

HUNTER

THE VIGIL

SECOND EDITION

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Compact & Conspiracy Preview #1



Long Night & Ascending Ones

The Long Night

The Tribulation Militia

Quote: *“The End Times are upon us, and we must stand against the darkness.”*

The signs of an impending apocalypse are clear. Markets crash, entire governments fall, and horrors gather in the shadows waiting to strike. The world isn't just going to end soon — for members of the Long Night, the slide into decay has already begun. Some cling to a shred of belief that, one day, God will pluck His true believers and carry them to heaven. A few acknowledge the Rapture may have already happened. Most hunters, however, don't have the luxury of hope because they're too busy fighting the oldest battle between doing what is right and what is necessary. This is the Tribulation. This is the war, and prayers aren't enough. Good Christians can't rely on a promise they might be saved; they must save themselves from the forces of darkness that have come to prey on us all.

The roots of the Long Night are tied to American survivalist movements that gained traction in the mid-1970s. Members cannot pinpoint any one specific founder and take issue with anyone pointing out similarities to any other group. Its past is murkier than other compacts, for its former members have included Branch-Davidian-style, gun-worshipping cults and anti-government doomsday preppers that have fought alongside ultra-conservative “family values” campaigners, affluent Southern fundamentalists, and middle-class Midwestern evangelicals.

Now, members of the Long Night have spread beyond the southern United States. They tend to cluster around notable preachers in states like California and Texas, but may be found in Northern Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, and England. What they share is a belief in God and the grim philosophy that Satan is winning — and it will take more than guns and their tight-knit communities to drive the devil back to hell.

Hunters in the Long Night do not share one nationality, one belief in God, or one view of the Code. What they do have in common, however, is the realization that mortals are living in desperate times. The Long Night knows there are more monsters than ever before, because they can no longer count the losses they've experienced. Some monsters have dared to wear the skin of their members and profess to uphold God's will while punishing “those wicked liberals.” This tactic worked right up until some hunters started realizing they'd devoted their energy to fighting other people and were forgetting how to battle the true monsters.

Many Long Night members agree their faith is being examined through the lens of the Code. After all, the Vigil isn't about helping “some” people, it's about saving human lives — even if they don't agree with or like them. To set aside their hubris, the compact has an open-door policy; all hunters are welcome, even if they don't necessarily ascribe to conservative ideals, provided they share Christian beliefs and the fear a biblical apocalypse is nigh.

When hunting, the Long Night views the war against the supernatural as their God-given duty. Though some members are convinced the Tribulation must happen before humanity can spiritually evolve, they fear the costs of the war more than they'd care to admit. To end the current crisis, members are given the support and encouragement to step up and fight. Some turn to their churches, to take comfort in sermons that preach every person has the power to prepare the way to bring about the Second Coming. Others recruit their families to fight, knowing a painless victory cannot be guaranteed, and keeping the Vigil a secret does more harm than good.

The Enemy

More monsters prowl, feed, and manipulate the innocent than in decades past. The Long Night struggles to categorize these creatures neatly, as the Bible doesn't mention them. Some hunters are convinced all new monsters are infernal. They point to the seven deadly sins — wrath, lust, sloth, pride, gluttony, envy, and greed — as proof that demons are not a figment of a good Christian's imagination, and they could be to blame for the creation of new monsters.

Most members agree that the cause of supernatural activity isn't as important as saving the souls upon whom monsters prey. Many hunters are convinced that wicked or cursed mortals, namely warlocks, witches, mediums, fae-touched victims, and some slashers can be saved, if not redeemed. Of course, the Long Night isn't naïve. They understand a spiritually compromised person will lie when desperate. After all, reformation takes time and a willingness to renounce the darkness that has already seeped into their souls.

The Long Night's members work tirelessly to hunt and convert. The damned, whether they are vampires, werewolves, demons, or other abominations, must be dealt with swiftly lest they tempt or feed on the living. Wayward souls, however, must be carefully approached and brought into the fold slowly and considerately. In both cases, vigilance is required for the compact understands their hunters aren't free from sin either, and their members can fall to the darkness just as easily as the lambs they're trying to save.

