space: moons, space stations, planets, asteroid outposts, etc. Third, if it has a representation in Between Space, it also has *its own Underworld*. Just as the Underworld on Earth represents the shades of that place, so does every netherworld of every planet, moon



and stardock. (And it bears considering exactly what the Underworld of these places look like: the Underworld of a stardock might very well look like the claustrophobic halls of any **Doom** video game, where the netherworlds of other planets would represent the dead cultures of those civilizations that dwelled there.) Finally, it should be possible for a character to leave one Underworld by going “deep enough” (meaning, into the Lower Mysteries) and emerging into another Underworld—which means, yes, a character could enter the Underworld on Earth and reemerge onto, say, the planet Corvus (through its Underworld) some 10,000 light years away without ever venturing into outer space. Sin-Eaters can use Avernian Gates (per normal) on any body or structure that has its own Underworld.

## Story Considerations

- The geists themselves should be thought of in those “space operatic” terms while still retaining that archetypal sensibility: the Suffocated Cosmonaut, the Dead Knight of the Black Comet, the Impaled Pilot, the Lunar Miner.

- What to do about ghosts? Consider that the universe is probably *full of them*. In space opera, massive battles unlike any seen on Earth can unfold. Sometimes, entire civilizations and planets are wiped out with single-stroke mega-weapons (think the way the Death Star obliterates Alderaan—in fact, just as the Force hears all those “voices” crying out, so too might Sin-Eaters feel such a deathly disturbance across space). You have plenty of excuse to populate the stars and planets and dead dreadnaughts with as many ghosts as you so choose. In fact, being so far “out there” probably makes it a lot easier for specters to manifest and affect human beings: faces at the portholes, engines dying suddenly, wraiths traveling alongside the ship like pale worms instead of porpoises. *However*, if you feel like you want to open up the Sin-Eater purview a little, feel free to add “spirits” to their resume, alongside “ghosts.” It isn’t entirely without sense given that geists are so archetypal that they aren’t ghosts so much as the *spirits of ghosts*. Why not assume that Sin-Eaters straddle two worlds, making them an easy ally for the Forsaken?

## New Toy: The Meteor Mask (Deathmask)

Deathmask, the Forgotten (Death by Chance)

**Key:** Industrial

**Skill:** Drive (Pilot)

This mask—a porous mask forged of volcanic rock, peppered with glittering gems where the eyes and teeth should be—is the face of the Last Colonist, a geist whose entire moon colony was destroyed by a rogue asteroid.

The Last Colonist did not die with the others, as he was underground in the mines at the time. When he emerged, he found that his family and friends were all gone. He was trapped, because the meteor had also destroyed any chance of getting off the colony, and over time he perished. When he was left as a lingering ghost, he absorbed all the roaming specters of those who had died, and together as one they wandered the rock, gathering glittering gems and stones with compulsive fervor.

When the Sin-Eater dons this mask, the machines around him run silently and effectively—no machine within 50 yards will break completely (unless destroyed actively by the changeling).

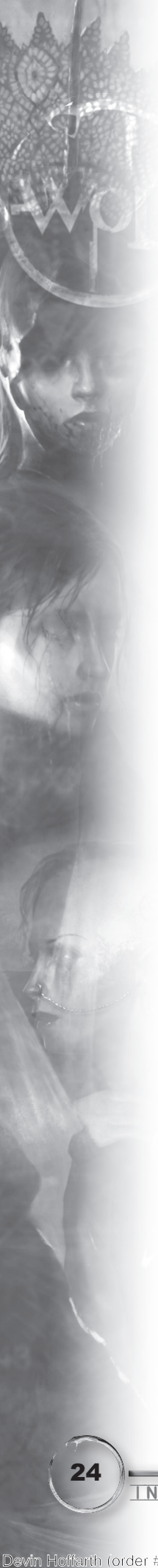
## Possessed Starships

If cars and airplanes have spirits, you can be damn sure that starships do, too. They aren’t content to sit and wait in dry-dock. They long to be out there. It’s what they are, what they do. Regular maintenance keeps them docile and content, while a crew that develops an affection for their ship may find that sometimes the craft... helps them out. The engines may kick in just at the right moment, or a short-circuit flickers brightly to illuminate something terrible in the dark cargo hold. Crews (or krewes, if you’re playing with Sin-Eater characters) treating such a vessel with a lack of respect may find increased injury rates or that their navigation system is always pointing them just off course.

