

# Boston<sup>TM</sup> Unveiled

the World of Darkness

MAGE  
THE AWAKENING



*Do not presume to think of Boston as merely a college town rich in Colonial history. History is a net closing in around us, choking us slowly, unless we can maneuver our knives to cut through it.*

*There are other histories. Events that haunt our nightmares as if they were memories. Shadows of happenings that have occurred—elsewhere, in less wholesome territories of the soul. But histories, still.*

*Pray your knife is sharp.*

*—Culson, of the Shadow Chorus*

This book includes:

- A detailed setting rife with intrigue and arcane secrets, introducing many mage characters suitable as friends, enemies or mortal foes
- A host of intriguing and gruesome antagonists who seek control over the same mysteries as the mages of Boston
- A sample story suitable for use with local, visiting or transplanted mages

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**MAGE**  
THE AWAKENING

# WITCH HUNT



Two years ago, I came to Salem, looking for someone to induct me into the “ANCIENT AND MYSTERIOUS traditions of the Goddess,” or something like that.

I WAS 19 AT THE TIME and had only rarely been more than a half-hour’s drive out of my native Wiscasset, Maine.

I had recently graduated high school and had spent some time living with my parents and trying to figure out what I supposed to do with my life — who I was meant to be and where I was meant to go. Finally, fed up with almost two decades of the same vistas and eager to learn more about the spirituality I had played at while barely passing algebra and French,

I SCRAPED TOGETHER MY MEAGER SAVINGS, PACKED UP AND GOT MYSELF A STUDIO APARTMENT IN THE SELF-PROCLAIMED “WITCH CITY.”

It was that or keep listening to my mother’s nagging about when was I going to find a husband and settle down. Salem wasn’t quite what I thought it would be. I figured it would be — **spookier**. It ended up coming off a lot more like a chintzy children’s Halloween costume: a lot of the trappings of spookiness, wrapped up in a sense of self-promoting commercialism insincere enough to make your stereotypical used car salesman come off as genuine. The city’s air of mystery went no deeper than that found at a carnival’s haunted house. Looking past that, there was a bit of the overall laid-back coolness of a New England coastal town, but that was nothing you couldn’t find in Maine. All in all, I felt disappointed that the reality had not lived up to the hype. In retrospect, I have to wonder what I was expecting. Maybe I was thinking I’d be surrounded by **DRAB GRAY SKIES, GRIM-FACED MEN IN TALL, BLACK HATS AND**

**WOMEN DANCING BY NIGHT AROUND FIRES IN THE WOODS** in ceremonies watched over by black cats with glittering yellow eyes.

To tell the truth, I guess I was hoping for something that seemed magical. At the time, I couldn’t put my finger on exactly **why** I felt I needed that, but my “grand spiritual quest” fell by the wayside, and I, like so many others, instinctively embraced the mundane chores of everyday life as armor against my disappointment.

# I remember clearly the day I began to see through the illusion, **THE DAY I WOKE UP.**

It was a few months after I'd gotten to Salem, a shitty, miserable day.

It was shortly after dusk, and the clouds were spitting a blend of sopping-wet snow and freezing rain that soaked straight through your clothes and your footwear. Naturally, I had just set the water boiling for a box of macaroni and cheese when I realized I was out of milk. Now too committed to my dinner selection to start making something else, I killed the burner,  
**PUT ON MY WINTER COAT AND HEADED OUT INTO THE NIGHT.**

I felt sad when I left my apartment, although I didn't understand the cause of my sadness. My time at the gym was paying off, my job was actually pretty good and I was finding time to write again. I had no reason to be sad — none I could identify, at any rate. Even when the wind kicked up and the stinging slush blew in my face (and I realized that I had forgotten my hat and gloves), I didn't feel annoyed, just sorrowful. The three-minute walk from my front door to the convenience store felt like an hour, and I just sort of wandered numbly through the place, grabbing my milk and a candy bar for later.

When I left the store, the brief jaunt back to my apartment seemed like an insurmountable obstacle,

**SO OVERWHELMING WAS THE HEARTACHE  
that had settled onto me.**

It was only after I heard a very faint sound down a narrow alley that I realized I had stopped walking and was just standing there, in the dark, under the frozen torrent. I also took some small notice of the fact that I was utterly alone. The streets were abandoned.

I turned to look toward the sound that had broken my grim fugue and noticed

**a thin, soaked tabby cat**

**PERCHED MISERABLY ON AN UPTURNED BARREL.**

**HE MEOWED LOUDLY AT ME.**

As I took a few tentative steps down the alley, he hopped down and began to walk slowly away.

I started to step back toward the mouth of the alley. As I began to turn, a feeling washed over me, a sense that I could choose to return to that empty, slushy street and follow it back to my apartment and my three-times-weekly workouts, my decent job and my idle musings, but that I would be taking the path of the known, the safe.

After all, the only thing that waited back at my place was a box of macaroni and cheese. Down this alley, after the trail of this poor, freezing cat that seemed to want me to follow him, was something else, something I didn't know.

Huddling into my coat, I set down my bag on the upturned barrel, tucked my numb right hand into my pocket and wandered into the shadows.

\* \* \*

I don't know how long I followed that cat. Somewhere along the line, I completely lost track of where I was. In the end, I lost sight of the stray and found myself in the midst of a tangle of narrow alleys I couldn't recall walking





through before. I couldn't have been more than a quarter-mile from my apartment, and I was utterly lost. The wind howled, and the heavy, wrought-iron fire escapes felt like a net, closing in over and around me. Uncertain of what to do, I pressed ahead and emerged into a quieter part of town. I realized that I was maybe a 15-minute walk from my front door, though my watch showed me I'd been out in the cold for well over an hour. I felt rather disoriented, and, after looking around for a bit, I couldn't determine exactly how I had gotten from the one place to the other.

The streets were still abandoned. Maybe there were lights on in those houses, but I don't recall seeing any. It felt to me like I was truly alone in the world, in the midst of a night that would never see morning. My sorrow took on an edge of thoroughly irrational fear. I felt — no, I **knew** — that something terrible was going to happen. My pace quickened, and I tried to get a bearing on where I was. I was fairly certain that I was moving in the direction of my apartment. I no longer cared about my milk or my chocolate bar. I wasn't hungry anymore. Then, I heard **her**.

There was the slightest note of fear in her tone. I think she was saying, "Get out of here," but I could be misremembering now. A reply came, a man's voice, cold and menacing, with a brutal conviction about it. "I know what you are."

As I rounded the bend, I saw them. She was dressed as if she were headed out to the club, but tonight wasn't a Goth or industrial night anywhere I could think of. Her black hair was slicked back, but stray locks were lashed about her pretty face by the wailing wind. She was on one side of a tall, broad, wrought-iron gate, which was hemmed in on both sides by high, ice-encrusted hedges. He was huge and broad-shouldered, with a severe cast to his features. There was something else about him, something that looked, or maybe felt, **wrong**. He was standing before that gate, gripping the freezing metal with one large hand. He snarled, "I know who your master is, as well, and I bring a message for him."

She answered. "You should leave."

In reply, he smacked a folded sheet of some kind of weird, thick cloth, or maybe parchment, against the gate. He chuckled grimly. "My master knows something of your Concord, and he has instructed me to have you inform your Nemean of such." He traced a sign of some sort in the air with his hand, and my skin crawled as though I were covered in spiders, but she stood her ground, and muttered words under her breath that I couldn't make out. The crawling feeling then quickly subsided.

As I got a bit closer, I was certain that the man was clearly at least a little bit insane. I could also see the tension in his body, like he was working up the nerve to pull that gate open and do something awful to that young woman. I wanted to just turn around and leave — go home and put on some warm clothes and tell myself that it was all right to have done so, that none of this was my problem, anyway. But it wasn't that part that I listened to.

"Hey!" I shouted before I was even fully aware that I was purposefully approaching this confrontation. I pointed at the man, "You! Why are you harassing her? What right do you have to come to someone's house and threaten her?"

He turned to face me, pure malice in his eyes. I knew I should have run, but I stood firm and stared hard into his angry eyes. He wanted me to flinch, and, though I didn't (and still don't) consider myself particularly brave, I didn't give him what he wanted. He raised his hand once more, and that crawling feeling began anew. I heard the breath of the woman on the far side of the gate hitch softly in her throat. From behind me, though, even over the sound of the wind, I heard the sound of a cat's hiss. The man's eyes darted down, and, strangely, I saw the glimmer of fear in them. He took a step back, though he continued to clutch at the gate. Standing beside my right foot was the tabby, its eyes shining with far too much intelligence and purpose.

The man tilted his head to one side, like a dog that hears an unfamiliar sound. "You are another of his witches, then?"

I didn't see that he deserved an answer from me. "Go home."

He hesitated for a moment and then backed away a pace. He mumbled something I couldn't make out and relinquished his grip on the gate. He wandered off into the rain and was soon lost to the night. When I glanced back down, the cat had disappeared.

"I had that in hand," said the young woman behind the fence, "but thank you."

I was so focused on the guy I was fairly certain was going to crush my windpipe that I had almost forgotten that there was someone else there. I barely managed to blurt out, "You're welcome."

She smiled. "Few would have done what you did. It took courage."

Without thinking, I responded, "What he was doing just wasn't right."

It was then that I actually glanced over her shoulder, at the snowy rooftop of the house behind her. A fierce gust of wind blew a heavy icicle down from an old and elaborate iron weathervane, and it tumbled down the roof to shatter on the small patio. My eyes darted back down to her, and her smile returned as she asked, "How did you find me?"

I smiled back, not knowing why I did. "I'm not sure. I started wandering, and this is where I stopped."

The side door to the house opened, and a vicious-looking young man glared out at the two of us. He fixed a baleful gaze on me. "What are you doing here? You don't belong here."

The woman turned to face him and said, "Great timing, Tempest. She's fine, though. She's one of us, or close enough to it."

He stared dismissively at me and then shook his head, laughing bitterly. He turned and stepped back into the house, calling after the woman I was speaking to, "Fine, Chaplain, she's **your** problem. You show her the way. If she proves to be anything, **maybe** we'll take her in."

Chaplain nodded and looked back at me as the door slammed shut. "Don't pay him any mind. He's an asshole. We'll begin soon."

"But not **right** now," I finished for her, "and not in this place. He was right; I **don't** belong here." I wasn't sure why that was right, but the place somehow felt distant from me, like I couldn't walk through any of its doors, even if I tried.

She laughed, "No, I suppose you don't. Sometimes, I wonder if maybe I don't, either."

Suddenly, gripped by an urge I didn't understand, I pulled the gate open. Seconds before, such a thing had seemed an insurmountable obstacle, but it felt to me just then as though it were the most important thing in the world to do, and that there was nothing that could stop me from doing so. The gate squealed in protest and shards of ice fell to the ground below. I stepped through, and every trace of the apprehension I had felt was gone. I extended my hand. "My name's Ursula."

She grasped my hand in her own. Looking back now, I felt like I had just spoken my name for the first time, like I had never before touched a human hand or looked into the eyes of another. I think I might have swayed a bit. There was a violent energy within her, like a roiling wind, only barely contained, and I felt a similar energy writhing within my soul. Somehow, though, I knew that I had tamed the energy, and claimed it for myself. She laughed softly, but comfortingly. "You can call me Chaplain. Everyone else does."

"Well," I replied, steadying myself, "it's nice to meet you, Chaplain."

"Likewise, Ursula." She looked back to the house. "You should head home. I'll be in touch." I knew that she'd find me. There was no need to give her my number or anything like that. How I understood that, I don't know, but it was somehow reassuring.

I nodded and stepped back through her gate. Without another word, I walked away, toward my apartment, seeing the world through new eyes. My hunt was over. I had found what I was looking for.

## *Credits*

**Written by:** Kraig Blackwelder, Stephen Michael DiPesa,  
Malcolm Sheppard

World of Darkness created by Mark Rein•Hagen

**Developer:** Bill Bridges

**Editor:** Scribendi Editorial Services

**Art Director:** Richard Thomas

**Book Design:** Becky Jollensten

**Interior Art:** Ed Bouelle, John Bridges, Talon Dunning,  
Vince Locke, Nate Pride and Andrew Trabbold

**Cover Art:** Matt Mitchell



1554 LITTON DR  
STONE MOUNTAIN, GA  
30083  
USA

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# Boston Unveiled™

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# INTRODUCTION

**Boston Unveiled** is a city and regional sourcebook that presents the signature setting for **Mage: The Awakening** — the city of Boston and its environs with all its old, witchy New England atmosphere. The sourcebook provides in-depth information on history, geography, notable characters and the various cabals. In addition, there is a full story for beginning a Boston-based chronicle.

**Boston Unveiled** builds substantially on the information presented about the city in Appendix Two: Boston of **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 368-389. While that chapter provides a glance at the city, **Boston Unveiled** reveals the forces at work behind the scenes, delving into the agendas and secrets driving events in the Awakened world. This book presents a plethora of stories that can be used to drive chronicles set in the region.

Boston is an old city, one of the oldest colonial settlements in the Americas, and it has long been fertile ground for the struggles of the Awakened. **Boston Unveiled** will help you to integrate your characters into this centuries-old tangle of alliances and enmities, to plumb the depths of this city and discover what exists in its darkest recesses. You will meet the Awakened inhabitants of the city and its surroundings as well as the Atlantean order willworkers and apostates. Some may become friends to your characters, and others, deadly rivals, but the characters must beware, as friendship is sometimes used to conceal an assassin's blade and open hostility may serve to cloak a potent allegiance.

Boston is a city of secrets. While secrets are in many ways the stock-in-trade of **Mage: The Awakening**, Boston is truly rife with secrets such as the Concord between the Ebon Noose and the White Putnams, the terrible truth behind the Red Word and the identities of the sinister Shadow Chorus, just to name a few. As mages learn more about the hidden nature of Boston, they are drawn further into the web of occlusion and deceit that encompasses the city. Perhaps, they might even learn why it's best that some secrets remain unrevealed.

## *Theme: The Past as Prologue*

In the "unintended consequences" category, the first mages to arrive in the region made compacts that still affect mages to this day. The region's history weighs heavily on the shoulders of any mage here, even if he's just passing through. Remember, in **Mage**, time can be measured and affected like a sculptor works stone. Even more important here, however, is the web of fate that binds everyone — entangling the young in the karma of the old.

The strands of fate binding the region aren't all bad. The city did spawn the Boston Tea Party, which helped to create a new nation dedicated to freedom and liberty. The city also saw the Salem Witch Trials. It's the city where Ben Franklin grew up, and the place where the infamous Strangler stalked. In other words, it's a place of potency. New things are created daily at MIT, while Harvard grads figure out how to best steer the course of society.

## *Mood: That Old Black Magic*

The woods of New England and upstate New York have a certain rep for having been haunted by devil-worshippers, witches or creatures of the night during the time of the pilgrims and the later colonies (the Headless Horseman, for instance). Was this all just in the imagination of the Puritans, or is there some grain of truth here?

Mages are mortal, but they see things from an entirely different perspective than Sleepers. Mages get involved in a wide spectrum of human and supernatural events — anything that can be detected and dealt with using Mage Sight. In other words, pretty much anything imaginable.

There's a world of mystery and terror out there, and it can overwhelm even a mage. Mages must struggle just to get past the false stereotypes handed down in legend.

The mood of this book is one of ancient fear, as old horrors claw their way out of the past to retain a hold on Sleeper and Awakened alike and dread secret alliances move in the shadows, eager to wrest power away from the Awakened. This is not your standard "splatterpunk" horror but instead a long, slow dread, one that evokes feelings of lore best left forgotten: specters walking lonely roads and abandoned hallways and gatherings of terrible purpose, in which oaths are spoken and the blood of the firstborn is let. It is the fear of speaking the Names that bring madness — of beholding sights meant for no mortal eye — a good, old-fashioned, New England fear.

## *What's in This Book*

Within the pages of **Boston Unveiled**, you will find everything you need to begin to craft your own adventures for the Awakened in and around the City on a Hill.