Hunters

You hit rock bottom, reached out, and no one was there to catch you. You have reveled in your sins even though you knew every heinous crime was wrong. The taint spread so deep inside your soul that you convinced yourself you were beyond redemption, but just after you knocked that *thing* unconscious in the alleyway you had a moment of clarity. Sure, you peered into the darkness and it stared back at you with beady yellow eyes, but you were saved. There can be only one explanation: The Lord smiled upon you and gave you a chance for redemption. Now, you atone for your misdeeds by putting the monsters to the torch, cleansing your sins one screaming demon at a time.

You see the truth. You see how others turn their backs and ignore the headlines. Destabilized governments, mass protests, acts of terrorism, falling markets. The signs of the apocalypse are everywhere, and they're getting worse. You've spent decades filling scrapbooks and journals with evidence, and years trawling forums and chat rooms. Other people laugh at you, call you paranoid, crazy, a conspiracy nut. Before, you could only shake your head, but the signs are unmistakable. The apocalypse is here. You're going to save them even if they won't save themselves.

You are a Good Samaritan. You saw a woman cornered in the parking lot just after midnight. At the time, you weren't one of the faithful; you just didn't want to see another woman get mugged. When you stepped up to help her, she told you the man cornering her was her brother. You had a choice: Fight or run. You stayed. She tossed you a tranquilizer gun, and you managed to help subdue him. When you asked her what he was on, she told you the truth: vampire blood. At first you didn't believe her, not until you helped cleanse him of his addiction. Then, you realized other people need help, too. Now, you save others from the taint of the supernatural.

Doctrines

The Long Night contains several factions and religious denominations. They all are unified on one major idea — Armageddon is here. Despite this, there are particular doctrines of how and why they fight for God that divide them.

The Hopeless are sinners who hunt to redeem themselves. Maybe they tasted a bloodsucker's blood and killed for more. Maybe they were a powerful warlock and used spells on the innocent. Or, maybe they stole, carjacked, dealt drugs, or trafficked people. Whatever the cause, the Hopeless feel the weight of their sins, acknowledge the stains on their souls, and fight the darkness to absolve themselves of their past or prevent others from falling like they did.

The Faithful believe they are ordained by God to fight in the Tribulation Army and are convinced their actions are justified in the eyes of God. They see everyday life as a battle between “them” and “us,” and people who get in the way are casualties of war. To them, the apocalypse is God's last warning that the monsters must be wiped out by any means necessary — and they're the only hunters blessed with this understanding. The Vigil is God's will.

The Merciful use compassion and empathy to redeem mortals who've been tainted, used, or manipulated by the supernatural. They believe that God loves all His children and it is their job to save souls when possible. While they will use violence when necessary, the Merciful seek ways to rehabilitate the fallen, awaken victims to God's will and service, and bring warlocks and witches back into the fold.

Status

Hunters in the Long Night gain status by serving the compact's evangelical needs.

- You understand why the Long Night must fight, and effectively argue its theological beliefs with ease to recruit other likeminded hunters. Gain Evangelism as a free Specialty of either the Persuasion or Expression Skills.
- Your growing reputation has impressed other members of the Long Night, and they've entrusted you with secrets of the hunt. Take two dots in the Merit: Allies (Long Night).
- You've established yourself as a popular internet evangelist who uses colorful metaphors to spread the Good Word and talk about the hunt. Gain three interns who work for you; this is equivalent to three, one-dot Retainer or Staff Merits.



Ascending Ones

The Cult of the Phoenix

Quote: *“Our war is eternal. Our sacrifices, endless. Our draughts, prepare us.”*

According to legend, by the time Upper and Lower Egypt unified around 3150 BCE, the Cult of the Phoenix and the Cult of Set were already ancient. Both sects of soldiers fought the darkness in a time beyond memory, one by day and one by night. The Cult of Set lit their fires, stayed near the people, and protected their villages during the long nights. The other sect, the Cult of the Phoenix, hunted the shadows by day and slayed the monsters they found with righteous fury.