In game terms, benign spirits get to add their Power score to any Skill checks made using ship systems, while malevolent entities apply Power as a penalty to Skill checks. Of course, really pissed-off spirits can do a lot worse. Any spirit that unpleasant might just switch off gravity and life support and flush the flesh contagion out into space. Exorcising a starship computer may not be the ship’s chaplain’s normal duty, but it’s perhaps the best time to have a priest on board.

Other things can take control of ships, too. Ghosts of dead crewmates or living individuals with particularly powerful supernatural abilities can cause hair-raising horror in space. It only takes a few adjusted systems to turn a starship into a coffin—if you’re in the piracy game, this can make it easy to acquire new vessels.





# The Other: Playing an Alien in the World of Darkness

Your flesh shimmers. It's iridescent, like the mirrored flesh of a lizard. Your hands? Each finger tapers to a whipping tendril (like the tongue of a hummingbird). Your eyes don't exist; you "see" by cobbling together an unholy host of stimuli—sound, light, heat, smells. And that's a good thing, too, because you can hear blood pulsing through human hearts. You can smell the sweat of their fear. Feel the warmth of flesh even at 50 yards. It makes you hungry. You want to crack open that poor dumb meatbag and savor the juices. But you don't. Not now. That would be rude. And your people are very polite. At least, they are until nobody's looking...

## From Darkest Space, You Appear

You have always played The Other.

As a vampire, you are held fast to the darkness, and kept to the fringes by your cold hands and the hot blood in your mouth.

As a mage, you know things others do not, can perform tricks that could crumple someone's mind like a soda can under a heavy boot.

As a werewolf, you are a creature straddling worlds, equal parts spirit, animal, and man.

That's not even talking about Sin-Eaters, hunters, Prometheans or fae creatures.

You haven't seen anything yet.

This portion of **The Infinite Macabre** is devoted toward letting you roleplay an alien being. Technically, this is meant to be kept with the setting and themes of **The Infinite Macabre**—*space opera* as a concept is comfortable with the pulpier elements and motifs that best suit an alien character. That said, if you are inclined to take characters built from this section and put them in your modern-era **World of Darkness** game, go for it. The only person who can stop you is the Storyteller. (Alternately, the rules in here could easily be used to create **Nightbreed**-style monster types, too, provided you extract out any of the space opera trappings.)

To be clear, most of this section is geared toward the rules and character creation necessary to play an alien

creature in **The Infinite Macabre**. We're getting down and dirty: here are the rules and as many examples as we can cram into the gaps. Everything else is up to you.

## Step One: Choose Concept

Determining the direction you'll take in creating an alien character is almost as difficult as being asked, "What do you want to do when you grow up?" The answers are, of course, limitless—but hopefully with a little thought you'll be able to zero in on the type of alien you might want to play within the boundaries of **The Infinite Macabre**. Haughty power-mad diplomat? Flesh-hungry moon-born berserker? Disgruntled robot? Emotionless jellyfish-like bladder of toxic gas and telepathic communication? You have no end to the choices you may make.

## Step Two: Select Attributes

Choose Attributes in much the same way you would choose them for a starting human character.

## Step Three: Select Skills

Same with Skills: while it's possible that aliens might not technically possess the same Skill sets as human beings, in the mode of **The Infinite Macabre** space opera, aliens still have humanoid qualities. An alien can hack a computer, canvass a party, or stab you with a pointy implement.