- **Chapter One: Maps and Legends** — This chapter details the history of Boston and its surroundings, from both the Sleeping and Awakened perspectives. In this chapter, the region's many intertwined strands of destiny are explored. Boston was once a revolutionary city, full of ideas and promise. Its possibilities have been fading, lost in a mire of apathy and the frantic pace of too-rapid change. What legacies continue to reach forward, out of history, to continue to affect the present? These legacies not only give Boston's past an identity but also serve, through means both mystic and mundane, to define its future.

Here, you'll also get a look at the modern face of Boston and its environs, the kinds of things a newly arrived visitor (or transplant) to the area might notice or find interesting. A bit of geography, significant landmarks and the like are to be found here, as they pertain to long-time residents, newcomers and those just passing through.

- **Chapter Two: Cabals** — Presented here are the cabals of the Awakened orders and the politics and enmities that both hold the Awakened of the region together and threaten to drive them apart. The alliances, accords and enmities of the Wise are explored and the major local factions of the Awakened are discussed in depth.

- **Chapter Three: Renegade Mages** — Of course, the Atlantean orders aren't alone in Boston. The machinations of rival mages abound, and this chapter details their willworkers and their cabals: the alliances, feuds and outright wars between these renegades as well as the ways in which they interact with the Atlantean orders and, of course, the Sleeping world that binds all together.

- **Chapter Four: Off the Map** — Along lonely roads, in deep woods and on the grounds of isolated and ancient houses, strange things lurk. Boston and its surroundings have long known the tread of those who walk in other realms — centuries-long hauntings, spirits both benign and malevolent and creatures unknown to either



science or superstition, just to name a few. This chapter explores the local spirit realms and their denizens, the beings that exist sometimes perhaps just beyond the peripheral vision of the Sleeping world and, sometimes, well outside the awareness of all save perhaps the most dedicated (or foolhardy) mage.

• **Chapter Five: Beast of Burden** — Presented here is a sample story with which to begin a Boston chronicle — an event that will test the characters' abilities to win friends and allies or create new enemies in their attempts to restore the dead to life.

## *How to Use This Book*

This book isn't meant to be the be-all, end-all final word on Boston or New England or the Awakened who live there. Instead, this book is intended to serve as a springboard for your own chronicles by inspiring you with ideas and suggestions. The real decisions are up to you.

For Storytellers, **Boston Unveiled** exists to provide interesting story hooks, the beginnings of the foundations on which you can build years' worth of great tales for your players. We've done the basics of the groundwork, but, because we don't know your players or your game like you do, all the most important details are in your hands. That keeps your players guessing and makes Boston your city to do with as you will, free of the constraints of any plots you may not want or might find inappropriate for your cabal.

For players, **Boston Unveiled** offers a chance to tie their mages into a full setting rife with possibilities. This book contains a number of built-in allies, enemies and even just old acquaintances for any character to latch onto, as well as plots to become involved in (or, perhaps, attempt to stop). Most importantly, this book is designed with opportunities for the player characters to become some of the big movers-and-shakers of the area. Suggestions for long, convoluted roads to power, fame and influence are found in these pages, waiting to be explored by your mages.

## *What This Book Isn't*

**Boston Unveiled** is by no means a sort of city guide to Boston, New England in general or anywhere else. This book is a guide to a more darkly fantastic place: the minute details of where Beacon Street is in relation to Commonwealth Avenue are nowhere near as important as what sorts of mysteries or schemes your mages might become involved in around the next corner. This book was written with that idea in mind.

## *Suggested Reading*

New England is, and has been, home to many writers, and is the setting or subject of many a written work. Some authors (or individual publications) do, however, stand out as authorities on the particulars of life in New England, especially its darker, grittier or more fantastic aspects.

*Curious New England: The Unconventional Traveler's Guide to Eccentric Destinations*, by Joseph A. Citro and Diane E. Foulds — An enterprising Storyteller could easily craft an entire chronicle based on the various shades of old-fashioned New England weirdness explored in this book. It covers such curiosities as an inexplicably slowly spreading desert along the coast of Maine, John Childs' alleged flight from the steeple of Boston's Old North Church in 1757 and Dudleytown, long ago swallowed by Connecticut's woods and (if the many stories are to be believed) a place of madness, haunted by demons and the ghosts of the damned. A real must-read.

The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne — Perhaps most famous for his books *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables*, this contrite descendant of John Hathorne (a judge during the infamous Salem Witch Hysteria of 1692) was a prolific writer of tales, both long and short. Perhaps most interesting (from the perspective of **Mage**, at any rate) are Hawthorne's stories that detail mysteries

leading scientists to the so-called Elixir of Life. Today, only fragments of the mysteries are known to fragments.)

The Works of Howard Phillips Lovecraft — Architect of a universe without symmetry or sanity, H. P. Lovecraft challenged the preconceptions of his readers through his *Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos*, a collection of stories in which mankind is alone and helpless in a reality as cruel and mysterious as it is vast. Lovecraft wrote a lot more than just fiction about malevolent entities from beyond the stars, however, and a brief glance into his other works grants a measure of insight into the mind of a brilliant and perhaps mildly disturbed would-be recluse, who was quintessentially New Englander in his character.

The Works of Stephen King — Heavily inspired by Lovecraft (among others), Stephen King is likewise a writer committed to the overarching strangeness of his native land. Although a few of his works have strayed beyond New England's borders, many are set in locations, both real and fictitious (but still quintessentially New England), among those states, most especially in his home state of Maine. By no means are all (or even all of the best) of his works horror stories, but several (though individual mileage may vary) have a feel that is distinctly **Mage**. And, if you just can't make the time for a novel, there's always the option of renting a film or two.

*The Boston Phoenix* — This newspaper is an invaluable resource for those looking to get a handle on the street-level view of Boston. Often irreverent, the periodical looks at the city in a way other local papers dare not. Of course, if you can't get your hands on a copy of the newspaper, check out its website: <http://www.bostonphoenix.com>

## *Suggested Viewing*

As well as making more than the occasional appearance on the printed page, Boston has shown up on both the large and small screens every now and again. Although a number of movies and shows have been set in Boston, many of them use the city simply as a geographic location and don't delve into its essential character. The two described below, however, offer a somewhat deeper look at Boston on its own terms.

*Boondock Saints* — This movie, a tale of two brothers given what they believe to be a holy mission from God, is set (and, in large part, was filmed) in the city of Boston. While at times fantastic, the film offers a good look at many aspects of Boston's essential character, most notably themes of immigration and integration (and the difficulties inherent in both), faith and its many pitfalls, the changing face of Boston's crime and the attitude of often holding justice above law.

*Cheers* — If you can find any episodes of this old comedy floating around, they're definitely worth watching, if only for a look at a certain facet of Boston life. The characters, if often a bit simplistic (as is the case with almost any sitcom), constitute an interesting glimpse of the city's essential character: blue-collar drinking buddies, the aristocratic intellectual, the takes-no-guff working woman. Though dated, the show conveys a sense of the Boston that is rapidly vanishing (and, in some places, has disappeared entirely), one in which "everybody knows your name."

## *Other Resources*

Boston and New England have significant online presence, though applicability varies considerably based upon what you're looking for out of the setting. Websites for tourism are plentiful, but most don't capture the grittier aspects of the region and many are too narrow in focus to be of much use to someone who isn't looking for whatever the site specifically addresses. Your best bet is to just search around until you find something that takes your fancy and provides useful information. Searches for "New England hauntings," "New England UFOs" and the like are bound to turn up something worth basing a story arc or two upon or perhaps even an entire chronicle.





# MAPS AND LEGENDS

What is this damnable Secret Concord that causes the Noose and the Putnams to rule our fate? I fear that the one who uncovers the truth of this pact will come to no good. It has dogged the heels of history, sometimes biting those who come too close. I would be free of this weight, before it crushes us all.

— Vajra, formerly of the Brotherhood of the Ineffable Truth cabal, now residing in India

Oh, it was a Devil's Deal my predecessors signed, all right. We are being tested, each and every one of us. He that is found wanting will be swallowed up, but he that remains virtuous will triumph and reap the victor's crown.

— Jeremiah, formerly of the White Putnams cabal, now deceased

The gnats chatter on about the Concord. Should I tell them the truth? Oh, no. There are reasons some souls fight to remain asleep. Should I contribute to their number with some of our own? Let the Awake remain Awake, but ignorant.

— The Nemean, Hierarch of Boston, leader of the Ebon Noose cabal

CHAPTER ONE

THERE ARE REASONS SOME SOULS FIGHT TO REMAIN ASLEEP

The point of view in which this tale comes under the romantic definition lies in the attempt to connect a by-gone time with the very present that is flitting away from us. It is a legend, prolonging itself, from an epoch now gray in the distance, down into our own broad day-light, and bringing along with it some of its legendary mist, which the reader, according to his pleasure, may either disregard, or allow it to float almost imperceptibly about the characters and events for the sake of a picturesque effect.

— Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables*

The hackneyed line that nobody is actually from Boston has been relatively accurate from the very founding of the city. The original inhabitants of what is now known as Boston were the Massachuset Indians, 3,000 of whom lived around a Boston Bay that is much larger than the one the city's current residents are familiar with. The 20 small villages around the bay benefited from the presence of an unusually dense network of ley lines, which in turn promoted the formation of Halls and spirit loci. The flow of energy through the bay was healthy, keeping resonance with stagnant emotional qualities from collecting, resulting in good hunting and long lives among the Massachuset. The Awakened among the natives took advantage of this good fortune — most notably through the creation of a surprising array of enhanced and otherwise magically potent items. These powerful items, as well as the healthy tass harvested from Halls around Boston Bay, were coveted by Native American mages throughout the rest of the Northeastern woodlands, and the area's mages were afforded a great deal of respect.

The peninsula (and sometimes island) of Boston was a sacred place to them due, in part, to its intermittent accessibility. The surrounding lowlands were inundated with water during high tide and times of heavy rainfall, and it was therefore considered liminal, a sacred ground. The top of modern day Beacon Hill was a place of ritual cleansing and atonement for Native Americans. Any member of the Massachuset who committed (or was strongly tempted to commit) an act of violence out of anger could go to the top of the hill and ritually rid himself of the spirit of violence. The resonance of the peninsula was such that it absorbed and contained hostile energy and prevented it from spreading.

The Indians' ease of life ended with the coming of the white settlers. In the space of three years, between 1614 and 1617, the diseases brought by Europe's outcasts killed off all but a few hundred of Boston's native inhabitants. The settlers, staunchly Calvinist and comfortably certain that God was on their side, were happy to have the harbor to themselves and fancied themselves blessed.

What is now known as Boston was originally called Trimountain, named for the its three large hills, by the settlers. The city's first long-term European inhabitant was the Reverend William Blaxton, who built his home on the top of Beacon Hill in 1624 — less than four years after the Pilgrims settled in nearby Plymouth. The Indians, needless to say, weren't happy about Blaxton's choice of buildingsites. They tried to explain to him that the top of the hill that "eats anger" was not an appropriate building spot, but he wasn't interested in hearing their quaint stories, and their numbers had dwindled so much by then there was little they could do to drive the settler from their place of atonement. When a medicine man tried to demonstrate to the Reverend why the

Indians didn't want him living there, Blaxton shot him and accused the Indians of "deviltry most brazen."

Ultimately, however, it would not be the Indians who would prove to be the Puritans' greatest enemy, but themselves. New England's defining moment, as far as the Awakened community was concerned, would take place decades later, 20 miles northeast of Trimountain, in the hamlet of Salem Village. The dread of heterodoxy crept through the hearts of the Salem Villagers like a disease. As unified as the groups were, the town's villagers placed such tight constraints on acceptable behavior that something had to give. To this day, mages can't agree upon the cause. Some believe spirits of malice plagued the area, while some think that the violent resonance absorbed by Beacon Hill somehow welled up in Salem Village. Others say that the settlers just cracked under the strain of living with the daily hardships of a Puritan settlement.

The first 100 years of Boston's existence marked a tremendous number of firsts for the New World and the Awakened alike. Many powerful institutions rose to power in those years, and the roots of Boston's present can be found there.

### *Back to the Wilderness*

Sailing to the New World was an extreme form of flight in the 17th century. Many Awakened, tired of the Inquisition's witch hunts (which would continue for the rest of the century), crossed the Atlantic in hopes of finding (or founding) a place of tolerance, where the practice of magic wouldn't be a potentially mortal offense. Those mages whose connection to wild and nature-oriented Supernal Realms — the Acanthus and Thyrsus — found little support for their lifestyles in the teachings of the Church. Many mages felt a bond of solidarity with the so-called witches, most of them innocent Sleepers, who suffered persecution at the hands of the Roman Catholic Church's Inquisition. These Old World mages hoped to leave this world of persecution behind when they came to the New World.

Many disparate mages arrived and spread out north and west. Among them was a cabal called Epona's Chariot (later to be renamed the Ebon Noose). As described in Appendix Two: Boston (see **Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 368-389), these "pagan" mages sought to build a paradise in the wilderness, only to find the woods already inhabited. Ignorant of the territorial claims of certain spirits in the Shadow Realm, Epona's Chariot raised the ire of a group of terrifying spirits. Whereas most spirits relied on eating lesser spirits to gain sustenance, these spirits could materialize and eat the flesh of humans. A local medicine society of native mages used the spirits' ire and turned it fully against the newcomers. Pursued by the spirits and native mages, the cabal retreated to a small



colonial settlement where they performed a dread spell in the hopes of saving their hides. It worked. The cannibal spirits were driven away and the native mages killed. But the unspeakable nightmare the mages had summoned forced them back into the wilderness and cursed the settlement for years to come.

That settlement would later be called Salem.

### *The Founding of the Stone Assembly*

Boston's first cabal of recognized merit was established in 1633 by a handful of mages from Cambridge University in England. These men (and they were all men) called themselves the Stone Assembly. The group consisted entirely of Mysterium mages. They crossed the Atlantic with the goal of collecting and examining the magical wonders created by the Native American mages. The cabal soon discovered other European mages from the other Atlantean orders, all of whom were likewise interested in the strange mysteries of the New World. Rather than resort to violent competition with these potential rivals, the Stone Assembly petitioned the Consilium of Cambridge, England, for the right to charter their own Consilium. With the august old Consilium's stamp of approval, European mages saw little choice but to accept the Stone Assembly as the foremost Awakened power in Boston. This was before the fires of revolution were lit in the country — most colonists still hearkened to England for leadership and guidance.

The new Consilium, named after its founding cabal, became a club for elite Awakened gentlemen dedicated to the acquisition and use of the New World's magical knowledge and Artifacts. The new Consilium's Hierarchy was a mystagogue of the Stone Assembly, as was one of its Councilors, but the remaining seats were doled out to representatives of the other Atlantean orders. All of the Assembly's members were academicians, and, unlike many of the others settling the New World, they were all at least moderately wealthy.

Idealistically enough, the Councilors and officers fancied themselves, the face of the Awakened community in the New World — integrated, cooperative and social — although positions within its ranks were open only to men with the financial means to own property. In the earliest years, it was assumed that all local mages were a part of the Stone Assembly's society unless they took steps to indicate otherwise — and the social consequences of that course of action were heavier than most of the Awakened were willing to incur. It was acceptable for a mage to be a quiet, passive member of the Stone Assembly, but to decline membership altogether once it had been offered was a scandal of arrogance and incivility. The Stone Assembly did not consider women and men of humble means to be proper members and left such mages to fend for themselves — the Assembly did not believe that such rabble were likely to number more than a few mages anyway. Knowledge, in the Consilium's model of the world, was at the core of magical praxis. Their certainty of that fact blinded them to a noteworthy number of exceptions — a significant population of women, hermits, free Africans and others who had also Awakened, though without the benefit of either education or wealth.