Unfortunately, no mortal group of hunters is infallible, and the Cult of Set slowly fell to corruption. Nightmares wormed their way into the night warriors’ ranks, and infiltrated the sect forcing the hunters to fall. Over time, the two sects grew more and more distant. The compromised Cult of Set faded away, absorbed by the shadows with which they unwittingly comingled, leaving the Cult of the Phoenix to hunt on its own.

The burden of an endless hunt quickly overwhelmed the remaining hunters in the Cult of the Phoenix. Their leaders sought answers by brewing potions to bolster their soldiers’ resolve and tonics that enhanced their physical prowess in battle. The first elixir was successful and gave the soldiers an edge; its formula required constant consumption, however, and the ingredients were toxic. Eventually, the elixir proved fatal and their numbers fell.

For several years, the Cult of the Phoenix devoted itself to the art of alchemy experimenting with wondrous herbs and mystical components to concoct the perfect formula. Over time, they also realized how certain ingredients destabilized their essences, and had to be neutralized in the body. By developing a metaphysical training regimen that blended alchemy with their faith, members learned how to metabolize poisonous concoctions after ingestion.

Elixirs gave the Cult of the Phoenix power to rise from the ashes as the Ascending Ones, restore their membership, and renew their pledge to fight. Once the alchemists built a stable of potions that yielded predictable results, their methodology remained stable for 1,000 years. The Ascending Ones spread their influence from Egypt into other parts of North Africa, the Middle East, and into Roman-occupied territories; they courted members who hailed from different faiths, incorporating the followers of Christ, Muhammad, Hermes, Horus, Ashoka and others.

As cultural traditions, laws, and boundaries continued to change, the Ascending Ones shifted tactics and applied their alchemical knowledge to a mercantile craft. Their potion-brewing skills created a sustainable trade to sell legal and illicit medicinal powders, tonics, drugs, and spirits which in turn funded their operations, allowing them to follow trade routes and extend their reach — and their hunt — globally.

While the Ascending Ones thrive in the modern era, many of them are conflicted. They no longer possess the freedoms they once enjoyed in ancient times to distribute narcotics, alcohol, and illicit herbs. Some members have turned to organized crime to sell drugs while others sell formulas and rare plants to pharmaceutical companies. Most members apply their alchemical knowledge to a trade of some kind; this allows them to remain vigilant while earning a living.

In recent months, leaders have grown concerned that their organization is at great risk of falling prey to the same forces that claimed the Cult of Set so long ago. Not only have they tasked the

Ascending Ones to walk a righteous path, they've also been keen to check in with members more frequently by conducting face-to-face meetings. Alchemists whisper that their leaders are up to something, but don't possess the means to unlock their secrets — yet.

The Enemy

The Ascending Ones protect people by keeping the supernatural a secret, dealing with threats, and putting the lives of others before their own. Stopping monsters often means the hunters kill them, but not always. As one of the oldest (and most secretive) surviving hunter organizations, the alchemists have a reputation and are known to the elder denizens of the supernatural. Time and experience have taught members that monsters don't always have to be slayed; some can be reasoned with, others can be calmed or convinced that murdering people is not in its best interests.

Most of the Ascending Ones lean heavily on their faith for answers. The Cult of the Phoenix has many legends, and the alchemists know several of them are true. One such legend is the idea that monsters live in communities of their own. When war is brewing, a designated alchemist acts as an intermediary and engages in diplomacy to broker a peace between monster factions in an Arabic tradition called *Sulha*. Much like a cop trying to mediate a fight between rival mobsters, the Ascending Ones know neither side is without sin, but they also know a battle would claim innocent lives.

Despite the organization's history, the Ascending Ones do not possess an encyclopedic knowledge of monsters or their societies. In part, this lack of understanding is because most cells operate independently of one another, and it is very rare that the organization gives a top-down order.

Hunters

You're an imam who serves an Islamic community in the inner city. You've heard the cries of the faithful and want to protect them as best you can. When you visited Egypt, you were approached by an alchemist who told you about the ancient ways. You were skeptical but agreed to a strict training regimen. Now, you've found a few likeminded members of the faithful and together you keep the peace.