## Step Four: Select Skill Specialties

Choose three Skill Specialties for any Skills your alien character possesses.

## Step Five: Add Alien Template

The alien template is a simple one: it is composed of *Qualities*, which are the elements that define your alien species. It is up to you whether or not these *Qualities* are meant to be singular to your alien character or representative of his entire alien species.

As with Skills and Attributes, you must prioritize the categories for your alien character's *Qualities*. Except here, you gain an additional category: Physical, Mental, Social, and *Cultural*.

You do not need to put these in the same order that you applied to either Skills or Attributes.

In each category, depending on the order you give it, you gain a number of dots to spend across various alien Qualities apropos to that category.

Primary earns you five dots.

Secondary earns you three dots.

Tertiary earns you two dots.

Quaternary earns you one dot.

Note that purchasing *Imperfections* (below) can earn you up to an additional five dots to spend in Qualities, and these dots are not bound to any one category.

## Your Awesomeness Trumps Our Awesomeness

True fact: anything you come up with is probably going to be cooler than anything we come up with, especially in how well it flies at your game table. The Qualities found in this chapter do not need to be the end-all be-all list; they are not meant to be exhaustive. Make up your own. Note that dot costs are higher when the Quality offers a larger benefit. You should work with the Storyteller and the other players not only to come up with interesting abilities, but also to determine the appropriate dot levels.

## Physical Qualities

### Bodiless (•••••)

The character has no body. How you interpret that is up to you: is he a cloud of vapor? A purely telepathic entity? A spirit of sorts, kept only to the Shadow of the galaxy? Does his gaseous form lie trapped in some kind of tank? However you determine it, the character has no body to speak of and thus is given over to no Physical existence.

What does this mean? First, it means no Physical Attributes or Skills. Cross them off the sheet. It also means: no Physical advantages. The character has no Size. It has a Speed equal to Resolve + Composure. Initiative is equal to Intelligence + Wits. This may not seem like a Quality (meaning, a benefit) until you recognize that the character is virtually indestructible: while it may make no Physical attacks, it also suffers no Physical attacks. Swing a vibrating blade through the character and—what? Nothing. No damage done.

The character has no Health score and instead tracks damage through Willpower. Choose one weakness from this list (or make up your own with Storyteller approval):

fire, cold, radiation, steam, or electricity. This is the only source of pain the character may suffer: it does damage, but instead of causing wounds, it subtracts Willpower. If the character is reduced to zero Willpower, then the character suffers a -5 penalty on all rolls until at least one point of Willpower can be restored.

### Chameleon (••••)

The character's flesh is capable of shifting colors and manifesting iridescence: as such, the skin can blend in with most backgrounds provided the character can wait for a single turn to manifest the skin-shift. The simpler the background, the more effective the camouflage happens to be: if the background is uncomplicated (a forest, a brick wall, a rock face) then any attempts to actively search for the character suffer a -5 penalty. If the background features unusual complexities (a poster on the wall, other characters, bundles of wires or other manmade intricacies) then that penalty drops to -3. Further, the character may not move during this time: the skin does not change to keep up. Finally, if the character is wearing clothes or objects then the penalty to find the character drops by one more (to -4 or -2, respectively).

Other characters must be actively hunting for the character in order to see the chameleon: passive witnesses will fail to see anything strange at all regardless of the circumstances. Finally, darkness helps the chameleon skin adapt: darkness keeps the penalty at -5 regardless of the background complexity and whether or not the character is wearing clothes.

### Covered in Cilia (••)

The character's flesh is covered in small (or large, if you're so inclined) cilia—or, to be more descriptive, “whipping tendrils.” The character may choose a +1 bonus at the time of character creation to either Initiative, Defense, or Speed due to the tiny energy generated by the constant movement of her cilia.