The remnants of Epona's Chariot at this time were scattered and weak, nursing their psychic and physical wounds in

the aftermath of the terrible Binding of the Blasphemous Scribe spell. The Stone Assembly heard only vague rumors of this event, and discounted it as nothing more than deep-woods hyperbole, meant perhaps to scare their own mages away from finding wells of magical power.

The Stone Assembly was, for nearly 300 years, the ironclad patriarchy of Boston's magical life, the city's founding Consilium. With equal weight in both Boston and nearby Cambridge, it had both the magical acumen and financial clout to guide Boston as it saw fit and police the Awakened like a stern father.

The Stone Assembly offered prestige and, sometimes, lucrative reward to those mages who could collect for them the most interesting New World magical lore and objects. In time, the Assembly's magical armory became one of the largest and most powerful on the East Coast.

### *The Convocation of Witches*

Many immigrant mages from all backgrounds would seek out the Stone Assembly. Those mages who did not meet the Assembly's requirements were rebuffed and, lest they be exposed as witches, told to leave the practice of magic to those qualified to do so.

In the New World, these fearful and disparate "witches" (i.e., any mage not meeting the criteria to join the Stone Assembly) often didn't know of each other's existence, and, if they did, their shame and fear was often enough to prevent them from associating with one another. Women, in particular, were fearful of practicing magic in groups because it was known that witches practiced their dark arts in covens, and one "witch" under torture could betray an entire cabal (or "coven"). Consequently, witchcraft was, by and large, a solitary practice in 17th century Massachusetts. Letting even a close friend or family member know that you practiced magic was often tantamount to turning oneself in to the authorities, and, on the other side of the Atlantic, the witch hunts were just reaching their peak.

The trials in Salem forced a change for the New World's "witches." The mages of the Epona's Chariot cabal viewed what happened in Salem as a warning of what could happen to them all if they did not band together. Only one of the cabal's original mages who first arrived in the New World still lived, and he harbored immense guilt over his cabal's actions at the place that would become known as Salem.

Epona's Chariot sent out a call throughout the New England colonies to gather "witches" and "magic men" interested in working together for mutual assistance. These messages carefully bypassed the haughty mages of the Stone Assembly. After so many years of isolation, the habit of solitude among these mages was strong, but so was the fear and the desire for conversation and companionship. Many of the "witches" of the New World gathered together under the leadership of Epona's Chariot and vowed to prevent any more tragedies like the one in Salem. To remind themselves of those unfairly hanged in Salem (and to atone for their own guilt in that place's curse), Epona's Chariot was renamed the Ebon Noose.

The number of cabals that sprang up in Massachusetts around the Ebon Noose was a testimony to the charisma of the Noose's first members and the effect of the Stone Assembly's arrogance. The Assembly had Boston in the palm

of its hand, but the rest of the commonwealth (its official designation) was the settling place for mages who did not share the Stone Assembly's bourgeois model of mage society.

The Stone Assembly considered co-opting the Noose as it did all other cabals, but it just couldn't take the witches seriously. The Assembly initially issued something akin to a cease and desist notice to the mages of the Noose, forbidding them to practice magic. Once the witches of the Ebon Noose pointed out that they outnumbered the mages of the Stone Assembly, the haughty cabal gave up its threats and let the Ebon Noose and its gang of affiliated cabals freely exist, so long as they did not act against the Stone Assembly's interests. The tension between the officially acknowledged urban Consilium and the Ebon Noose's outlaw rural society set the tone for much of Awakened affairs for the next two centuries.

## *The Revolution Years*

Throughout Europe, the intellectual movement known as The Enlightenment, whose followers explained that there was nothing in the world that could not be understood through sheer rational thought, spread like wildfire. "The world is a rational place and man is a rational animal" went the argument. Mages could do little but raise their eyebrows and marvel at the obliviousness of Sleepers.

In America, the Enlightenment was the invisible foundation of a new nation. The country's ideals were those of its age.

The Stone Assembly had made itself a powerful institution in the Awakened world by the time relations between England and her colonies began breaking down. While the Assembly was initially divided on which side to support, they ultimately opted to side with the colonies, largely because that course of action held more promise for them than sticking with the status quo. The colonial Consilium had tired of the perception that they needed to clear any major undertaking through their parent Consilium in Cambridge, England; since the Stone Assembly had, by now, established themselves as more influential in the Awakened world than in Cambridge, they saw no reason to keep up the illusion of continued ties. The most optimistic mages hoped to turn the New World (or at least Boston) into a new Atlantis for the Awakened. They believed that only Sleepers who lived in liberty, free of the shackles of the past (i.e., servitude to England), could Awaken with the proper drive and resolve to help build this vision of a "shining City on the Hill."

The Ebon Noose and its allied cabals kept a low profile during the revolution. Wars always have a way of crushing the disenfranchised, and the mages of the Noose wanted to avoid that. The witch hunt was still taking place in Europe, mostly in Germany, during the time of the Revolutionary War and the Noose had yet to come into its full power. They sided more quickly and more absolutely with the rebel colonies, hoping that a break from England would also bring about a break from English Puritanism and the European craze for persecuting witches.

The Awakened who lived in the American colonies had one major advantage over the British: English mages were unwilling to leave their laboratories, their universities and their sprawling country estates to press the war on the magical front. The one or two who did so out of loyalty were amazed by both the power and dedication of these "hinterlands hex tossers" — to the degree that the British mages

realized they were outclassed, and participated in only the subtlest ways.

When the colonies finally achieved their independence, the Awakened were some of the most optimistic about what the future might hold in this vast new world.

## *Moving Mountains*

Few cities have changed as much since their founding as Boston. Founded in 1630, Boston was built at the end of a low peninsula. During high tide, it often became an island city, as the ocean reclaimed the low, muddy strip of land connecting the city to the mainland (what is currently Washington Street). The entirety of the city covered 470 acres of land and around the city were mudflats and salt marshes.

Beginning in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the city's lack of usable land became more of a hindrance than the city could suffer, and the residents began massive public works projects to fill the marshes by leveling the hills. It was an ambitious project, but Boston's harbor made it the single best location for a major city and seaport, and so the changes to the terrain began.

Unavoidably perhaps, a handful of mages saw the massive geo-engineering project as their chance to subtly alter the underlying geomantic configuration and resonance of the region in a way that would redound in their favor. None of the mages, sadly, seemed to notice that the quality of resonance throughout the area was *already* better than in most populated locales: the possibility of change on a grand scale appealed to the imaginations of the Awakened of the day. In particular in that time, few mages could even dream of manipulating the very terrain in so great a fashion, even with their most powerful magics (at least not without incurring Paradoxes). That all of them failed to shape the land to suit their own plans speaks to the incredible difficulty involved in permanently shaping the flow of magic to the human will. That some of them actually succeeded, inadvertently, in disturbing and warping local ley lines is ample testimony of the dangers of hubris. The Sleepers' new earthworks, however, made the situation even worse. The swarms of workers doggedly devoured the hills and turned them into landfill. Salt marshes disappeared, buried beneath tons of stones and soil.

In 1643, Mill's Cove became Mill's Pond when a dike was built to keep out the ocean. A century and a half later, Mill's Pond was filled in entirely and now comprises a large chunk of north Boston. All in all, Boston gained over 2,000 acres of land as a direct result of filling in surrounding lowlands and salt marshes with materials from the surrounding hills. What is now Boston and its environs was the result of filling in West Cove, Mill Pond, South Cove, East Cove, South Bay and Back Bay.

By the time these enormous public works campaigns were completed, vital ley lines were inadvertently rerouted, blocked or driven underground. The healthy flow of resonance through the land had been dramatically altered from its natural pattern. Stagnant pools of negative emotion began to develop and grow, and the part of the city that would eventually become known as Chinatown collected angry and violent resonance it could no longer expel by way of the ley lines. This is the origin of what has historically been called "the Combat Zone."

As another consequence of the altered flow of resonance and the chaotic rerouting of ley lines, ghostly hauntings



seemed to increase in number, and malicious spirits flocked to certain areas to build nests and soak in the negative energy of new, ill-born spirit loci.

## *The Transcendental Era*

Rationality and order were the ideals of the Enlightenment and, largely, of the nascent United States as well. Mages, particularly those of New England (the site of America's intellectual core) were not content to let the forces of tedious rationalism have the final say and wedge them out of the running.

Beginning in 1830, a group of New England Obrimos, Acanthus and Thyrus mystagogues banded together in a cabal to support a counterstrike against rampant rationalism. Fearing that the forces of overweening reason actually prevented new Awakenings among the Sleepers of America, this cabal, called the Transcendent Eye, sought to foster among Sleepers a recent philosophy they believed was more conducive to Awakenings. This philosophy, called transcendentalism, which combined a liberal Christian ethic (in the form of Unitarianism) with the veneration of nature and channeled the results through the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg, a powerful and charismatic Swedish philosopher, ignited the imaginations of many Bostonians. Transcendentalism taught that everyone and everything was a part of nature and in that way played a part in the great overmind of God. The Sleeper thinkers and writers who accepted and propounded these ideas were called the transcendentalists. They gave birth to the first, and perhaps the strongest, American response to the Enlightenment.

One article of faith shared by the transcendentalists (and their precursors, the Puritans, for that matter) was the sense of America (as epitomized for them by Boston) as being a "City on the Hill," a bright place of idealism and enlightenment. The transcendentalists experimented with this notion by forming intentional communities (communes) and testing their theories about society and nature. The best-known of these, Brook Farm and Fruitlands, both formed by Sleepers, ran their course and disbanded. Another commune, a collection of diehard transcendentalist mages and Sleepwalkers, formed in 1842 and took the name "Benefit." The mages (and unAwakened) of Benefit worked together well. The occasional use of magic was all the advantage the mages of Benefit needed to make their experiment a resounding success. Their farm, in what is today known as Waltham, remains a Demesne and continues to attract mages. By modern standards, the mages of Benefit are hardcore hippies (they eat only what they grow and wear only what they make) and unapologetic utopians who believe that living in harmony with nature is both simpler and healthier than living in conflict with it. They are known to the mages of Boston (and Salem), but the mages of Benefit see Boston's political intrigues and infighting as dangerous, and probably contagious, and so they enter the city proper only a few times a year and otherwise keep themselves as separate from Awakened culture as possible. (See p. pp. 26-28 for more information on Benefit.)

## *Victorian Boston*

If ever an era resonated with Boston's puritanical soul, it was the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the tremendously

uptight Victorian era. Sleepers and mages alike took pride in their ability to control not just their own urges but the world around them as well.

## *Secret Societies*

For Sleepers, although being a magician (or being *thought* to be a magician) possessed a potent mystique (thanks in part to the Gothic revival that was making its way over from Europe) actually being *proved* to dabble in "that sort of thing" was grounds for social ostracism from the church and most polite company. Throughout the Victorian era, magic was among the trendiest transgressions a man could be falsely accused of. The rigid claw of Puritanism loosened not a whit in the Victorian era, and may have gripped society even a bit tighter. Practitioners of magic (both Awakened and otherwise) had to be absolute exemplars of tact and discretion if they wanted to practice magic *and* keep whatever social standing they may have held.

Facilitating this somewhat awkward double life were dozens of Sleeper secret societies that met throughout the Boston area; projects established by the Emerald Scroll cabal of the Guardians of the Veil. Such societies sprang up around any number of practices, identities or ideologies that ran contrary to prevailing Victorian mores; society members included — in various subversive permutations — artists, homosexuals, Buddhists, anarchists, feminists, Jews and an array of similarly disenfranchised groups. Members of each group typically recognized each other through complicated systems of gestures, handshakes, coded language and sartorial iconography.

Inevitably, some of these would-be magicians would actually Awaken. The Guardians were in the perfect position to lure them deeper into the Labyrinth of magical revelations and grades of initiation, leading the new mages into the real society — the Emerald Scroll — and inducting them into their order. As many of these new mages were members of high standing in Boston society, or were destined to become so through inheritance, the Guardians gained a degree of influence over Boston's Sleepers that soon eclipsed that of other orders.

The Hierarchy of the Stone Assembly knew a threat when he saw it, and began maneuvering to thwart the Emerald Scroll's power, mainly by arranging to reveal public scandals involving members of the various secret societies the Guardians shepherded, which would result in the ostracism of those members from Boston's influential circuit. It never got that far. A more potent and immanent threat arose, not in secret dens with bizarre handshakes, but in the halls of academia. The Seers of the Throne had been secretly inducting newly Awakened members from a different Sleeper institution: Harvard.

Unknown to the Secret Assembly, Harvard was growing its own small mage population under the careful cultivation of the Seers of the Throne. The Seers had infiltrated the ranks of the school's professors and administrators, either directly or through mind-controlled proxies, and from this vantage they became aware whenever a student Awakened. The new mage would be quickly indoctrinated and initiated as a Seer, all without the knowledge or awareness of mages off campus. As with the Emerald Scroll's own pool of newly initiated mages, the Seers' mages were destined, as scions of Harvard, to hold high places in Bostonian and American



society, from which they could help enact the Seers' agenda to keep the populace asleep and unaware of the possibility of magic.

The battle lines were drawn, and, as the nation itself stumbled toward World War I, the Secret Assembly began marshaling its forces to deal with the Seers threat.

### Story Hook — Secrets and Lies

The age of the secret society did not die out with the Victorian era. On the contrary, the Guardians of the Veil have found the privacy and security afforded by such arrangements to be crucial to the survival of many of the organizations favored by the Awakened. For mages trying to penetrate the world of a secret society, however, breaking through the wall of secrecy is a challenge, even with the use of magic.

As part of a quest, the characters may need to join or infiltrate a secret society. This necessitates that they be both investigators and sociologists. They will need to research their target society, attempt to discern its codes and secret gestures and gain access to the group. If the characters succeed, there may still be an

initiation to weed out the unworthy, and after the initiation will come the task of proving loyalty.

The characters may discover the difficulties of being under deep cover, including acute ethical dilemmas and confused loyalties. The type of secret society infiltrated determines the tone of such a chronicle. Infiltrating an elite gentlemen's club run by the Mysterium will be a far different experience from breaking into a Chinese tong run by the Scelesti, for example.

### *The Secret Concord*

In 1906, a cabal called the White Putnams set out to claim Salem, a ground long thought to be cursed. They were met by the Ebon Noose, who had its own designs on the city. The two cabals prepared to clash, but, instead of war, they both left the field as signatories to a strange, mystical pact. This event is explained more fully in Appendix Two: Boston in **Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 371-372, and hints about what's really behind are given on pp. 94-95 of this book. This pact, called the Secret Concord, remains a mystery to this day. Even modern-day members of the two cabals are ignorant of just what the Concord entailed. Most believe it to have been merely a declaration of alliance between two cabals that feared mutual destruction, intentionally shrouded in mystery by the cabal leaders to make their members think twice



before breaching its tenets. Others, however, believe it was something more sinister, citing the terrible death of the single person who was said to have seen the actual document.

At the time of its signing, the Concord remained a secret kept between the two cabals. Other mages thought that the White Putnams had either failed in their bid for Salem or had relinquished the town in return for some as-yet-unstated boon from the Ebon Noose. The Noose did take up residence in Salem and, from their base, began to consolidate more power, knowing that the Stone Assembly was far too distracted by the threats posed by the Seers of the Throne and even the Emerald Scroll to pay much attention to the pagan outsiders.

The Noose was focused on creating a community and avoiding a repeat of Salem, not making a lunge for power. They were highly successful in creating a sense of community among Massachusetts' disenfranchised mages. With the groundwork laid, the Ebon Noose was perfectly situated to welcome a new crop of mages that were pouring into the area on the tide of immigration. The newcomers were generally frightened and uncertain of what to expect in America. By watching for the Awakened and welcoming them into the community, the Ebon Noose earned these new mages' loyalty and thereby swelled its influence.

It was an incredibly effective strategy. In the space of a few years, the Noose went from being a loose network of a few Shamans and Enchanters to being a powerful Awakened organization that even the Stone Assembly hesitated to challenge.