You watched a new type of drug being brought into your neighborhoods, and immediately knew something was off. You saw how the people controlling them were not what they appeared to be. You played the game, joined a gang, even wound up in jail. After you got out, you were approached by someone who told you the truth: You weren't crazy, and the skills you learned could help people. Now, you're back on the streets but playing an altogether different game and keeping the peace.

You follow the seven Hermetic Principles for Self-Mastery and uphold the traditions of Hermes Trismegistus. A practicing Gnostic, you walked a spiritual path in deed and word — but that didn't stop you from being kidnapped by a creature beyond your understanding. For several days you were trapped in a sewer, until a group of mysterious people rescued you. After you were freed, you begged the hooded heroes to let you help, to save others from the horrors you experienced. Now, you hunt from the shadows, too.

Factions

The lineage of the Ascended order is ancient and its branches are varied. Sometimes, individual cells may not recognize each other because they practice their alchemical arts through the lens of their specific faith, culture, or community. Within the order, most groups are connected to one of three main factions.

The militaristic, faith-based **Knife of Paradise** can trace its roots back to the Cult of the Phoenix. While some alchemists still follow Ma'at, members also include Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Members hold the belief they are *Shurat*, which translates to “having sold their souls to god.” The Knife does not denounce Egyptian or Gnostic mysticism and avoids petty squabbles about religion. Instead, they prioritize the needs of the hunt and seek common ground among the faithful to ensure they remain on task.

The **Order of the Southern Temple** emerged as the influence of western mystical traditions spread and settled on Hermeticism as the foundation for their beliefs. Members have embraced the writings of Hermes Trismegistus and practice the Hermetic traditions to live by example and explore new formulas for elixirs. Unlike other alchemists, the Order does not recognize any Egyptian gods, such as Thoth, Seshet, Isis, Neter, or Heka, and considers Hermes Trismegistus to be the inventor of all occult knowledge.

The **Jagged Crescent** is the most modern faction of the three. Located in urban areas, many alchemists focus on survival. The Jagged Crescent spurred interest in mercantile trade and has profited from drug trafficking and organized crime. While many alchemists have been selling formulas to pharmaceutical companies and government agents, members are often moles planted deep within society's underbelly where monsters thrive.

Status

To be an alchemist is to practice discipline of body and mind. Status is gained by applying the knowledge you've learned to endure the hunt.

- You've completed the intellectual, spiritual, and physical tests required to become an alchemist. You may use the 8-again quality when attempting to regain Willpower once per session.
- You have devoted time, energy, and knowledge to raise funds for your fellow alchemists. You now possess two extra dots of Resources you can use to help you hunt.
- You are considered a “master alchemist” and have obtained the services of an initiate, represented by a three-dot Retainer.

Endowments

For tier-three hunters, Endowments are the difference between winning and losing the fight against the supernatural. While not always inherently supernatural, Endowments are powerful tools that imbue a hunter with the ability to deal with the supernatural on their level — but that kind of power always comes with a price. Endowments represent both the learned power and institutional wisdom of an entire conspiracy, and the struggle to maintain a Code while still protecting the ones who are the most important to the hunter.

Conspiracy leaders encourage their hunters to acquire Endowments and are willing to risk hunters leaving their hallowed halls with that knowledge if it means the monsters in the dark have a deadly opponent. Endowments themselves are a dangerous gamble, but the conspiracies are willing to take risks despite any backlash that may come crashing down upon them or their members. With the seemingly endless stream of monsters on the move, the risk is more than worth it.

The cache of supernatural relics, potions, rituals, and spells, when combined with stockpiles of armaments and psychic abilities, is far more than the average hunter dreams about. Sometimes these abilities are accepted as a gift from the heavens, while other times they're wielded as a shield to force the darkness back into the shadows. Whatever the methodology, Endowments mark their wielders in some way and, like the Vigil, it's not something you can un-see.

The Endowments provided in this book are some of the bread-and-butter Endowments used by their respective conspiracies. These are the ones that most hunters in a conspiracy will know or learn over time, but we also include rules for making your own using select Relics from the Aegis Kai Doru in Chapter Eight: Storytelling on p. XX.