### Does Not Breathe (••)

Oxygen? Who needs oxygen? Certainly not you. You gain life-giving sustenance from other sources: perhaps you are driven merely by the kinetic energy of your bodily processes. Whatever the case, you can walk on the exterior of a ship, you can wander underwater for hours on end, or you can waltz into a cloud of toxic gas because you do not breathe.

### Gazing Across the Spectrum (••••)

The character's vision offers him a myriad of perception tweaks via gazing across multiple spectrums. He is able to gain visual input across infrared, ultraviolet, and thermal sight, compositing it with his normal mode of vision. This offers him a +3 on all Perception-based rolls.



### Human-Seeming (•)

Perhaps the character is a synthetic humanoid or, rather, just a really weird distant offshoot of humankind (with some frighteningly close genetic parity to humanity, perhaps within one percent). Either way, the character can pass as human more easily. Any rolls made to pretend to be human gain a +3 bonus. Genetic testing will reveal the truth.

### Mucusflesh (•)

The alien flesh exudes a greasy, sticky, or mucus-like discharge at all times. It is therefore very difficult to grapple the character: any grapple attempts against this alien character suffer a -5 penalty.

### Natural Armor (• to •••••)

Hard reptilian scale? Chitinous exoskeleton, like that of a tremendous mantis or beetle? Dense-woven nano-fiber made to replace one's existing skin? Whatever the case, the character's skin is hard enough to provide the benefits of armor. The character gains one dot of armor (both against bashing and lethal sources) per dot purchased in this Physical Quality.

### Vicious Body Parts (• to •••••)

The character has a body part which does lethal damage equal to one die per dot purchased. Could be that this is some kind of violent mouthpart (a piercing proboscis), ichorous claws, or razor-sharp serrated fins along one's forearm.

## Mental Qualities

### Empath (•)

The character is able to, by expending a Willpower point, gaze upon the swirling aura of another character (alien or human), and determine the target's current dominant emotional state. The character may receive a single aura color or a hypnotic mix of colors (indicating greater emotional complexity). Consult the sidebar on this page to see a sample of aura colors and their accordant emotional states. Note that aliens that possess no emotions fail to register any kind of aura signifier. If the character wishes to view the aura of a different target, an additional Willpower point is required per aura examined.

### Non-Linear Thought Patterns (•••)

Human beings tend to think logically and linearly: man is a problem solver that moves from Point A to Point B and so on. Alien minds and brains needn't be so forthright and may solve problems and puzzles more comprehensively, or even backwards. The character gains the 8-Again quality on the following Skills: Academics, Computer, Investigation, Occult, and Science.

## Aura Signifiers

Condition	Color
Afraid	Orange
Aggressive	Purple
Angry	Bright Red
Bitter	Brown
Calm	Light Blue
Compassionate	Pink
Conservative	Lavender
Depressed	Gray
Desirous/Lustful	Deep Red
Distrustful	Light Green
Envious	Dark Green
Excited	Violet
Generous	Rose
Happy	Vermilion
Hateful	Black
Idealistic	Yellow
Innocent	White
Lovestruck	Bright Blue
Obsessed	Bright Green
Sad	Silver
Spiritual	Gold
Suspicious	Dark Blue
Confused	Mottled, shifting colors
Daydreaming	Sharp, flickering colors
Supernaturally Controlled	Weak, muted aura
Psychotic	Hypnotic, swirling colors
Supernatural Being	A vague, indescribable "wrongness" to the aura

Further, the Unskilled penalty is reduced from -3 dice to -1 die.

### Skill Focus (• to •••••)

The species focuses a great deal of mental energy on a single Skill. This Skill needn't be bound to the Mental

category (rather, the Mental nature of this Quality is born of the intense mental discipline necessary to train such a Skill so completely). For each dot purchased in this Quality, you may choose another Skill Specialty for the chosen Skill at the time of character creation. This Quality may not be taken twice.