### *The Irish Witches*

A wave of Irish immigrants, spurred by the Potato Famine, hit Boston in the mid-19th century. Among their number were an unusually high proportion of Celtic fortune-twisters and spirit-talkers who had become unwelcome in their native land following a spate of rumors alleging that witchcraft had caused the famine.

These immigrants settled among Boston's Irish population, and tended not to mix with the upper classes that the Stone Assembly looked to for new Awakened apprentices. Some of the Irish immigrants formed independent cabals that refused to have anything to do with the local Consilium, but some found common cause among the Ebon Noose mages of Salem and often acted as that cabal's eyes and ears in Boston.

### *The Italian Stregas*

The mages of Ireland were far from the last to bring their magic to the new world. Starting around the same time (the mid-19th century), a slower wave of immigration from Italy also changed the face of Boston and its Awakened community. The Enchanters and Shamans of the Benandanti ("Good Walkers"), their rival Malandanti ("Bad Walkers") and the old women *stregas* of Italy followed (or brought) their families. The Italian witches were less fearful and less social than the Irish, and their magic tended to have a slightly darker tint to it. Whereas most Irish immigrant mages who settled in Boston seemed to come from the Thyrsus and Acanthus Paths, many more Moros and Mastigos mages came from Italy. (A small number of Catholic Theurgists immigrated as well; however, they had a more comfortable time of it in Italy so, consequently, they were less motivated to abandon their ancestral home to make the voyage to America). The Ebon Noose initially hesitated to reach out to the Italians, but, after a brief debate, American optimism won out, and the group adopted an open-door policy for all Awakened immigrants.

### *The Portuguese Fetceiristas*

The last major wave of immigrants into Massachusetts largely comprised Portuguese fishermen from the Azores. They did not add their number to Boston's burgeoning population, but instead settled in the southern portion of the commonwealth (its official designation) around Fall River and New Bedford toward the end of the 19th century. And, inescapably, among their number were a handful of Awakened who practiced the Portuguese witchcraft called *fetceira*. Much of their magic dealt with fishing, whaling and ships, and many were also accomplished weather witches. The arrival of the *fetceiristas* had little effect on Boston's ethnically complicated mage community, but the arrival of the Portuguese did see to it that Massachusetts had, and still has, a population of mages in the less urban areas.

## Death and Madness

Just as New England was the favored port of entry for Awakened from Europe, so was New England the first arrival point for a darker magical phenomenon from Europe: the Tremere liches. In 1878 a state-run asylum for lunatics opened up near Danvers (formerly Salem Village). Distracted as the Awakened of Salem were by the presence that haunted Salem, they paid the asylum little attention, but the Tremere-afflicted mages zeroed in on it like predators to the call of the wounded — and they had the good sense to be stealthy about it. Working in tandem, two "generations" of Tremere instructors and apprentices made a Demesne out of the asylum; their twisted influence spread out from there. By the turn of the century, the Dark Crossings sanctum was entrenched enough that it had nothing to fear from its neighbors. The mad were easy targets for the soul-hungry Tremere, and the liches counted the entire institution as its sanctum.

With the closing of the asylum in the '90s, the Tremere dispersed, although a few remained in the area, hoping to reclaim their easy access to unwanted souls. The asylum and its grounds remain a Demesne and a potent Hallow, although the Mana produced is strongly tainted with the resonance of death and decay. "The Castle" has long haunted the minds of those living in the area, and with good reason.

See Chapter Three: Renegade Mages for more on the Danvers Lunatic Asylum.

### *Recent History*

The 20th century was traumatic for the Awakened of Boston and, indeed, all of New England. Change occurred at a shocking pace.

The simmering conflict between the Seers of the Throne and the Stone Assembly took its toll on local mages, especially those who supported the elder cabal. As the Seers began targeting the Stone Assembly's allies, rather than the Assembly itself, mages began to withdraw from association with the Consilium, arguing that its leaders were failing to protect them. Many newly initiated mages came from the web of occult influence created by the Emerald Scroll, and they followed that cabal's lead in questioning the legitimacy of the Stone Assembly's rule over the council.

The powerful old guard of the Assembly, of course, was more condescending than concerned. They and their forefathers had been firmly ensconced in Boston for centuries and had nothing to fear. Or so they thought. They were unaware of just how soft their support was among local mages and how decadent they had become in their own right. Nor did they have a good understanding of how strong the Seers had grown — or the lengths they would go.

The Seers weren't interested in waging war in any direct magical way. They worked through the channels they knew best: bureaucracies nudged by Fate, smear campaigns augmented with Mind magic and enslavement created by magic.

By the end of World War I, the mighty fathers of the Stone Assembly began falling, one by one. In 1917, Tobias Dalton, a master of Mind and Prime as well as a temperance sympathizer, was found overdosed on laudanum in a gutter in Back Bay. William Wolfe, the Consilium's Sentinel and foremost member of the Adamantine Arrow, was arrested for "crimes

against nature" and found dead inexplicably in his jail cell. Theodore Newbury was run over by a runaway automobile.

By 1923, the last bastions of the Stone Assembly's control over Boston had disappeared, as had most of its members. More fled than were actually killed, but that mattered little. Their power was broken, as was the Consilium. In their place, the Emerald Scroll cabal of the Guardians of the Veil rose to claim the seat of the Hierarch.

### Story Hook —

#### The Once and Future Kings

The Stone Assembly was once among the oldest and most powerful cabals in America. Its last surviving members allegedly abandoned everything in their haste to escape the plots of the Seers, but that's not quite accurate. The Assembly's armory was enormous and contained an array of potent enchanted items — and it never fell into Seer hands. What the Assembly did with their renowned store of magical weapons is unknown. It's possible that they've all been spirited away. It's just as possible that they've simply been hidden with extremely potent magic. (See also "The Library of Elders," p. 34.)





Mages might be approached by a solitary mage claiming to know the secrets of the Stone Assembly. He claims to have information that will lead them to the armory, but he will give it to them only in exchange for their help in cleansing Harvard of the Seers and establishing the power of the Stone Assembly in Boston once again. If their contact is telling the truth, the characters have everything to gain — status, power and lots of Artifacts — by helping to re-establish the Stone Assembly. If he's lying, however, the characters could set themselves up for a lot of pain for a non-existent reward.

The Emerald Scroll signaled their intent to leave the Seers alone, so long as their cabals did not extend too far from Harvard. The Seers acquiesced, secretly relieved, for the conflict had cost them too. A short period of relative peace among the Awakened began, one that would soon be frayed by the upstart Free Council and its mages' deliberate provocation of the Emerald Scroll's claim over territory and Sleeper occultists. Their wizards' war saw the end of Guardian power over Boston, the retreat of the Free Council into its own affairs and the end of Boston's Concilium, as no cabal could agree on a Hierarchy or even acceptable Councilors.

The Mysterium tried to organize a new Consilium on a number of occasions, but few other cabals of any note would get behind their efforts. Boston became a somewhat lawless city, as far as the Awakened were concerned, with each looking to his own affairs. Finally, in 1980, the Ebon Noose publicly announced the existence of the Secret Concord. With their allies the White Putnams, the Noose declared a new Consilium, to be ruled from Salem. The shock of this magical pact, long rumored but shrouded in mystery, worried the Awakened of Boston, but, clearly, the Ebon Noose and Putnams were too strong to ignore.

Today, the Ebon Noose still rules from its roost in Salem. While some mages grumble now and then about attempting to wrest power from the Noose, most attempts have failed before they really even begin. Some mages whisper that the Noose is protected by the Secret Concord, that the pact ceded the area to them and that no mage can rule without first breaking this pact. But how is that to be done? Who or what is the rumored third signatory to the pact? Perhaps if he or she or it can be found, and bargained with anew, Boston could finally see new leadership. But at what cost?

## *Around Boston*

Boston attracts mages from many regions, not only as a port city and stopover for international flights, but as a nexus of old legends promising ancient Artifacts and strange resonance. The Awakened residents prefer to keep the region and all its mysteries for themselves, and don't easily befriend the strangers who come seeking magic. To both residents and tourists, Boston is bigger and more haunted than it may seem upon first glance.

Relative to its significance in America's history and its standing among the Awakened in the Northeast, Boston

proper is a relatively small city of only 600,000 people, and many of the institutions that Boston is famed for, although located in the greater Boston metropolitan area, are not inside the city proper. Two of the most famous, MIT and Harvard University, are both north of Boston in the adjoining city of Cambridge. That said, the city of Boston is a major American city in every sense of the word, and it boasts a world-class array of neighborhoods, ethnicities and attractions, some of which are well-known to the area's mages — and some of which are feared. More than just a city, Boston is the urban hub of a megalopolis radiating out into the surrounding landscape for miles in all directions.

Boston, along with its outlying areas, is the home of an Awakened community that has its own social protocols, values and mores. Sleepers have no idea that mages walk among them and that an invisible Gauntlet separates them from a world stranger and more magical than any they imagine.

This section reveals Boston at the street level, characterizing the city and its environs through its wide range of component neighborhoods and giving players and Storytellers alike a taste of the city.

## *Boston's Character*

There is perhaps no better, kinder, more open and accepting city in the United States than Boston — provided you are extraordinarily wealthy and your family has lived there for at least two generations. Everyone else can expect a cordial cold shoulder. Some claim Boston has traded warmth for efficiency. Others blame the transient nature of the students attending the area's 50-some colleges and universities. Whatever the cause, Boston is an unfriendly — some say paranoid — city. Locals keep outsiders at arm's length (defining "outsider" as anyone they've known for less than a decade). Bostonians don't return phone calls. They turn down invitations and rarely issue any of their own. Anyone moving to Boston for any reason other than to attend one of the many colleges or universities in the area can expect to be treated as something of a pariah for a minimum of two years before being hesitantly and grudgingly allowed into the community.

Oddly, this may benefit the city's Awakened population. With such unusually high levels of urban anonymity, mages rarely find it difficult to pass unnoticed down a street.

This density of the Awakened extends out from Boston proper like tendrils that reach up to Danvers and Salem, west to Northampton and east to Provincetown. Boston and its environs boast a number of known Hallows — simultaneously a boon and an automatic high-alert situation for territorial mages. The tension this causes among mages fighting for these magical resources is but one of the driving forces behind the history and current events of the Awakened.

Boston is a very balkanized city. Its assorted populations do an uncanny job of existing in the same geographical area without ever actually mingling. The students mix with each other, but rarely with students from other schools and almost never with the city's permanent residents. The white- and blue-collar sectors ignore each other as much and as smoothly as possible. The city's black and white populations are as mutually exclusive as both groups can make themselves, to the point of living in parallel worlds. Likewise, the Awakened have no time for the Sleepers or for Boston's other supernatural residents — unless forced to deal with a *situation*

—and behave in all ways as though they would prefer not to have to deal with them at all. Almost every one of Boston's component populations is oddly insular and exclusive, and, while several of these groups may be at odds with one another, no one group would be so rude as to let these frictions boil over into a manifest conflict, so Boston is kept in a state of perpetual cold simmer. Should these assorted antagonisms ever flare up, the cool demeanor of the city would rapidly fall into chaos.

What no longer shows on the city's face, at least not without active snooping, is the city's relatively recent near failure. For decades, Boston foundered. For many years, the rich holed up on Beacon Hill, allowing the rest of the city to become one massive slum. The city's brick Victorian buildings were allowed to fall into egregious disrepair, and the safe sections of the city became smaller by the year. By the early seventies, Boston was an urban nightmare zone.

### Mass Transit

Boston proper does not cover a great deal of space. Most of the city is concentrated on one fat peninsular outcropping (the inability of Boston to sprawl like other cities is one of the reasons for its outrageous real estate prices), and is easily walkable. For getting to the more removed neighborhoods, the MBTA (Metropolitan Boston Transit Authority), more commonly called "the T," is a commuter's best bet. It is America's oldest subway system, is insanely crowded, runs at odd intervals (and not at all between midnight and five in the morning) and houses veritable swarms of rats in some of its tunnels. Th T does a decent job, however, of transporting people around the city.

For a full map of the MBTA system, and the insights into Boston's geography it provides, go to [http://www.mbta.com/traveling/t/schedules\\_subway.asp](http://www.mbta.com/traveling/t/schedules_subway.asp).

And for those wondering why there's a train going to Wonderland (the last stop on the Blue Line), Wonderland is nothing more than a dog racing track.

### Neighborly, Neat and Orderly

Neighborhood councils are a potent force in Boston. These small neighborhood organizations have a remarkable (some say excessive) amount of pull with the city and reinforce Boston's puritanical image by preventing the opening of new bars and clubs and shutting down existing businesses that are deemed too noisy or "troublesome." A perfectly legal business can spend a fortune obtaining all the necessary licenses and jump through any number of legal hoops only to be told, a day or two before opening, that the neighborhood council has deemed the business somehow incompatible with the neighborhood character, thereby preventing the business from ever opening. Any mage wanting to avoid

trouble with her neighbors is advised to present a straitlaced image and to save the eccentricities for the sanctum.

## The Neighborhoods

Boston is known for its role in the Revolutionary War and gets a vast amount of tourist trade due to the city's history. Those who visit, however, discover Boston to be a city of exquisite architecture, high culture, excellent restaurants and intelligent, liberal-minded people. Any of these can be found throughout the city's many neighborhood areas, and these are the mundane attractions that keep the Awakened flocking to the city.

Boston is a Frankensteinian city that has grown by razing hills, filling in marshes and portions of the bay and ravenously annexing nearby towns. The city's character comes largely from its component neighborhoods, which themselves span the gamut from the urbane to the desolate. Boston proper may be a relatively wealthy city with a college-educated populace, but many of its outlying neighborhoods and suburbs have a much more industrial, blue-collar feel. Rightly or wrongly, more refined Bostonians often develop a bit of a siege mentality with regard to venturing beyond the comfortable gentility of Boston's more civilized neighborhoods. This is far less prevalent now than it was 30 years ago at the nadir of Boston's decline, but Boston is a very traditional city and old habits die hard.

For mages, this siege mentality is a reality of life. For them, however, the causes of this attitude are far more rational. For the Awakened, some areas really *are* much more dangerous than others, for any number of reasons.

The following list provides a taste of Boston's neighborhoods. The list is by no means exhaustive, but it does emphasize places frequented by the Awakened and places with which mages are most likely to be familiar.

### Allston/Brighton

Allston and Brighton are large adjoining neighborhoods connected to Boston by a thin ribbon of land and the MBTA Green Line. Both neighborhoods used to be agricultural land and stockyards, but they're now more known for their population of party animals than farm animals. Boston College and Boston University are both located in Allston, and it shows. A great deal of renovation has taken place in Allston in recent years resulting in a range of new bars and restaurants that appeal to the young. Allston is a loud, youthful and cheap neighborhood. Thrift stores are everywhere, and the street-level mage will have an easy time finding what she needs to get by. Established mages often keep an eye out for those students who have recently Awakened in hopes of recruiting for their magical order, if not their cabal.

Brighton isn't quite as noisy and boisterous as Allston, but it has a similar student ghetto feel. Graduate students and young families make up a large portion of Brighton's population in addition to a few young mages who have just begun their magical studies.

### Brookline

Surrounded by Boston on three sides, Brookline is almost an island, more of a neighborhood than a separate city. Only



the fact that Brookline won't allow Boston to annex it allows it to remain a separate legal entity.

Brookline is a sleepy community. It's neither where people go to party nor is it hip. It is, for the most part, a quiet residential area with a good park system and lots of green space. Many professors from the local schools call Brookline home, and the age of the average Brookline resident hovers around the low 40s.

Since the exodus from Mattapan (pp. 20-21) at the end of the '60s, Brookline has become the main Jewish neighborhood in the Boston area. A solitary but highly respected Theurgist-rabbi lives in Brookline. He keeps largely to himself and his community of Sleeper Jews, playing little part in the Awakened politics of Boston.