Conspiracy-related Endowments include:

- **Advanced Armory:** Task Force: VALKYRIE, p. XX.
- **Benediction:** Malleus Maleficarum, p. XX.
- **Castigation:** The Lucifuge, p. XX.
- **Elixir:** The Ascending Ones, p. XX.
- **Perispiritism:** Council of Bones, p. XX.
- **Teleformatics:** VASCU, see the Slasher Chronicle on p. XX.
- **Thaumatechnology:** The Cheiron Group, p. XX.

Using Endowments

Each conspiracy has access to a completely unique set of powers. While they may look similar in structure, how they function is vastly different. One may look as mundane as high-powered weapons while another is literally fueled by the hunter's demonic blood.

How a hunter gains access to his Endowments, how he activates them, and what kind of backlash comes from using them is defined in each individual Endowment. For our purposes though, Endowments are distinctly supernatural powers and using them creates some internal conflict for the hunter who is bound by a Code to defeat monsters. This isn't to say that hunters view using Endowments as Code violations, otherwise only the most unscrupulous hunter would use them. But it does mean that using them often or choosing to use an Endowment instead of a mundane

solution is a conscious choice the hunter makes, and she justifies it however she can. This is where Touchstones come in handy, as she uses these people to remind her why she is different from the monsters she hunts.

Hunters are not supernatural, but the Endowments they use are. As such, they can be used by any hunter regardless of their physical abilities. There is, however, a cost to using them. Sometimes the toll of using these powers shows itself in the way of a backlash. Particularly powerful or overtly supernatural Endowments have a backlash listed for each use. Some Endowments have a baked-in backlash that isn't specific to the individual powers.

Against the Supernatural

Hunters fight the supernatural. They fight against the creatures of the night and to protect the ones they love. Every now and then, they might fight another hunter, or a mortal in thrall of a monster, but they reserve their most dangerous Endowments for the creatures themselves.

Some Endowments are contested or resisted. The dice pools listed are for use against normal mortals and monsters alike. But some monsters have a better ability to resist powers. If a monster has a Supernatural Tolerance rating (see p. XX), then it applies that rating as normal to Contested rolls against a power. Additionally, sometimes an Endowment's powers will directly oppose a monster's power (or another Endowment). For example, a Lucifuge who commands a demon to attack a child of the Seventh Generation who can *also* command demons may find themselves in opposition, and a hunter who uses an Endowment to see the hidden may come into direct conflict with a monster that has a Dread Power that makes it invisible.

When this happens, there is a Clash of Wills. All characters using conflicting powers enter a contested roll-off, each using a pool based on her type. Hunters use their Highest Resistance Attribute + Occult, while Monsters use their Potency + their Dread Power rating. Supernatural creatures without Dread Powers, such as those found in other Chronicles of Darkness games, use different rolls depending on what they are. Ties reroll until one player has accrued more successes than all others. The effect invoked by that player's character wins out and resolves as usual, while all others fail. Victory of one power in a clash does not mean the immediate cancellation of the others, save in cases where only one power can possibly endure.

Characters may spend Willpower to bolster the contested roll, but only if they are physically present and aware that powers are clashing. Certain powers, such as those with exceptionally long durations, are more enduring in a clash. Night-long effects add one die to the clash roll, weeklong effects add two, month-long effects three, and effects that last a year or longer add four.

Gaining Endowments

You may purchase Endowments related to the conspiracy of which your character is a member. She must have at least one dot in the correct conspiracy Status Merit (p. XX) to purchase new Endowments. Each hunter begins the game with two Endowments at character creation. Purchasing a new Endowment costs three Experiences each. Some Endowments are collections of powers, which are rated one through five (such as Elixir, Benediction, and Advanced Armory). In this case, when you purchase an Endowment, you gain a dot rating in that collection. This purchase still gives you an individual Endowment, but it might also serve another purpose such as dictating how many items you can carry, or how powerful your Endowment is.