### **Tech Brain (• to •••••)**

Choose either the Computer Skill or the Crafts Skill. The character gains a series of bonus dice at the beginning of each game session equal to twice the dots purchased in this Quality. The character may expend these dice over the course of the game session on the Skill for which they were chosen. She can, if she possesses them, add more than five dice to a single roll. The character may be a robot, possess hard-wired synapses, or may just be an alien with a keen technical mind.

### **Telepathic (•• or •••••)**

Vocalized speech is not absolutely necessary for every alien species: many are capable telepaths, able to communicate directly with the minds of others (two-dot) and read the surface thoughts of targets (four-dot).

The two-dot version offers the character a one-way avenue of communication: she can, with no roll, talk to another character's mind. She cannot, however, hear their communication that comes back—again, it's a one-way street. To gain two-way communication, the character must upgrade to the four-dot version. This Quality allows the character both modes of telepathy.

She can hear the surface thoughts of others if they will it to be so. If they, however, are not actively willing their thoughts to be heard by the character, then such telepathy constitutes a kind of mental theft and requires a roll of Wits + Larceny (many have compared to, quite literally, picking a lock) versus the opponent's Resolve + Composure. If the alien character succeeds, she can hear any and all surface thoughts from the target for the remainder of the scene. She cannot, however, go deeper than surface; think of it like a radio. One can tune in only to active frequencies, but one cannot use tune in transmissions from the past.

### **Thought Into Action (••)**

The alien is an eminently fast thinker, and this translates into a fast actor. The character calculates Initiative differently than human beings: instead of Dexterity + Composure, the equation is now [Highest of Wits or Intelligence] + Composure.

## **Social Qualities**

### **Beast Whisperer (•• or •••)**

The character can implicitly understand the language of animals: a creature that barks, meows, caws,

or makes any vocal noise at all, is saying *something*. The alien can understand whatever that may be without any roll. It is in part a matter of inflection, but it's also an issue of body language. For an additional dot (•••), the character can carry this over to her dealings with humans and aliens who do not speak her tongue: she may make a Wits + Empathy roll in order to understand the *general meaning* of what another character is saying, even if she doesn't understand their exact tongue.

### **Lyrical Voice (•••)**

The alien's tongue and vocal chords (or vocal spiracles or spore-voice or whatever it is that allows the creature to speak) provides a beautiful, melodic sound. The cost to purchase dots in the Presence and Manipulation Attributes as well as the Expression, Persuasion, Socialize and Subterfuge Skills are all halved (round up).

### **Pheromones (• to •••••)**

The character's body exudes hard-to-detect pheromones that can affect the emotions of others. For each dot in this Quality the character may choose one overarching emotion (anger, love, hate, fear, compassion, lust, sadness, etc.) and, with a Presence + Persuasion roll (which is also granted a +3 bonus) affect all those around her (within a 10 feet radius) with that emotion. Characters may actively attempt to resist feeling this emotion with a Resolve + Empathy roll, but can *only* do so if they believe themselves actively manipulated. If they feel that the emotion is a natural response, they are not granted the option to resist until they gain some clue about the pheromonal manipulation.

### **Seductive (•• or •••••)**

Sex is a critical part of this alien's habits, a casual component that is as fundamental as breathing, sleeping, or eating. The two-dot version of this grants the character a bonus to all Seduction rolls by allowing her to add both Presence and Manipulation to the roll to seduce (Seduction as an action is described on p. 84 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**). The four-dot version allows the character to bear fruit from her seductiveness: if she successfully has sex with another character, she gains a measure of authority over that individual. She gains a +3 bonus on all Social rolls made to sway that character's actions or emotions. This bonus fades at a rate of one die per week but may be re-established with further sexual contact.

### **Soothe the Beast (•)**

No animal (or animalistic, non-sentient alien) will attack the character. It could be something physiological (a sweet-smelling sap exuded by the flesh) or something altogether ethereal (a calming aura). Either way, no animal will attack the character unless the character attacks first.