### *Solitary Mage: Rabbi Tzaddi*

**Quote:** *You do not belong here. I want nothing to do with your silly 'Atlantis.' Leave an old man to his studies.*

**Path:** Obrimos

**Order:** Apostate

**Background:** Rabbi Tzaddi Awakened in Boston but was never discovered by any mage, and hence never became initiated into an order. By the time he was noticed, he was already set in his ways and had no desire to be part of the Awakened community. As he saw it, most mages are muddled and confused. A little more Torah would set them straight.

He lives in a tight-knit Jewish community and rarely even leaves the neighborhood. He rarely uses his magic; when he does, it's mainly to better understand the forces of Prime and Mind.

**Description:** Tzaddi is an old man with unruly wisps of hair that frame his head like a corona. He has large, thoughtful eyes, and he always wears his yarmulke.

**Storytelling Hints:** Rabbi Tzaddi is in his late 60s and prone to a certain degree of bullheadedness. He is a caring man, though distant and a bit suspicious. He lives to learn, not fight, feud or conspire. His dedication to his studies is beyond question. He speaks several languages and reads



and writes several more. He serves his community as an elder rabbi, and he's very well connected in Brookline's Jewish community.

**Abilities:**

**Improvised Prime magic (dice pool 8)** — Rabbi Tzaddi's best Arcanum is Prime spells. Although he knows only one or two rites, picked up from a grimoire, he is competent at casting improvised Prime spells.

**Jewish occultism (dice pool 9)** — Rabbi Tzaddi has long striven to explain magic and Awakening through the terms of Jewish mysticism; consequently, he is a particularly erudite scholar of the Kabbalah.

### *Fenway*

The Fenway neighborhood is best known outside of Boston for Fenway Park, the city's enormous old baseball stadium. Within the city itself, it's known for other reasons, not the least of which is the area's heavy concentration of bars and nightclubs.

Most of the Fenway neighborhood is glaringly illuminated at night by a lurid, multi-story neon Citgo sign, lending everything and everyone in the area a surreal glow. The college students who make up a large portion of the residents don't seem to mind, as the nightlife here, centered on the infamous Lansdowne Street, is quite distracting.

Cheap housing appeals to some mages just as much as it does to students and young professionals, and the somewhat funky character of the Fenway neighborhood has its own charm. The kind of nightlife found here is of the more garish and glitzy Hooters and beer bong variety so, so while some mages may need to let off some steam on occasion, the bars of Lansdowne aren't big attractions for the Awakened.

### *The Fens*

Along the banks of the slow moving and aptly named Muddy River, just south of Fenway Park, there's an expanse of low, boggy parkland that gives the Fenway its name. Essentially used as green space by the city, the character of the fens changes dramatically when the sun goes down.

The more elevated sections of the fens, just off Boylston Street, are devoted to dozens of large community garden plots, and summer weekends find a swarm of eager gardeners descending on the area to nurture, prune and tend to their small garden plots. Once the first frost hits, usually by late October, the community gardens become lonely places until spring.

Farther down the bank, between the community gardens and the banks of the Muddy River, is a wide swath of land that is neither solid land nor river but rather a muddy bog. Several acres of thick rushes, twice the height of a tall man, rise up from the marshy ground, and, at night, lonely men come to the fens and navigate the maze of rushes to find others for companionship. From late evening until dawn, particularly during the summer, dozens of men can be seen prowling the manicured paths between the community gardens and the maze of rushes. Several times that number can be found deep in the labyrinth getting what they came here for.

Cruising the fens, whatever else it may be, is a dangerous pastime. Not only are muggings and bashings commonplace here, but there have been wholesale disappearances. That comes as no surprise to Boston's mages; the fens are known to be a popular feeding ground for vampires. Any mage



trabbold

looking for sacrificial victims can find one here, but he might have to compete with other predators, including serial killers and the undead.

Most of the Awakened community is at least vaguely aware of the place's reputation, but the occasional mage still gives in to the temptation of the fens.

### *Shadow Realm: The Bog Locus*

A spirit locus exists in the fens, deep in the thick rushes and marshy ground frequented by night visitors. The spirits here are drawn to the fens' resonance of lust and muggy sweat, although some are attracted to the violence of the muggings.

### *Mattapan*

Boston once had a thriving Jewish community with a population of nearly 100,000 located in the neighborhoods of Mattapan, Dorchester and Roxbury. Blue Hill Avenue could have been a street in any pre-war Jewish ghetto in Europe. A small cabal of Jewish mages regularly ignored the call of the magical orders to stay in their community and protected it with covert magic (only Rabbi Tzaddi remains of that cabal; see p. 19). This close-knit community was strong until the mid-1960s, when local banks, controlled largely by the Roman Catholic Church, decided that they didn't want a unified Jewish community in the Boston area and took steps to rectify what they saw as a problem.

For several years, starting in 1965, the three Jewish neighborhoods — with their neatly kept houses and old synagogues — were quietly targeted by banks as the only area in the

entire city where low-income blacks could get loans to buy homes. These loans required no assets and very little credit history, and, by 1974, 50% of those who had bought homes with such loans had abandoned them or lost them through foreclosure. By that time, violence and synagogue burnings had become common news as the black and Jewish communities turned on each other. The area rapidly transformed into a crime-ridden, rat-infested urban wasteland epitomizing all that was wrong with American cities.

It is strongly believed that the Talmudic Enchanter, Solomon ben-Cohen, placed a curse on the entire neighborhood (or possibly just on the black community) the night a band of thugs torched his synagogue, because the speed with which the neighborhood plummeted into decay was truly remarkable. The resonance of the neighborhoods remains somewhat tainted, although that's starting to fade.

Since the early '90s, those three neighborhoods have been recovering from the blight they suffered, though at different rates. Prior to the '90s, all three of these neighborhoods were populated almost entirely by blacks; although few Jews can even be found there any more, the burned-out shells of a couple of synagogues still stand, mute testimony to the destruction of a lively Jewish community and the urban disintegration that followed.

Today, Mattapan is a residential neighborhood largely composed of orderly houses and quiet streets. It is also exemplary of Boston's extreme degree of segregation. Caucasian faces are rare here. Middle-class blacks predominate; there is little racial diversity. A few solitary mages, mostly

unaffiliated with any order or cabal, sometimes reside here, usually associated with the large Haitian population.

## *Dorchester*

Around the turn of the 20th century, Dorchester was one of the wealthier neighborhoods in Boston and boasted an array of gorgeous Victorian homes, particularly around Ashmont Hill. The historic value of the homes helped Dorchester recover more quickly than either Mattapan or Roxbury from the urban traumas of the '60s and '70s. Dorchester is currently the most integrated of these three neighborhoods as whites and Latinos have begun pouring back into the area, attracted by cheap real estate on tree-lined streets.

Dorchester is a popular neighborhood for mages seeking to establish sanctums. The large, beautiful houses easily provide room for more than one cabal, and the plentitude of trees is likely to attract mages who prefer a more natural setting for their magic.

## *Roxbury*

Southwest of Boston proper is Roxbury, the neighborhood most associated with poverty, crime and urban desolation. In the '70s, Roxbury was the poorest and most blighted of Boston's surrounding communities, but even it is now benefiting from Boston's general upturn as well as the wave of gentrification that began in the mid-'90s. The recovery is slow. Of the three neighborhoods, Roxbury had the least to interest buyers who might start the wave of gentrification and the most to discourage them. If one Boston neighborhood is avoided more than any other, this is it.

Roxbury is also the home of Mama Desta, a powerful Boston Tremere lich. Mama Desta oversees a network of children whom she pays to use as pawns. A large minority of Roxbury's children are in Mama Desta's employ, and it's unlikely that other mages will be able to get around Roxbury unseen unless they use magic. (See Chapter Three for more information on Mama Desta.)

## *Sanctum: Emerald Scroll and Shangri-La*

Roxbury is the home of the Emerald Scroll, the Dead Wrens' grungy watering hole (see Mage: The Awakening, p. 389) and Shangri-La, the rundown tenement housing the Company (see p. 68).

## *Twilight: Mama's Ghosts*

Mama Desta has bound a number of ghosts to her service through the creation of anchors. People with the ability to sense (or interact with) ghosts will be able to take note of this. Most of Mama Desta's ghosts are gangsters who tried to move against her somehow and whose souls she found unappetizing (usually because they were too brutal). She can command these ghosts to do her bidding, and they do so with great zeal. Use the traits for the Poltergeist (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 215) if she brings them into play.

## *Back Bay*

The actual bay this neighborhood was named after was little more than a stagnant pool of seawater, and it was filled in during the last half of the 19th century. The bay is now one

of the city's wealthiest neighborhoods and sports an extensive collection of brick row houses and high-end boutique stores, most of which are along Newbury or Boylston streets.

Vendors hawk mass-market mainstream culture from carts, from kiosks and from malls. Although the malls and boutiques are slick and full of pretty, successful people, there's little reason for most mages to spend time here once they've finished their shopping.

## *Sanctum: The Putnam Estate*

The sanctum of the White Putnams cabal is a walled house on a side street near the Commonwealth Avenue Mall. See pp. 88-89.

## *Shadow Realm: Stagnant Pool*

Those attentive to such things will notice that the Gauntlet is particularly thick throughout this area (Strength 5). On the other side of the Gauntlet, the Shadow Realm geography is shockingly different from its material realm counterpart. While most of the buildings do appear there, they are partially submerged in water — in the Shadow, the bay still holds sway.

## *The South End*

Calling the South End a trendy neighborhood is both understating the point and failing to give the area (and its inhabitants) credit for its astonishing turnaround. At late as the early '90s, Boston's South End was an urban nightmare not much better than Roxbury. Crack whores and street thugs controlled the streets, and the long boulevards of grand old 19th-century buildings were steadily falling into seamy disrepair. Broken windows, burned-out cars and neglected children were commonplace on every block of Tremont Street.

And then the urban pioneers moved in. Consisting mostly of gay men with disposable income, no kids to worry about and an appreciation for beautiful architecture, these shock troops of the gentrification army bought neglected, unwanted and run-down old buildings for very little money and began fixing them up. Buying and renovating old South End buildings became The Thing To Do among the affluent members of Boston's gay community, and the results were remarkable. Buildings on the verge of demolition became elegant, rehabilitated trophy homes. In the space of five years, the streets were safe. In the space of 10 years, property values had increased tenfold. Now, where once the length of Tremont Street was an urban eyesore lined with grimy, shuttered storefronts, now is one of Boston's hippest and trendiest neighborhoods, sporting restaurants that keep the area bustling seven nights a week.

Any member of the Awakened who fancies himself "hip" is likely to visit the South End on occasion.

## *Twilight: Linger On*

Some buildings here are haunted due to deaths that took place when the neighborhood was in eclipse. Mages may find this out in dramatic style if they use the Death 1 "Speak with the Dead" spell (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 135).

## *Shadow Realm: Decrepitude*

While the material-realm neighborhood is doing quite well, the Shadow Realm of the South End has yet to catch up.



The buildings are older, and some still carry the negative resonance of despair, anger and envy instilled here by the intense emotions of the now long-gone junkies and bums who used to live on the material side of the Gauntlet. Spirits attracted to such resonance lurk in these places, eager to harass anyone who crosses their turf.

## Beacon Hill

The first European settler in what would become the city of Boston was the Reverend William Blaxton, who arrived in 1617. He lived alone for five years on what is now Beacon Hill before more Europeans arrived. In those days, a number of ley lines intersected on the top of Beacon Hill, and it benefited from excellent resonance. The ley lines have long since dried up or gone underground. Now Beacon Hill alone is home over to 10,000 people.

In the current day, bluntly put, this is where the money is. Old money, well connected and strategically spent, made Beacon Hill what it is today. Although there are suburbs of Boston with higher per-capita incomes, within the city of Boston, Beacon Hill is the site of the city's most celebrated dynasties and most prestigious addresses. Brick row houses line the narrow old cobblestone streets, and the city's two biggest parks, the Boston Common and the Boston Public Garden, are here. Many of the city's power brokers live on Beacon Hill, a very convenient state of affairs for them since the State House Rotunda is only a short walk away.

Beacon Hill is neither trendy nor hip. On the contrary, its aura of Puritanism casts a pall on anything that is not the strict provenance of wealth and privilege.

## *Sanctums: The Academy and the Temple of the Gryphon*

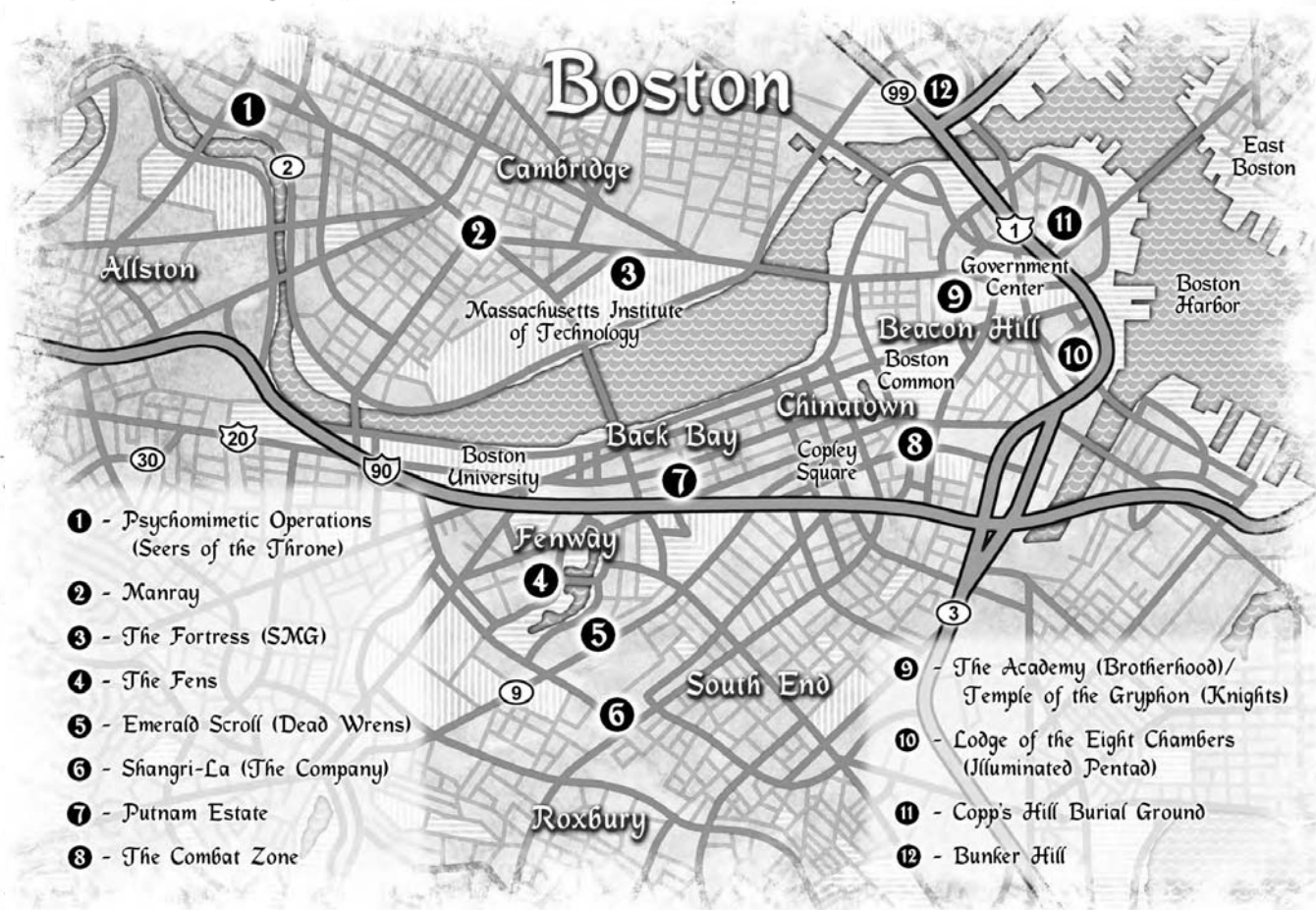
The Brotherhood of Ineffable Truth cabal maintains the large, walled-in apartment building known as the Academy. The north wing serves as the sanctum of the Exalted Knights of the Gryphon cabal. See p. 37.