A hunter can only learn Endowments from the conspiracy to which she currently belongs. If she leaves a conspiracy and joins another, she does not lose the Endowments she gained in the old conspiracy but cannot learn new Endowments from her past organization. The only exception to this is if the hunter belonged to Task Force: VALKYRIE, as they no longer have access to the armory when they leave, and even if they take equipment with them, they are likely to run out of ammunition. Using Endowments from a past organization may cause that group to come asking questions. Conspiracies might allow the risk of a hunter running off with their secrets, but that doesn't mean they don't act to prevent a hunter from doing so. Lucifuge who leave the conspiracy are particularly at risk for their past to come hunting them down. A hunter who leaves a conspiracy and chooses to lose her Endowments — or has to, in the case of TFFV — benefits from the Sanctity of Merits rule, which allows her to regain her spent Experiences on the Endowments to spend elsewhere on her sheet, or on new Endowments from a new conspiracy.

Elixir

Alchemy is the art of transforming one substance into another. Truly advanced practitioners of the art need no laboratory or tools to perform their miracles — their own body and enlightenment suffices. The Ascending Ones guard the secrets of internal alchemy, for they are easily abused and dangerous to the uninitiated. Many elixirs are highly toxic without an alchemical touch, and a few may seriously harm or cause a fatal reaction.

Elixir Endowments represent the knowledge and training needed not only to prepare the alchemical cocktail the hunter imbibes, but to transform the reagents within herself and redirect that energy as needed.

Elixir Endowments require consumable exotic reagents and substances. The Ascending Ones have stockpiles of reagents available to their members, and members know where and how to acquire new reagents for their most used Endowments. Ingredient lists for elixirs are well-kept secrets to which members only gain access after demonstrating ability and knowledge. While members are assumed to have ready access to the reagents they need, rouge hunters using elixirs have a harder time procuring reagents. The Ascending Ones warn that reagents bought outside of their auspices can be dangerous or impure. Despite these warnings, there is a growing number of reports that rogue alchemists are stealing and stockpiling ingredients to sell on the black market. At present, the conspiracy has not revealed how it plans to resolve the issue and appears to be more concerned about their current members.

When Ascending Ones first learn alchemy, they learn not only to mix potions and brews, but how to imbibe such without poisoning themselves. This process is not fast, and hunters in the field using elixirs have been members for years before finally mastering the technique. But each new elixir requires a new skill set. Learning a new elixir, both how to make it and how to properly imbibe it takes time and training which is represented by several days of uninterrupted study (and spending the requisite Experiences).

Developing a whole new concoction used to take months, if not years, but with access to a few specific lab spaces, an abundance of reagents, and proper training, making new elixirs now takes a matter of weeks. To invent a completely new elixir (never seen before), the Ascending One must perform an extended action and net 10 successes using her Intelligence + Medicine, with each roll representing a week of time. New elixir creation is subject to Storyteller approval.

Using Elixirs

Elixirs are by nature one-use items. When a hunter purchases the Elixir Endowment, she is buying the ability to utilize new recipes. She purchases dots in Elixir instead of each individual Endowment. At each dot of Elixir, she gains a new recipe for free. She can purchase additional recipes for three Experiences each. The Ascending One can only hold as many prepared elixirs on her person as she has dots in Elixir plus her Stamina rating. Making a new elixir takes an hour, but does not require a roll. When the hunter wishes to use her elixir, she must apply the elixir to herself in some way (apply a salve, imbibe a liquid, inhale a smoke). Elixirs may have additional costs other than this action to activate. Using most elixirs requires an instant action using the following rules. Some may be extended actions in which case they have their own roll results.

If someone without at least one dot in the Elixir Endowment attempts to use the elixir (or it is applied to someone without training) then they suffer the dramatic failure result. Applying an elixir this way requires a touch attack, or a maneuver during a grapple.

Cost: Variable

Dice Pool: Stamina + Elixir

Action: Instant (Some actions may be contested or resisted)

Duration: Variable

Roll Results

Success: The hunter succeeds in converting the alchemical compound and produces the desired effect.

Exceptional Success: Variable depending on the effect.

Failure: The reaction fizzles and the Ascending One gains the Drugged Tilt.

Dramatic Failure: The alchemist fails to convert the alchemical compounds and suffers the lesser version of the Sick Tilt. If it is used outside of combat, she suffers the moderate version of the Poisoned Tilt instead.