### Without Emotion (••)

The alien's physiology and brain chemistry does not allow for pesky "emotions" to get in the way of social interactions. As such, it's very difficult to affect the character in a social, emotional way. Social rolls against the character (such as an Intimidation roll to scare her or a Persuasion roll to appeal to her compassion) suffer a -3 penalty, and Empathy rolls suffer a -5 penalty if trying to read her current state of mind. Note, however, that some rolls may still work on logic: an Intimidation or Persuasion roll can be based on logic rather than emotion (appealing to, say, data or knowledge). The Storyteller can rule that such rolls do not suffer the penalty.

## Cultural Qualities

### Child of the Stars (••)

The character's culture was born amongst the stars: not on a planet but quite literally in space. They are a star-faring race whose civilization remains bound to the infinite emptiness, perhaps traveling in a massive fleet of starships, as a part of a stardock's culture, or possibly belonging to a cobbled together empire of floating space junk. Characters born of this culture find a deep sympathy with any kind of space-faring vehicle. Crafts rolls made on starcraft (or any tech related to starcraft) do not gain any bonuses directly—but the character gets, once per game session, the chance to re-roll any failed dice on those Crafts rolls. Further, the character may buy more such chances at a cost of one Willpower point per re-rolled failures. Note that this doesn't mean the character discards successes and re-rolls the entire dice pool. The character keeps successes and may re-roll those dice that rolled as failures.

### Competitive Species (••)

The character's culture thrives on Darwinian competition: survival of the fittest determines anything from breeding rights to royalty. As such, the character is a keen competitor, and gains a +3 bonus to any contested (non-reflexive) action.

### Diplomatic Species (•)

It'd be easy to dismiss these aliens as weak and acquiescing, what with their almost religious devotion to diplomacy and compromise, but some might wisely see that being the arbiter of such compromise actually grants one a small but not insignificant measure of power. This alien's culture gains power from solutions: anytime the character successfully negotiates a compromise of sorts (perhaps but not necessarily resulting from a contested Social roll), the alien gains a point of Willpower.

### Hive Mind (•••••)

The character's species or culture is built off of a hive mind—all members of the race are connected. This Quality confers a number of benefits. First, all characters within the same species may communicate telepathically if they choose to. Second, the character may spend a Willpower point to gain a Skill she does not normally possess from another of her species provided that the other character a) is within sight and b) possesses the Skill. (The character gains the Skill at the same number of dots as the target.) Finally, the character may share wounds with her species mates by touching them: she can give away a single point of damage (bashing or lethal) to another of her kind (provided the other accepts it; she may not force it upon them).

### Logical Species (••••)

The culture from which the character comes eschews religion and may even look down on art, literature, and other forms of non-logical expression. Logic and science are kings to the members of this culture or species, and this confers a specific benefit: upon character creation the character may take one additional Attribute dot in the Mental category and three additional Skill dots in the Mental Skill category.

### Pilgrim Culture (• to •••••)

The character's culture is driven by the journey, not by the destination. They may not even have a centrally located civilization and instead may be cast across the stars. For each dot purchased in this Quality the player may create a goal for the character that serves as a waypoint of sorts along the character's pilgrimage. Any time the character fulfills this goal, the character gains 10 experience points (and then removes one dot from this Quality until it goes to zero). Note that the goals should not be easy to accomplish ("I'd like to sing a song!") but should be monumental ("I'd like to visit the most distant planet in the universe and find out if life ever existed there"). However, the goals should not be impossible, either. The Storyteller should have input as to the character's goals and should approve or deny them as necessary.

### Warlike Species (•••••)

The alien's civilization is one steeped in the art of war: they are in a constant stage of violent agitation, either internally (civil war) or externally (against other alien species or empires). This Quality earns the alien a number of benefits. First, the alien may take a fourth Skill Specialty at character creation that must be applied to one of the following Skills: Athletics, Brawl, Firearms, Weaponry, or Intimidation. Second, the character may

choose one weapon at which she is proficient. Attacks made using this chosen weapon type (for example: photon blasters, rip-swords) gain no direct bonus but instead possess an amped-up bonus based on Willpower expenditure: instead of gaining +3 for a Willpower point spent, the attack roll gains +5 dice instead. The character may never change this association with the type of weapon chosen at character creation: her culture breeds it into her species at a very young age.