## *Twilight: Empty Anchors*

An unusual number of old buildings and residences — now missing in the material realm — appear in ephemeral form in Twilight, as if they are ghosts of their former glories. Odder still, they appear to be empty of any ghosts that might reside in them, as if the buildings were at one time powerful anchors whose ghosts have departed or been destroyed.

## *The North End*

For decades the North End was known for the part it played in the Revolutionary War. The Old North Church (where Paul Revere hung his lanterns) is here, as are Paul Revere's house and Copp's Hill Burying Ground — a very old cemetery (see pp. 120-122). The North End's narrow winding streets represent the oldest sections of Boston and its historic city center.



Waves of immigration have changed the North End, giving it a distinctly European flavor. Until Boston's disastrous attempts at urban renewal in the '50s razed much of the North End to put a highway through town, the neighborhood was also the home of a large and thriving Italian community. While it's still Boston's "Little Italy," it's a shadow of what it once was.

That said, the North End has been called the most European neighborhood of one of America's most European cities. Many Italian immigrants still make the North End their home and bring the culture of their homeland with them.

The many wharfs of the waterfront, including the Coast Guard pier, are arrayed around the North End like pins radiating from a pincushion.

### *Downtown*

Located between Boston Common and the North End is Boston's downtown, an unremarkable collection of slightly worn skyscrapers. The resonance of this area has been poisoned by construction and the fracturing of ley lines such that many Halls that once existed here have gone dormant.

The Dead Wrens (pp. 48-53) maintain a warehouse along the waterfront, where they store their "booty" before transporting it to their sanctum in Roxbury.

### *Sanctum: The Lodge of Eight Chambers*

Located on the top two floors of a skyscraper in the Financial District, the Lodge of Eight Chambers is the sanctum of the Illuminated Pentad. See pp. 84-85.

### *Chinatown*

Since 1870, Boston's Chinatown has been the first home for many Chinese immigrants. Boston's population of Chinese immigrants is relatively small and not particularly well connected; consequently, Boston's Chinatown, unlike that of many American cities, is far from being a tourist attraction. On the contrary, this neighborhood has been one of the city's problem areas for decades, the center of much of the city's sex trade and gang violence. Since the '80s, however, efforts to reclaim "the Combat Zone" have been making headway, and Chinatown has benefited from that immeasurably. But with the impact of the Combat Zone waning, the business sector is now looking at Chinatown with a hungry eye. Chinese buildings and businesses are now being bought by developers and torn down to make way for upscale restaurants and hotels, and the Chinese who have lived in the neighborhood all their lives are being forced to leave the city for suburbs with smaller Chinese communities.

### *Unknown Demesne: The Combat Zone*

In the 1970s, an urban blight seeped through Boston and grabbed a firm hold on several square blocks of the downtown area, most of which were in Boston's Chinatown. Only the Glass Slipper, a strip club, and a handful of adult bookstores prospered at the time; most other businesses were forced out of the neighborhood (if not out of business altogether) by the high crime rate and the neighborhood's expedited decay. Drug dealing, prostitution, gang violence and other sorts of violent crime were both widespread and blatant.

For many young mages, the Combat Zone was a thrill ride or, perhaps, a game of chance. Paradoxes, it was noted, were rare in the Combat Zone. It was clearly a Demesne, but no one could determine its exact type, the realm or realms from which it drew its power. Likewise, the soul stones that formed it could not be found, leading some to believe that the place was a naturally occurring Demesne. Many young mages took the ambiance of lawlessness as an open invitation to vigilantism or just an excuse to let off steam. Sometimes these mages' efforts were directed at each other, but more often they were directed at criminals who mistook the mages for easy targets.

Eventually, this vigilantism attracted the attention of St. Michael's Promise (see pp. 98-102), a cabal of fundamentalist Catholic Banishers who started turning up to ambush and kill mages who had the temerity to use magic openly.

Although some younger mages continue the tradition of performing brazen magic here, the neighborhood has lost the post-apocalyptic feel that made "patrolling the Zone" a ritual of mage-hood throughout the '70s and '80s; but the presence of the Banishers makes the Combat Zone more dangerous now than it was in decades past.

### **Story Hook:**

#### **Restoring the Land**

For years the seedy neighborhood known as the Combat Zone was renowned among Boston's mages for its protection from Paradoxes. Mages could cast vulgar magic with no care, so long as Sleepers did not witness it. The Combat Zone became something of a "poor man's Demesne" for those mages who didn't have the magic or the resources to create such an area themselves.

For the last couple of years, however, the mundane world seems to have crept in and damaged the area. The Demesne's Paradox protection qualities seem to be fluctuating and even disappearing. Some mages claim that disruptions caused by the Big Dig destroyed the harmonious flow of ley lines through the area and disrupted the local *feng shui*.

If someone doesn't do something about this soon, the area's special qualities might disappear. Complicating any attempt to reverse the damage is the presence the cabal of Banishers called St. Michael's Promise, who are likely to do anything in their power to stop mages from fixing the problem.

### *South Boston*

More commonly known as "Southie," South Boston is populated largely by blue-collar Irish immigrants and their descendents. It's a toss-up whether there are more Catholic churches or neighborhood pubs in the area, but Southie seems to have gotten stuck in the late '50s, and there's not

much to draw people to the neighborhood. Those with talent or potential typically flee, moving up to Boston proper or elsewhere, leaving the surly, pious souls of South Boston trapped in their chronically worn neighborhood that feels nearly 50 years out of step with the times. The tightly knit community of South Boston is too conscious of outsiders (some might say blatantly xenophobic) to be a comfortable place for mages (or any other supernaturals) who do not have a long history there.

More recently, St. Michael's Promise has taken to "cleansing" any kind of supernatural activity that does pop up, leading some mages to believe that the Banishers might be based out of Southie and going to the Combat Zone to do the majority of their hunting.

## *Jamaica Plain*

Once something of a run-down neighborhood, Jamaica Plain (or J.P. as it's commonly called) has experienced a major resurgence in recent years and now threatens to become shamelessly trendy. The neighborhood has attained an unusual balance of chic and shabby that makes it popular with recent college graduates and landed gentry alike. The neighborhood is also a bit farther from Boston than many suburbs and sports its own large pond, which gives the area the feel of a small town. While J.P. doesn't have much of a nightlife, it's known for a great array of brunch spots.

## *Roslindale*

Residents who get priced out of Jamaica Plain or West Roxbury by a wave of yuppie invaders may find themselves fleeing to the slightly grittier neighborhood called Roslindale. This neighborhood is often touted as "the next hip neighborhood," but it remains more than a little rough around the edges, despite a handful of rehabilitated houses and trendy shops. Roslindale is one of the few truly ethnically diverse neighborhoods in Boston. The neighborhoods of Roslindale are so eclectic that it's not particularly noteworthy to see odd groups of individuals gathering or going about their mysterious business. The exact roughness that intimidates young families facilitates a mage's existence in Roslindale because people know that it's better just to mind their own business.

## *Farther Afield*

Boston does not exist in a vacuum. On the contrary, the city is at the heart of a sprawling megalopolis that extends north almost to New Hampshire and south most of the way to Providence, Rhode Island. Focusing on Boston proper would ignore many of the aspects that make Boston the haven it is for the Awakened. Beyond Boston's greater metropolitan area are regions and towns that play an important role in the stories that unfold in Boston proper. Below are some of the suburbs and nearby communities that play prominent roles in the daily lives of Boston's mages.

## *Cambridge*

To the north and west of Boston, separated from the city proper by the intervening Charles River, lies the highly educated liberal bastion of Cambridge. In addition to Harvard and MIT, Cambridge is home to a number of Buddhist

monasteries, New Age bookstores, alternative religious centers and similar places of importance to the area's Awakened community. The prevailing atmosphere is one of unbridled intellectual exploration, and many who find themselves in Cambridge for school find that they like it enough to stay.

## *Treaty Zone: Manray*

If any place could be considered to be a "watering hole" for Boston's (or, more accurately, Cambridge's) supernatural community, it would be the black-painted dance club and bar called Manray. This isn't where mages go to do business (that would be the Emerald Scroll, in Roxbury); this is where they go to cut loose with other like-minded Awakened folks. The club's halls, bars and dance floors have been the setting for many meetings between those Twilight people who exist neither as part of humanity nor removed from it. The club's Sleeper habitués are so colorful, so diverse and so jaded that no mere oddity of appearance is likely to garner attention of any sort. Suit drinks with Mohawk, straightedge chats with burnout and witch chats with tech-geek, all with equal ease. A mage needing to contact another mage — or possibly even a member of one of Boston's other supernatural communities — could do so at Manray in relative safety. The place is well known for its reputation as neutral territory, and individuals come here from as far away as Connecticut and Maine to conduct diplomatic missions in the environs of the club.

Manray's unspoken rules are simple and quickly passed around by word of mouth: No killing for any reason. No fighting for any reason. No magic for any reason. The rules, enforced if necessary by the cabals that frequent the place, serve to keep everyone on an equal footing, and are even acknowledged (most of the time) by Harvard's Seers of the Throne. Mages have been known to interpret the no magic rule as meaning no *vulgar* magic, but even in those cases they'll use spells typically only for communicating with associates across the crowded bar or similar non-hostile purposes. Anything else endangers the club's value as a diplomatic resource between the city's supernatural factions, and that would be a loss all the way around.

The truce zone is only official inside Manray itself, but extends, unofficially, for a radius of "a few blocks," however that gets defined. The neighborhood outside the bar is located between MIT and Harvard and largely consists of housing for students of those two universities.

The area outside the truce zone, especially the grungier section west of Massachusetts Avenue, has seen some ugly encounters, but police patrolling the area between Harvard and MIT are somewhat more accustomed to seeing odd sights than their counterparts in, say, Peoria or Duluth.

## *Sanctum: The Fortress*

The SMG cabal maintains a sanctum, a small brownstone, on the MIT campus. See pp. 53-54.

## *Somerville*

North of Cambridge lies the town of Somerville. There was little to this suburb until after World War II, when clapboard houses sprung up to provide housing for returning soldiers and their young families. Somerville went into sharp decline in the '60s, and only recently has it truly begun to



challenge the unflattering sobriquets “Slummerville” and “Scummerville” that it received during that period. Somerville remains among the cheapest places to find housing in the Boston vicinity, but now its vaguely decayed appearance is being made “hip” by the presence of the young college graduates settling there for the relatively affordable housing.

## Northeast

Going northeast along the coast from Boston is one long tendrill of urban sprawl nourished by the presence of Route 1 and I-95. There is no appreciable gap between towns, and one city bleeds into the next with little or no undeveloped land interspersed until well beyond Salem. The communities found along this corridor range from the typical working class town of Peabody to the very wealthy community of Marblehead.

## Salem

Salem (short for “Jerusalem”) is 20 miles northeast of Boston, up along the coast. Many of the events of the American witch hunts that took place in the summer of 1692 actually took place in Salem Village, the site of modern Danvers. Salem revels in its reputation as “Witch City USA,” and capitalizes on that reputation every Halloween, as visitors converge from up and down the eastern seaboard to get a taste of the town’s “spooky” ambiance.

Salem’s reputation as a witch city is so well known that it spills over into the consciousness of the Sleepers. The

unAwakened think nothing of Salem’s several witchcraft shops and occasionally go in for a book or a few exotic herbs themselves. This pre-eminence of witches is aided by the presence of the Ebon Noose. There is an unquestionable concentration of would-be mages in the area, although they show no signs of Awakening with more frequency than any other population. Still, those who do Awaken are usually already partially indoctrinated in the brand of magic practiced by the Ebon Noose.

Due to the large Awakened community and the relatively small size of Salem, the Awakened politics of Salem are unusually incestuous, with many different cabals competing for status and everyone knowing everyone else’s magical business.

### *The Consilium: Cormant House*

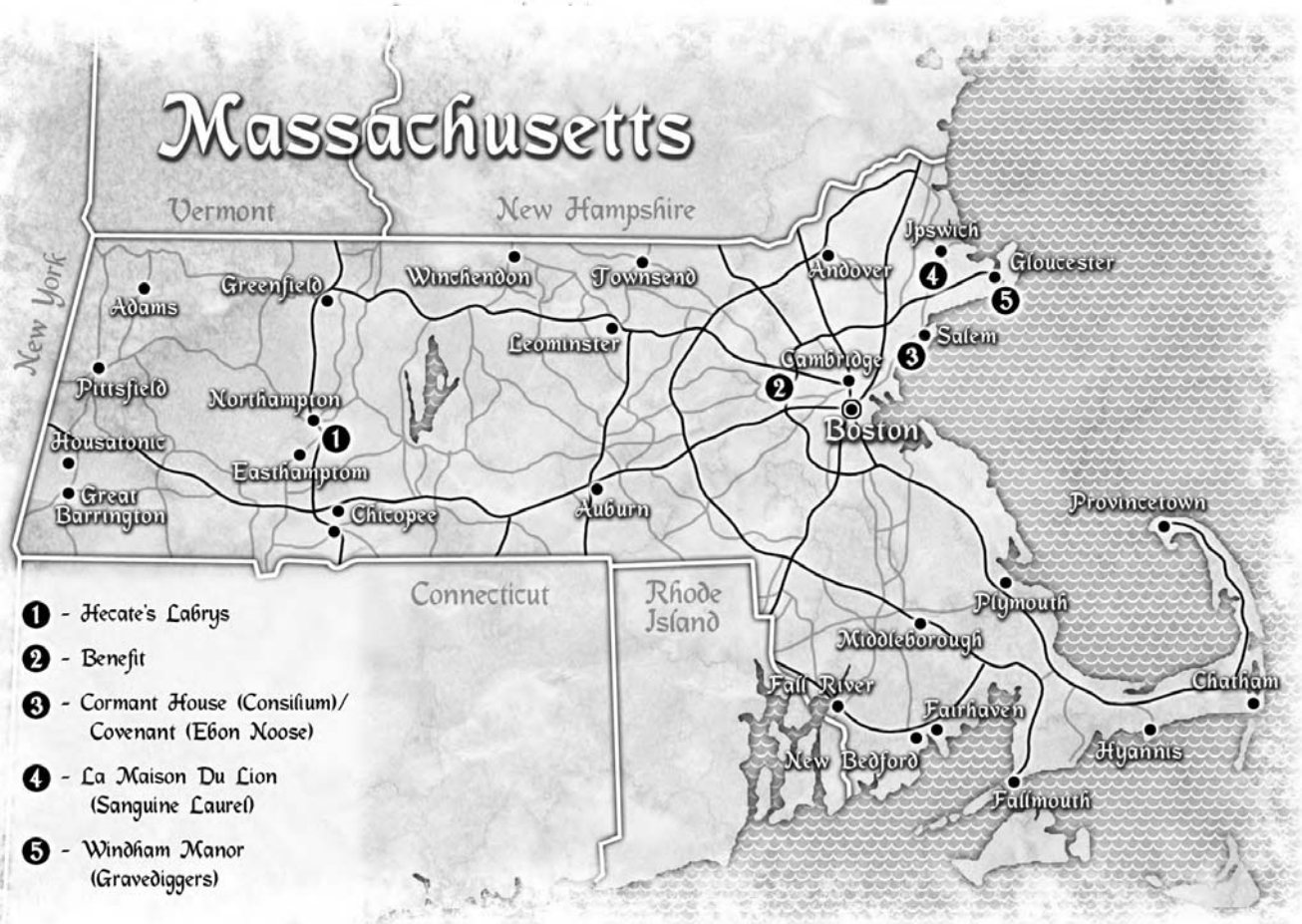
The Consilium convenes at Cormant House. See Appendix Two: Boston in **Mag: The Awakening**, pp. 387-388.