Amun's Water

Taking their cues from the monsters they hunt, the Ascending Ones have developed an elixir that allows them to pass unnoticed. By drinking this potion, they can become invisible to the naked eye.

The potion is a combination of adder venom crushed with queen of the night flowers and mixed with ethyl alcohol. It tastes cloyingly sweet but burns as it goes down.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Duration: One scene

The alchemist becomes invisible to the naked eye. This isn't just a trick of the light, or a psychic impression. Cameras fail to pick her up and electronics fail to register her presence. If she takes a hostile action, she breaks the effect.

Someone with the ability to see the unseen or view something that is invisible prompts a Clash of Wills.

Exceptional success: If she takes a hostile action, she does not break the elixir's effect entirely. Only the attacked person can perceive the hunter, but others may be able to follow her movements based on situational cues in the middle of a fight.

Backlash: The elixir acts as a hallucinogen. While active, the hunter suffers a -2 penalty to all actions as she has a hard time determining reality from mental images.

Breath of Ma'at

Though the Ascending Ones walk the path of righteousness, that path regularly leads them into shadow and sin — often, they must commit wickedness in the name of fighting wickedness. The Breath of Ma'at is a thick, musky incense, the vapors of which must be inhaled and transmuted by the Ascending One. Once under its effect, the whispers of their soul contort to justify once-indefensible behaviors as entirely reasonable courses of action.

Cost: None

Duration: One scene

The hunter does not roll for breaking points while under the effects of the Breath of Ma'at. Once the elixir wears off, she makes a single roll for a breaking point no matter how many acts she committed. If she is under the effects of a hunter Condition, she gains a +2 to resist the breaking point.

Exceptional success: She gains the 8-again quality on her breaking-point roll when the effect wears off.

Backlash: If, while under the influence of the Breath of Ma'at, the Ascending One takes an action that would violate the Code, she automatically gains the Demoralized Condition, even if she is successful on her breaking-point roll.

Breath of the Dragon

Breath of the Dragon is a fine, silvery powder consisting of sulfur, finely milled magnesium shavings, and several rare reagents. When transmuted in the alchemist's body, the "breath" becomes weaponized and poisonous. This powder must be inhaled to be properly activated; afterward, the alchemist can expel a powerful jet of toxic gas.

Breath of the Dragon is harsh on the user's throat and the hunter is left hoarse afterward; overuse can even lead to temporary laryngitis at the discretion of the Storyteller.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Stamina + Medicine vs. Stamina

Action: Contested

The hunter expels the toxic gas at her victim, which inflicts the grave version of the Sick Tilt. Additionally, the vapors act to increase the severity of pain sensors in the target. Her next attack gains an additional weapon rating of 2 bashing, which stacks with any other weapon damage.

Exceptional Success: Instead of Sick, the target gains the grave version of the Poisoned Tilt.

NOTE TO LAYOUT: THIS SIDEBAR CAN BE PLACED ANYWHERE IT FITS.

Harvest Markets and Silent Auctions

Hunter conspiracies may profess they want to work together but behind the scenes several organizations have been clamping down on cooperative hunts, sharing tips and connections, as well as the occasional drink. The reason? There's been a run on phoenix feathers, rare-earth alloys, crystals — even necrotic blood and holy water. Someone — or a group of someones — has been buying up every icon, organ, relic, and reagent hunters are bidding for. The Cheiron Group, who once enjoyed a healthy, if not friendly, relationship with Task Force: VALKYRIE to exchange money for monster parts, has forfeited payment for the last three transactions, claiming they “stole” the parts from their Retrieval Division and were trying to resell them. The Ascending Ones are pointing fingers at the Cheiron Group, the Council of Bones, Aegis Kai Doru, and Malleus Maleficarum, claiming they're attempting to hinder the conspiracy by making it even more challenging to find their needed ingredients. Meanwhile, the Lucifuge, Aegis Kai Doru, and Task Force: VALKYRIE have forged a temporary alliance to find the culprit, be they hunter or monster — or both.