### War-torn (•• or ••••)

The character's civilization has been torn apart by war and strife. While this is not itself a Quality, the result of it certainly is: it makes the character part of a tougher, heartier breed. The two-dot version grants the character the 8-Again quality on any Survival rolls. The four-dot version includes that benefit and also grants the character an additional dot of Health.

## Choose Imperfections

Any imperfections you choose from the list below grant you an additional dot of Qualities that may be spent in any Quality category. As always, this list is not exhaustive and you should feel comfortable creating your own if this list doesn't have what you're looking for.

### Frail Body

The character's physical body is weak. Perhaps her bones are hollow or her flesh is translucent and easily torn. Some aliens are simply not physically robust, as evolution has taken them down a different path from humankind. As such, the character's Health score is figured only by that character's Size. Stamina does not figure into the equation.

### Spatial Discomfort

The character is comfortable either on the ground (planetside) or in the stars (out on a spacecraft or walking on a stardock). Maybe it's because that's where the alien was raised, or maybe because the character experienced some manner of trauma on the ground or in the stars. Choose *ground* or *stars*. If the character is comfortable on the ground, then whenever he walks among the stars he suffers a -3 penalty to all Mental rolls and a -1 penalty to all Social rolls. If the character is comfortable among the stars, then the reverse is true: the penalties are applicable when he walks on terrestrial ground.

### Small In Stature

The character is from a species that is smaller than most other creatures: Size 3 instead of the normal Size 5. This translates to a reduced Health track, but it also lowers the species factor in terms of determining Speed (species factor of 3 instead of 5).

## Strange Requirements

Sure, humans like air to breathe, water to drink, and a sandwich to eat. Aliens don't necessarily have the same simple requirements. That alien over there? He breathes nitrogen. The one next to him? Has to sleep every night in red Martian dirt or he wakes up restless and haunted by nightmares (gaining no Willpower upon waking). The shadowy, trembling thing in the corner? It's like a vampire, except, you know, *not dead*: it needs blood to live. This Imperfection will require a little "design" on the part of player and Storyteller—what happens if the requirement isn't met? Damage? Dice penalty? Reduced Willpower? Derangement? It shouldn't be so serious that the character cannot exist in the game without serious repercussions, but it shouldn't be a stress-free problem, either.

### Vulnerability

Choose a substance. This substance now hurts the Hell out of your character by doing aggravated damage. The substance should be something that isn't incredibly common (oxygen) but isn't so super-rare that it will fail to ever come into play (dust from a supernova star). Think of how werewolves are harmed by silver or how vampires are vulnerable to fire. Other options might include radiation, below-zero temperatures, electricity, iron, lead, water.

## Step Six: Choose Merits

Given that aliens in this game mode can be as "humanoid" as you so choose, feel free to purchase any Merits that make sense (provided the Storyteller agrees).

You have one exception: you may purchase Size with Merit dots. You can go up one point of Size by spending two Merit dots. (This allows for alien races that are not of humanoid stature.)

## Step Seven:

## Determine Advantages

Now it's time to determine the final Advantages for your alien character. The standard Advantages are calculated as normal unless otherwise noted by the Qualities purchased for your character.

It is up to the Storyteller to determine whether or not Virtues and Vices are apropos to character creation. Virtues and Vices are explicitly bound to human culture, and thus may only apply to human (or once-human) characters. It is reasonable to suggest, however, that aliens that come from rich cultures likely have traits that are virtually analogous to Virtue and Vice. A good metric is: if your alien character has Cultural Qualities at primary or



secondary, then applying Virtue or Vice is likely appropriate. If Cultural Qualities fall to tertiary or quaternary status at the time of creation, then it's likely that the character does not possess rigorous cultural norms.