### *Sanctum: The Covenant*

The Ebon Noose cabal’s sanctum can be found in the quiet neighborhoods of Salem. See p. 78.

## Danvers

The town once known as Salem Village abuts modern Salem, and some say taints it. Danvers is best known for its lunatic asylum, which, although closed down in 1992, still remains a potent presence in the surrounding countryside.



The asylum itself remains a potent Hallow and Stygian Demesne.

Those who know Boston's Awakened scene well know that Danvers was, and remains, Tremere territory. There was a time when the Tremere liches of Danvers posed a serious threat to the mages of Salem, but that hasn't been the case since the mid-'90s. The closing of the asylum was a devastating blow to the death mages. Lacking an easy supply of souls, many have left, while others succumbed to death. Nowadays, the local Tremere avoid contact with the local Awakened and anyone close to them, and keep a low profile in general. Most local Tremere are solitaires who practice magic only when necessary, lest they get found out. While this is unlike the death mages, it's the only thing that allows them to subsist unmolested by the Ebon Moose now that the Tremere are so fragmented.

For more information on the Tremere of Danvers, see Chapter Four.

## *Ipswich*

About 30 miles northeast of Boston is Ipswich, among the most picturesque New England villages in the commonwealth of Massachusetts (its official designation). Its Colonial architecture and photogenic steeped churches make the town a popular place for tourists and photographers. It also has the advantage of being less densely populated than many of the area towns because of the presence of Willowdale State Forest, the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge and the Sandy Point State Reservation. Ipswich is often felt to be "eerie" or "sad," especially by the Awakened, and, though some blame this sensation on the openness of its geography, even those used to solitude agree that there's something grim or forlorn about Ipswich that would be difficult to put into words, much less explain.

## *Sanctum: La Maison du Lion*

The Sanguine Laurel's family estate can be found near Ipswich. See pp. 72-73.

## *Gloucester*

Northeast of Salem is Cape Ann. On the large island at the tip of the cape are two towns, Gloucester and Rockport. For a long time Gloucester was known as America's oldest fishing port. However, once the waters were all fished out, the town's fortunes changed. It now makes more money off tourists coming to watch whales than it does from fishing.

Gloucester is a picturesque place, but it's also the poster town for the New England Gothic. It's a stormy place, and the locals aren't too fond of tourists, despite the money. Gloucester is so clearly distinct from Boston that it may as well be a thousand miles away.

Gloucester boasts a particularly thick tangle of ley lines and Hallows, although the resonance tends to be, as some mages have described it, "chilling" and "watery."

## *Sanctum: Windham Manor*

The Gravediggers maintain their sanctum in a forbidding house on a windswept cliff overlooking the sea. See p. 43.

## *Western Mass*

To the west of Boston, Massachusetts opens up into a dense mass of wilderness and rural areas dotted with small towns. Many Bostonians go west only to attend concerts or cultural events at the outdoor concert venue called Tanglewood, but western Massachusetts has its share of mages, some leading a solitary life amid the trees, others creating Awakened communities in the larger cities.

Mages are clear on one thing: western Massachusetts is dangerous. Those staying on the major roads are likely safe, but the less-traveled paths are surprisingly dangerous. Indian curses on Europeans, ruins of old Hallows, violently haunted sites and, most dangerous of all, werewolf-claimed territory (and the like) are relatively common in the dense wilderness of western Massachusetts. Any mage looking for trouble will likely find it.

## *Waltham*

West by northwest of Boston proper lies the exurb of Waltham. Among the Awakened, it's known for one thing: the Demesne and cabal farm known as Benefit.

## *Demesne: Benefit*

Benefit took shape as an experiment by a cabal of transcendentalist mages over 150 years ago and has proved since then that, with only the most minimal magical assistance, humans can, in fact, live in total harmony with nature and benefit materially and spiritually by doing so.

The cabal is led — some have said dominated — by a powerful apostate Thyrsus mage and midwife named Jack Hawke. She, her husband Sandro (a Free Council mage and professor at MIT) and a solitary Shaman named Argos form a loose cabal united by a powerfully optimistic dream and Jack's inspiring charisma. They guide a community of Sleepers who share their vision of communal existence with nature. While the Sleepers are ignorant about Jack, Sandro and Argos' true natures as mages, the cabal does try to instill in the Sleepers an acceptance of the wonder and possibility of magic.

Jack is a fiery woman and the perfect embodiment of the archetypal redheaded witch. She is passionate, alluring and primal, a force of nature in her own right. She commands respect through wit and beauty as well as through sheer Awakened power. Jack's dedication to those she lives with at Benefit is unwavering. Although the commune has stayed out of Boston politics for many decades, the members of the commune are sorely tempted to take their utopian philosophy to town now and present it as a viable and commonsensical option to the inter-cabal squabbles that have plagued Boston's enlightened for decades. Jack and the others would have done so already, but they would rather not if there's any chance that it might imperil their Demesne and community.

## *Jack Hawke*

**Quote:** Of course you'll do it. I just asked you to.

**Path:** Thyrsus

**Order:** Apostate

**Background:** Jack has walked many roads. And as far as she's concerned, the stranger and more primordial, the better. She has been, at various points, a dominatrix, a midwife, a triathlete and, most recently, a mother of four young children, and she pours all of her legendary passion and zeal into everything she does.

**Description:** Jack is a beautiful woman with long red hair and ivory skin. Though she's had four children, her triathlon training keeps her lithe. She often has a roguish twinkle in her eye.

**Storytelling Hints:** Jack is a woman with a powerful primal nature. When others agree with her, all is well. If others stand athwart her, they become a problem to surmount, whether through sheer charisma or stony determination. Jack is used to being obeyed, and those who do otherwise face Jack's temper (which is just as elemental and passionate as every other aspect of her).

**Abilities:**

**Animal Training (dice pool 8)** — Animals love Jack, and she's adept at training them to accomplish simple tasks for her. She's had good luck using these techniques on some of the less brilliant members of Benefit as well.

**Birthing Children (dice pool 9)** — Jack is an experienced midwife. Not only can she deliver babies, but she knows how to tend to the mother before and after the delivery.

**Herbalism (dice pool 7)** — Well acquainted with herbs and their effects on living creatures, Jack can brew a variety of potions from tonics to abortifacients to sleeping potions to

powerful aphrodisiacs. With time and the proper ingredients, she can replicate the effects of most prescription medications.

*Sandro*

**Quote:** *Of course I can do that. I'll write the code right now.*

**Path:** Acanthus

**Order:** Free Council

**Background:** Too brilliant for his peers to understand as a child, Sandro turned to books and computers for companionship. His self-imposed exile served him well, as he was the ideal candidate for MIT when he graduated from high school (at the age of 16). He Awakened just after getting his PhD in computers, and he loves mixing his knowledge of computers with his ability to perform magic.

**Description:** Sandro is a tall bear of a man with long hair and a bushy beard. His constant smile radiates from his eyes.

**Storytelling Hints:** The soothing yin to Jack's fiery yang, Sandro is a warm, shy, easygoing man. If there are problems with other members of Benefit, he often plays good cop to Jack's bad cop. It's one of the things that makes their marriage work so well.

**Abilities:**

**Hacking (dice pool 10)** — A professor of computer systems at MIT (with a hint of the rogue about him), Sandro is a past master of hacking and computer systems.





**Internet Research (dice pool 8)** — Sandro has written his own search engine that puts anything outside the Department of Defense to shame. Given enough time, he's able to track down anything on the web — and a lot of stuff that isn't technically on the web, but that still exists somewhere on the Internet.

*Argos*

**Quote:** *The only way to find out for sure is to try it.*

**Path:** Thyrsus

**Order:** Apostate

**Background:** Though you can't tell now, the mage called Argos was reared in a very strict Southern Baptist household in Texas. It chafed him, and he was miserable nearly every day of his adolescence. Every rule, every denial, every thou-shalt-not stifled him and made him yearn for a freer, more experimental way of living. He read voraciously, so he knew that there were other ways of living in the world than the stunted path his parents made him walk. Every uptight neighbor and judgmental peer made him resent that way of life all the more. His native brilliance got him in to MIT, and, when he left home, he shrugged off his family and their Christian beliefs like the heavy chains he found them to be. And, along with them, he shrugged off Sleep. He Awakened within a month of arriving in Boston, and a vision nudged him in the direction of Benefit.

**Description:** Argos is a stunningly handsome man with dark hair, a lean, hirsute physique and the look of the Mediterranean about him. He is rarely seen without a wag-gish smile upon his face.

**Storytelling Hints:** If Jack and Sandro are the queen and king of Benefit, then Argos is the crown prince and jester wrapped up in one. He is an enthusiastic champion of Benefit's countercultural values. Argos is boisterous and friendly, and no one would ever peg him as Benefit's head security man. He considers it his job to be aware of everything that might affect Benefit and its members, and he's quite accomplished at gathering such information.

**Abilities:**

**Stealth (dice pool 8)** — Argos is an accomplished sneak. He knows the positioning of every strategic vantage point and cubbyhole in Benefit.

**Seduction (dice pool 9)** — Argos is a libido on legs, though he's quite charming and pleasant about it. While he's more attracted to men, he's been known to cross over and dally with the other sex as well.

*Amherst/Northampton*

Two hours' drive west of Boston, arrayed along the I-91 corridor, lie the nearby cities of Amherst and Northampton. These two cities create one of the larger breaks in the lush greenery of western Massachusetts. This area contains five separate colleges and universities, referred to as "the five-college schools" of Smith College, Mt. Holyoke College, Amherst, University of Massachusetts Amherst and Hampshire College. The concentration of so many colleges in a small and relatively sparsely populated area gives the whole place a strong college-town feel. Furthermore, Smith and Mt. Holyoke are women-only schools and contribute to the area's strong feminist ambience.

*Minor Cabal: Hecate's Labrys*

The cabal that resides here is women-only and fairly radical about it. Hecate's Labrys is composed of one Thyrsus shaman, one Obrimos theurgist and one Mastigos warlock. They are all affiliated with the Mysterium, but they want as little to do with the local Consilium as possible. The cabal is very involved in the community, keeping human energies in balance just as they do natural ones.

*Tisiphone*

**Quote:** *You just walked into an all you can eat buffet of trouble.*

**Path:** Thyrsus

**Order:** Mysterium

**Background:** With a father who rarely came home from the office and a mother who passed her waking hours in a Valium haze, Tisiphone was reared primarily by her five older brothers. She was, and remains, a tomboy because of this, and is by far the most physical member of her cabal.

**Description:** Tisiphone is a full-figured woman in her early 30s. Her features are rounded, cherubic even, and she smiles often. She dresses colorfully and with great flair.

**Storytelling Hints:** Tisiphone is a boisterous woman. While she's usually quite jovial, she can be violent when she gets angry. She's surprisingly strong for her size, especially when she augments her strength through Life magic.

**ABILITIES:**

**Fisticuffs (dice pool 8)** — If Tisiphone's brothers taught her one thing, it was how to fight, and she can brawl (and wrestle) with the best of them.

**Carousing (dice pool 7)** — Tisiphone is by far the most social member of her cabal, and she's quite adept at having a good time (even though she does get a bit loud at times).

*Stryx*

**Quote:** *Don't make me come looking for you.*

**Path:** Mastigos

**Order:** Mysterium

**Background:** Stryx has always seen the world from a different perspective, and that's always interfered with her ability to interact with those who do not see the world through the same odd lens. Being the black sheep of her family was only the beginning. That has had the effect of alienating her from most of the rest of the world, and for years she wondered if anyone else had ever been as horribly *alone* as she was. Once she Awakened, however, everything changed. She was able to find others who saw the world from the same perspective she did. While she's a much happier woman than she used to be, she still wears the grim expressions of a loner out of simple habit.

**Description:** Stryx is an unattractive, older woman with a gaunt face and a large, beaked nose. She wears a grim, determined expression on her face most of the time and rarely smiles. She dresses practically in sturdy pants and, generally, plaid shirts.

**Storytelling Hints:** In her late 50s, Stryx is the eldest member of Hecate's Labrys, and, like the owl from which she takes her name, she is also quite wise. She is the cabal's decision maker, conscience and judge. While she's very empathetic and

warm with members of her cabal, she's cold and closed to others, making her seem distant, possibly even cruel.  
**Abilities:**

**Shadowing (dice pool 7)** — In tune with the predator she's named after, Stryx has a talent for tracking others without them ever sensing her.

**Detect Lie (dice pool 9)** — Stryx is a very shrewd woman. Even without magic, she can sense most lies that have not been hidden with magic.

### *Obsidi Anne*

**Quote:** *Of course he's stupid, he's a man.*

**Path:** Obrimos

**Order:** Mysterium

**Background:** From the outside, Obsidi Anne's family looked like the very epitome of the wholesome American family: good income, nice house, three kids and a picket fence. It was all a lie. Her mother was a functional alcoholic, her father forced his incestuous affections on her for most of her adolescence and her brothers were arrested for dealing heroin shortly after graduating from high school. Anne went to Smith College and studied architecture. She Awakened while studying for a particularly difficult test, and she's been active in the women's Awakened community ever since. She still sees the American Dream as a big lie, but since she joined the Mysterium she's found truths much more interesting to focus on than mere resentment.

**Description:** Obsidi Anne is in her early 40s, and, although she has very attractive features, she deliberately dresses frumpily and keeps her hair cut in a very short flattop to prevent being seen as sexually attractive.

**Storytelling Hints:** In her heart of hearts, Obsidi Anne is a critic and a judge; though she tries to channel these tendencies to the cabal's purposes, she can still be a bit relentless in her fault-finding. However, this eye for flaws helps her in her own work, by showing her where problems are so she can correct them. Obsidi Anne is the most zealous separatist in the cabal. She would rather not deal with men at all, in any way.

**Abilities:**

**Detect Flaw (dice pool 9)** — Finding fault is a talent for some. Obsidi Anne is quite adept at detecting flaws, whether

in the craftsmanship of an item, in magical formulae or in the plans of her enemies.

**Repair (dice pool 7)** — Obsidi Anne *understands* mechanical objects on an intuitive level, and she can feel how they want to be put back together. Once she's taken a device apart and reassembled it, it'll work better than it ever did before.

## *East Mass*

Boston sits on the ocean, but parts of Massachusetts extend farther into the Atlantic. All of Cape Cod and the two wealthy resort islands, Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard, lie east of Boston.

The waters off Boston have a longer history of shipping than most of the rest of the country. There are a number of old wrecks off the Massachusetts coast and no shortage of rumors of ghost ships — some quite notorious.

### *Provincetown*

At the very end of the somewhat conservative Massachusetts cape lies a small town where Boston's puritanical tendencies are cast off like the heavy burden they are. The drive to Provincetown (or P-town, as it's known) is three hours from Boston. Taking the ferry from Boston Harbor reduces the time to one hour. Provincetown began as an artist colony and now functions as a

trendy and somewhat libertine getaway for bohemians, gay men and party animals of all persuasions

from throughout New England. Provincetown has a pronounced decadent carnival atmosphere throughout the incredibly busy summer-vacation season, but, from November through March the place shuts down, leaving only the year-round residents to deal with the desolation, darkness and storms of winter. While Provincetown is not home to any mages year-round, the Awakened are just as drawn to the "anything goes" atmosphere as anyone else, and magical confrontations have erupted more than once as two antagonistic mages have bumped into each other on Commercial Street (the town's main street) or out among the ocean dunes surrounding the town.







# CABALS

I sought into the future, to see how you might best conduct the affair at the secret Consiliar gathering, brother. Oh, yes, I know all about it. Don't act surprised.

I know you'll believe me when I tell you that there is no good outcome. All paths lead this benefit, at the expense of ours. The Nemean will own all of us and ours, in the end.

There is . . . one path, however, that is less damaging than others, although it creates consequences of its own. Do this: when Culsu offers you the jeweled goblet, refuse it. Yes, a jeweled goblet — it is old, something that mirrors the past on the surface of its wine. I don't know where he got it, and I don't wish to know. He will then offer it to a newcomer, one I do not know. Let this happen.