Bennu Feather

The Bennu is the mythical bird revered by Egyptians for rebirth, the sun, and creation. Thought to be a part of Ra's soul, the Bennu inspired legends of the phoenix who is immortal and everlasting, a symbol of rebirth.

The feather, pulled from the tail of a living bennu, is ground with potent opiates and antiseptic and analgesic plants. The resultant thick, brown paste can help speed up a hunter's natural healing.

Cost: 1 Willpower

For each success garnered on the roll, the hunter heals two bashing damage or one lethal damage, which come from the character's rightmost health boxes first.

Exceptional Success: Additional successes are their own reward.

Eye of Ra

A mixture of sandalwood, sacred herbs, and kohl (ground stibnite commonly used as a cosmetic in southwestern Asia and Africa), the Eye of Ra grants the user heightened visual acuity.

Traditionally, the elixir is applied in the shape of the Wedjat, an ancient Egyptian symbol of protection, but it retains its effectiveness if applied in other shapes, such as the Eye of Jibril, or simply used as eyeliner.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Duration: One scene

When attempting to notice something or investigate for the rest of the scene, gain exceptional success on three successes instead of five.

Exceptional success: The roll gains the 8-again quality as well.

Incense of the Next World

This carefully concocted incense releases a powerful hallucinogenic fume, which the user must breathe in while meditating for at least an hour. During this time, the alchemist's awareness and connection to their body gradually fades, until their soul detaches from it.

Though Incense of the Next World has its uses, especially when investigating a haunted house or crumbling temple, most alchemists have heard cautionary tales. Rumors swirl that some hunters are stuck, waiting for someone to rescue them, or had their bodies slain by monsters while their souls still walked. Worse: some alchemists believe the Council of Bones is actively trying to buy ingredients to prevent the Ascending Ones from using this elixir.

Cost: 2 Willpower

Duration: One scene

The user leaves her physical body behind and walks unseen. She is free to move about in this state for the rest of the scene, but her body remains comatose in the physical world. In this state, she can identify ghosts and spirits. She may take actions as normal but cannot use her Endowments. If she gets into combat, she uses her Willpower as her Corpus rating. If she loses all her Willpower in this state, she returns to her body unconscious and with the Soulless Condition.

Exceptional Success: As a success, but the user may transfer any active Endowments along with her soul as she leaves her body. These have their normal durations.

Backlash: If she is not near her body when her soul returns at the end of the scene, her soul is forcibly pulled toward her body, leaving the Ascending One confused and dissociated. She suffers a -2 penalty to all rolls for the next scene.

Mesmeric Vapors

Classically, this elixir takes the form of specially treated herbs, which resemble loose-leaf tobacco in their unburnt state and are lit in an urn. Its odor varies according to the individual smelling it. When the leaves are rolled into a cigarette or packed into a pipe, the smoke takes on a warm, golden hue.

The Ascending One has to inhale the smoke first to catalyze it, then breathes it out to affect her victim. Inhaling the Mesmeric Vapors the hunter emits erodes a target's will, making them so suggestible they might as well be a puppet. Some modern Ascending Ones, conscious of inhaling burning plant matter for any reason, use vaporizers instead — the effect is no different.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Stamina + Presence vs. Resolve

Action: Extended and contested; each roll takes one minute. The target success total is equal to the victim's Stamina.

Duration: One scene

Roll Results

Success: If the target success total is met, the victim is completely under the Ascending One's sway.

Exceptional Success: No additional benefit other than additional successes.

Failure: The Ascending One is having trouble with the target. She can choose to stop the treatment or continue. If she continues, she suffers the Drugged Tilt.

Dramatic Failure: The attempt fails. The Ascending One suffers the moderate Sick Tilt and the target snaps out of their false sense of security and might lash out at the Ascending One.

Upon completion, the victim is completely pliable and will answer any questions asked of them. If the Ascending One wants to command or manipulate the person into acting in a specific manner, then rolls to do so gain the 8-again quality. The victim is under the Ascending One's sway for the rest of the scene.

Backlash: Breathing in the vapors can be a heady process, and though the alchemist is immune to its effects, she is not immune to the feeling. Each time she uses this elixir she must succeed on a Composure roll or gain the Addicted Condition to her own elixir.