### Willpower

Willpower remains as an exhaustible personal resource for both human and alien characters. An alien character still has that conviction and drive to perform tasks critical to her nature, and so all the rules for Willpower still apply (unless otherwise modified by the alien Qualities above).

### Morality

You have three options in terms of dealing with Morality.

First: scrap it. This is recommended, because the ethnical mores of an alien species are, perhaps obviously, totally *alien*. Do coyotes, jellyfish and falcons care about Morality? No. It's an explicitly human thing, so, ditch it.

Second: use it as written. If you're assuming that the alien creatures in **The Infinite Macabre** are humanoid, then why shouldn't they be beholden to Morality?

Third: build-your-own. If you have **Hunter: The Vigil**, then you can turn to the Appendix ("The Code", p. 325) for guidelines on modifying the pre-existing Morality Advantage in order to make it more alien and monstrous.

Alternately, feel free to check out **World of Darkness: Mirrors** for additional ways to fold, spindle and mutilate the Morality system.

## No, Seriously, Please Make Up Your Own Stuff

We cannot stress enough how much we want you to contribute your own ideas to this by coming up with your own Qualities and Imperfections for alien species.

You want a handful of starting points?

What about...

Aliens that spit acid? That bleed fuel? That can fly? That can gain sustenance from eating rocks and other inorganic material? That have tentacles, or multiple limbs, or really long legs for jumping? What if you get really weird: heads separate from bodies, doppelgangers, living computers, flocks of sentient insects, manifested shadows, organic starships, aliens no bigger than a human fist, or hyper-intelligent moon-spiders?

## Pre-Built Alien Races

### Grays

**Qualities:** Cultural (Diplomatic •, Logical ••••); Mental (Telepathic ••, Tech Brain •); Social (Lyrical Voice •••); Physical (Vicious Body Parts • -- needle-tipped fingers)

**Imperfection:** Small in Stature

The Grays are the classic "alien" in occult lore, just like the ones that kidnapped Betty and Barney Hill in the 1960s: they have small bodies, large heads, black almond-shaped eyes, and wrinkly gray flesh. They are, as a culture, fascinated by other species: they are obsessed with finding out what makes other creatures "tick," happy to probe or dissect whenever they can do so without contravening galactic law.

### Nordics

**Qualities:** Social (Lyrical Voice •••, Seductive ••); Mental (Non-Linear Thought Patterns •••); Cultural (Pilgrim Culture ••); Physical (Human-Seeming •)

Nobody knows exactly where the Nordics come from, and frankly, they don't understand it, either. They only know that they are born, naked but as fully-formed adults, out amongst the stars. They literally just *appear*, stepping out of stardock closets or waking up in the cargo holds of cruising starliners. They're fairly strange, as they look alarmingly human, and in fact earn their name from their pale skin, tall builds and blond hair. They seem hell-bent on traveling the universe (they have been seen on Earth for thousands of years) and learn as much as they can, driven as they are by this almost obsessive pilgrimage, a pilgrimage that they seem unable to put in too many words. They adore human beings and seem to enjoy sex with them, too. Procreation with them is, thankfully, not possible. Their ultimate origins and purpose remain mysterious even to them.

### Reptoids

**Qualities:** Physical (Vicious Body Parts ••: Talons; Chameleon ••; Natural Armor •: Scaled Flesh); Cultural (Warlike Species ••••); Social (Beast Whisperer ••); Mental (Skill Focus •: Intimidation)

**Imperfection:** Vulnerability (Ice)

Nobody really *likes* the Reptoids—these brutish reptilian thugs don't make friends easily because they just don't care. They enjoy violence. They enjoy pain. It's how their culture survives and thrives. But just because nobody likes them doesn't mean they're not wanted. Reptoids serve as powerful berserker warriors, body guards, mercenaries and assassins.