It is the best of all outcomes, brother, although I cannot divine where it shall lead in the end.

— Blanche fleur, mage of the Sanguine Laurel cabal

## *Awakened Bostonian Society*

The taste and feel of the Awakened life in Boston is the result of far more than the character of the city's neighborhoods. Boston's mages participate in a patchwork culture that is the product of hundreds of years of cooperation and conflict as well as a strained diplomacy halfway between the two. The net result of all this Awakened history and culture is an ample accretion of tradition.

The weight of tradition is particularly heavy in Boston. *How* a mage observes the city's rules is just as important as her observance of them at all. Time-honored rituals are the only reliable means the mages of Boston have found to lubricate factional conflicts, and all of Boston's many cabals have very specific ways that these rituals are to be carried out and specific ways in which they are *never* to be carried out. The vast majority of the traditions observed in Boston were established by the Stone Assembly cabal that held dominance over the area's mages for 300 years. Although the Stone Assembly hasn't been in power since 1917, tradition has been slow to change, and, even the mages of the Ebon Noose, who have the *power* to change the status quo, lack much *desire* to do so, as they are so accustomed to "the way things are done in Boston" that they rarely think to update or reinterpret certain old traditions (unless it unequivocally suits their best interests to do so).

Those Awakened familiar with the etiquette and protocols of Boston will be able to interact with most of the other Awakened of the city with little or no problem if they make the effort. Those Awakened who don't know the rules (or ignore them), however, are destined to run afoul of them eventually, and conflict is the inevitable outcome for strangers who wander into the city.

Overall, Boston is an unusually formal — some might say uptight — city with regard to its social customs. This is true of Sleeper society and doubly true with regard to the Awakened. Cutting corners in social interactions or forgetting to observe small instances of etiquette *will* have consequences eventually if the offender is too obtuse to note his faux pas and change his behavior accordingly.

I looked upon the scene before me—upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain—upon the bleak walls—upon the vacant eye-like windows—upon a few rank sedges—and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees—with an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation more properly than to the after-dream of the reveler upon opium—the bitter lapse into every-day life—the hideous dropping off of the veil.

— Edgar Allan Poe, “The Fall of the House of Usher”

*Student Orientation (Initiation)*

When a Sleeper comes to the end of her slumber and finds herself on the threshold of Awakening, the mages of Boston go out of their way to see to it that she is properly welcomed into the fold. The scores of colleges, universities and assorted other institutions of higher learning in the Boston area bring many young, questioning people on the verge of Awakening into the city, and Boston’s cabals take great pride in helping to ease these newly Awakened mages into the magical community.

The larger cabals patrol the universities, colleges, bars and other youth hangouts, watching for any sign of an Awakening. If a cabal does happen to identify a newly Awakened mage (before another cabal gets to him), they begin the process of indoctrination, hoping to initiate him into one of their orders. While this is, overall, a blessing for the young mage, it can also be a burden, as it makes sure that new mages are pulled immediately into the highly politicized milieu of Boston’s Awakened community.

This doesn’t have too many consequences early on, as a kind of amnesty is extended to young mages for the first year after their Awakening. On one hand, they’re not taken very seriously, but, on the other hand, no mistakes they make in this time (unless motivated by sheer malice) will get them banished or otherwise punished. However, the city’s magical renegades obviously have no intention of observing this period of amnesty so a young mage still needs to be on her toes.

The Seers of the Throne keep a close watch on the student body of Harvard, and are quick to act if any Consilium mage tries to meddle in the affairs of any freshly Awakened student before the Seers can claim him. The SMG cabal at MIT keeps an eye out for fresh converts among that campus’ intelligentsia.

*Boston’s Cold Shoulder*

Whatever Boston’s magical community’s perception of itself, it has a pronounced reputation for unfriendliness, arrogance and outright hostility toward outsiders. A mage moving to Boston will be an outsider for several years before his alien status is re-examined, and then only if he has been making a tremendous effort to establish himself among the city’s Awakened. Few mages have a place in Boston’s Awakened community that they didn’t carve for themselves through diligent effort and social finesse.

Boston’s mages scrutinize wandering mages for suspicious behavior, and “suspicious behavior” is defined very broadly in Boston. Local mages are exempt from some of this; the magical community in general is not large, and it’s likely that any mages from the New England area are at least known of. Those mages who visit often, say from Salem or Northampton,

are likely to be ignored; although they are not locals, they are known quantities and subjected to somewhat less scrutiny.

Mages from outside New England or anyone else who is a complete unknown will be watched very closely, their behavior scrutinized for any hint of trouble. Outsiders who cause trouble will be given one warning before they are politely, but firmly, told to leave. “Trouble” is another one of those words that is broadly defined by Boston’s mages, but, as a general rule, vulgar magic in front of Sleepers, Artifact-theft or -smuggling, aiding and abetting renegade mages, magical attacks of any sort on Sleepers or against established sanctums are all considered serious trouble. One of Boston’s main cabals, most likely members of the White Putnams or the Ebon Noose, will arrange a little tête-à-tête to clarify things for the offending intruder. Further infractions lead to banishment for the recent arrival (at the very least) and probably something much harsher (especially if executed by one of the Consilium’s Sentinels).

Mages don’t *have* to participate in Boston’s loosely knit Awakened community. A small minority don’t involve themselves, preferring to dedicate themselves monkishly to their arcane studies, but those who do take advantage of the large community of mages find that Boston offers its mages a great deal. Becoming part of the community is difficult, but, once a mage has shown true character and proved himself, he’s likely to be tolerated, if not warmly welcomed.

*Caucuses of the Orders*

The Atlantean Orders are strongly represented in the Boston Consilium, and one of the customs observed by all five orders (to varying degrees) is that of the caucus. Some orders take a more freeform view of the affair, while some are much more rigidly traditional about it.

Perhaps surprisingly, the Silver Ladder’s approach to its caucuses is lackadaisical at best, as it is the Nemean, acknowledged as the most powerful and influential member of the Ladder in or around Boston, who calls them. The Hierarch doesn’t like to call for a caucus more than once a season, if he can at all help it. To his mind, the interests of the Silver Ladder are adequately addressed by the Secret Concord, which is, of its nature, exclusionary. He can, however, be persuaded to call the willworkers of his order to gather more often, if a pressing reason (or a worthy bribe) is offered. At any caucus of the Silver Ladder, the Nemean sits back, like a bloated spider in the center of its web, and allows lesser mages of his order (who are typically also members of the Ebon Noose) to make his points and express his opinions. Only when one of those points or opinions is challenged does he rouse himself and “put the meeting back on track” (which

is to say, bully any dissenters into agreeing with him). The end result is that little gets accomplished, and those not in the Hierarch's corner, or his pocket, almost always leave feeling utterly dissatisfied.

In contrast, the Mysterium's caucuses, convened at 8 P.M. on the 15th of every month (barring emergency), are rigidly ordered affairs. Called by Potestas of the Brotherhood of the Ineffable Truth (and held in a large forum on the first floor of the Academy), such caucuses benefit from a great deal of planning and decades of tradition. Since Aurem's appointment to the office of Potestas' Provost, he calls the gatherings to order, and then turns the floor over to his former mentor. Of course, the Brotherhood is well represented in the caucus, as is the Sanguine Laurel. The Company, despite being a Mysterium cabal, has almost never attended. Irrespective of Potestas' open disdain for "Vision's maggots," he never fails to extend them an invitation; his sense of obligation to his order permits no less. Some of the Mysterium members found in other cabals attend often (such as Seraphim of the Gravediggers), while others almost never do (like Ahriman of the Ebon Noose). The agenda is determined solely at Potestas' discretion, though items may be submitted, in writing, for his consideration for a given month's caucus by the first of that month. (And, unless he has a good reason not to do so, he almost always includes such items somewhere on the agenda). Typical items up for discussion include Atlantean lore, paranormal occurrences in and around the city and (whenever Potestas feels he can get away with it) increasing the Mysterium's political power within the Consilium.

The caucuses of the Adamantine Arrow are held at Windham Manor, called to order by Reinga of the Gravediggers and presided over by Ferrum, leader of the Exalted Knights of the Gryphon. Despite her high standing, Hydra no longer actively involves herself in her order's politics, preferring to leave such matters to the young. On rare occasions, she is persuaded to take a stand on an issue, and, at such times, others do well to heed her, given her great wisdom and the breadth of her experience. Ferrum calls for a caucus bimonthly (usually sometime during the third week of the month), unless events would seem to indicate that one should be called during an "off" month. Ferrum, as chairman of the caucus, makes his own points first (unless Hydra has something to say, in which case, he defers to her), and then opens to floor to others, in descending order of importance. (In the case of Arrow willworkers of equal standing, Ferrum first favors members of his own cabal, then Gravediggers, then everyone else). Common topics for discussion include the defense of the Consilium, the Duel Arcane and other martial acts of willworking and what position, if any, the Adamantine Arrow as an order should represent in the Consilium's politics. At least once a year, Ferrum likes to put on an exhibition of the Duel Arcane, inviting any and all mages of the Arrow to observe or, even better, participate.

The Free Council's infrequent caucuses are called by either Davy Jones of the Dead Wrens or Eleggua of the SMG. Were a third power-player in the Free Council to emerge locally, it is also likely that any caucuses she called (so long as they were not convened frivolously or too often) would also be attended. Usually, such gatherings are only held when someone has a point to make or a problem to address,

one that encompasses the interests of the order as a whole. Davy usually holds his caucuses at sea, well away from "prying eyes and spying ears," while Eleggua simply opts for the use of the Fortress. In either case, the caucus always starts out with the presiding willworker bringing up whatever issue prompted the caucus in the first place, followed by an open forum, in which all attending willworkers are free to express opinions, bring up issues of their own and otherwise make their voices heard. Favor trading is not as common at these caucuses as it is among those of other orders. Since the Emerald Scroll already exists in no small part for precisely that purpose, the members of the SMG are usually happy to briefly talk business at one of their parties.

Culsu, of the Shadow Chorus, calls the caucuses of the Guardians of the Veil, but she has done so only a handful of times since her cabal made its presence known in the city. There is no appointed hour for such gatherings; instead, Culsu appears to other Guardians when they are alone and names a time and a place. When (and if) the Guardian goes, a pair of shining metal double doors awaits and, behind them, a descent into the Oubliette (see p. 58). Culsu typically uses such meetings as an opportunity to disseminate cryptic advice or warnings to a broader audience than usual, knowing that such information will quickly make the rounds along the rumor mill. She does not allow discussion of other matters until she has said all she needs to say, and usually tries to terminate the caucus almost immediately after she has said her piece. To her thinking, such gatherings are to be used for her purposes, not for the banal politics of other, lesser willworkers or as the Awakened equivalent of a flea market.

## *The Consilium*

The Boston Consilium is typical of such bodies, presided over by a single Hierarch, who is advised (and, occasionally, opposed) by the Consilium's other Councilors. Each Councilor (the Hierarch included) is served by a Provost, and a Herald carries word to the Awakened, both locally and abroad. The local Sentinels are perhaps the only unusual aspect of the Consilium, organizationally speaking, as there seems to be a large number of them for a Consilium not at war. This is likely indicative of the Hierarch's propensity for brutal displays of power whenever he feels that his authority is being challenged.

At the head of the Consilium sits its Hierarch, the Nemean, of the Ebon Noose. Chain Parris, of the White Putnams, serves as his Provost, demonstrating both unity within the Secret Concord and the superior station of the Ebon Noose within that pact. Councilor Potestas of the Brotherhood of the Ineffable Truth has for a Provost his one-time apprentice within the Mysterium, Aurem. Numa, of the Sanguine Laurel, is another of the Consilium's Councilors, represented by his Provost and niece, Ranae. The Gravediggers' reclusive master, Hydra, also acts as a Councilor. The public leader of the Gravediggers, Reinga, acts as her Provost. Arathnos, of the Ebon Noose, serves intermittently as the Hierarch's Herald.

Although Ferrum of the Exalted Knights of the Gryphon is probably the most widely esteemed of the Consilium's Sentinels, the Nemean has made it clear that Anacaona de Xaragua, of his own cabal, is to serve as their leader. Despite this assertion, however, the Hierarch is wise enough not to put the two in proximity to one another whenever such can be helped.



Beyond "the Axe," Tiamat and Nebuchadnezzar of the Noose are employed as Sentinels. Eve and Hades, of the Gravediggers, are also Sentinels of the Consilium. In addition to the "formal" Sentinels, most of the remaining members of both the Exalted Knights of the Gryphon (through an agreement brokered between the Brotherhood and the Noose) and the Gravediggers act as "backup" Sentinels when needed.

The Nemean maintains his power largely through a combination of scare tactics and a hands-off philosophy of rule. He is normally roused to act only by immediate and forceful threats to his authority. When such a threat emerges, however, he uses the massive power bloc encompassed by the Secret Concord (about a third of Boston's Consilium willworkers) to leverage such action as he desires, usually action of a harshly punitive variety. Despite Potestas' and Numa's common ties of order, they do not usually ally with one another. The concerns of the Brotherhood of the Ineffable Truth and the Sanguine Laurel are distinct enough from one another that the two Councilors maintain their distance. Ultimately, Numa is simply too apolitical to get that involved. His interests are far better served by the Nemean's comparative laziness than they ever would be by Potestas' industrious nature or that of his student and obvious successor, Aurem. Instead, Numa and Hydra typically constitute a solid base of support for the status quo.

Potestas is the Nemean's only true rival for control of the Consilium, and he is sufficiently crafty to sway the opinions of Numa and Hydra just often enough to constitute a genuine challenge to the Hierarch's power. Unfortunately, the Nemean cannot simply dispose of such an influential and well-respected (not to mention powerful) figure. After all, Potestas too can effectively call upon the combined might of two cabals in time of need. Fortunately, no one (save perhaps for the local Guardians of the Veil, who are largely *persona non grata*) wants to see a war between factions, and so the state of affairs has boiled down to a political deadlock that heavily favors the Nemean.

There is a (largely fair) perception that Boston's Consilium is something of a "boy's club." For most of its history, male willworkers have held a disproportionate amount of sway over local Awakened politics. Perhaps it is a holdover from the old Stone Assembly's traditions or maybe just evidence of far too much chauvinism among most of the city's powerplayers. In the end, though, the Consilium's one female Councilor (Hydra) doesn't appear to be in any way bothered by the state of affairs; the one time it was brought up to her, she frankly confessed that she'd never before considered the matter, and had no intention of starting to. On the other hand, Khumeia, of the Illuminated Pentad, freely exploits the gender bias angle (among all of the other angles she can scrounge up) for whatever foothold she can manage to build from it in her quest to become Boston's fifth Councilor.

Generally speaking, the Ebon Noose is supported by the White Putnams, the Gravediggers and the Sanguine Laurel, while the Brotherhood of the Ineffable Truth enjoys the backing of the Exalted Knights of the Gryphon and, often (for the sake of diminishing the Noose's overall power) that of the Illuminated Pentad. The Shadow Chorus almost never throws its support behind anyone (not openly, at any rate), and the Dead Wrens do their best to remain apolitical. The Company and the Special Media Group barely know enough

about the Consilium's politics to get involved, even if their respective members wanted to (which they don't). Occasionally, this balance is disrupted (usually by the manipulations of either the Nemean or Potestas), but that is an infrequent occurrence.

## The Library of Elders

Probably the most complete library of philosophical and arcane works in the New World, the Library of Elders was collected by the mages of the Stone Assembly during their reign. While the mages of the Assembly are gone, local legend claims that the product of their many quests and hard work remains. The problem is, nobody knows where it is. At least, nobody is *saying* where it is. If any mage does know its location, it's one of the best-kept secrets of Boston. Judging from the number of mages who have sought it but come up empty-handed, however, it's a good bet that the library is still hidden, waiting for someone to rediscover it.

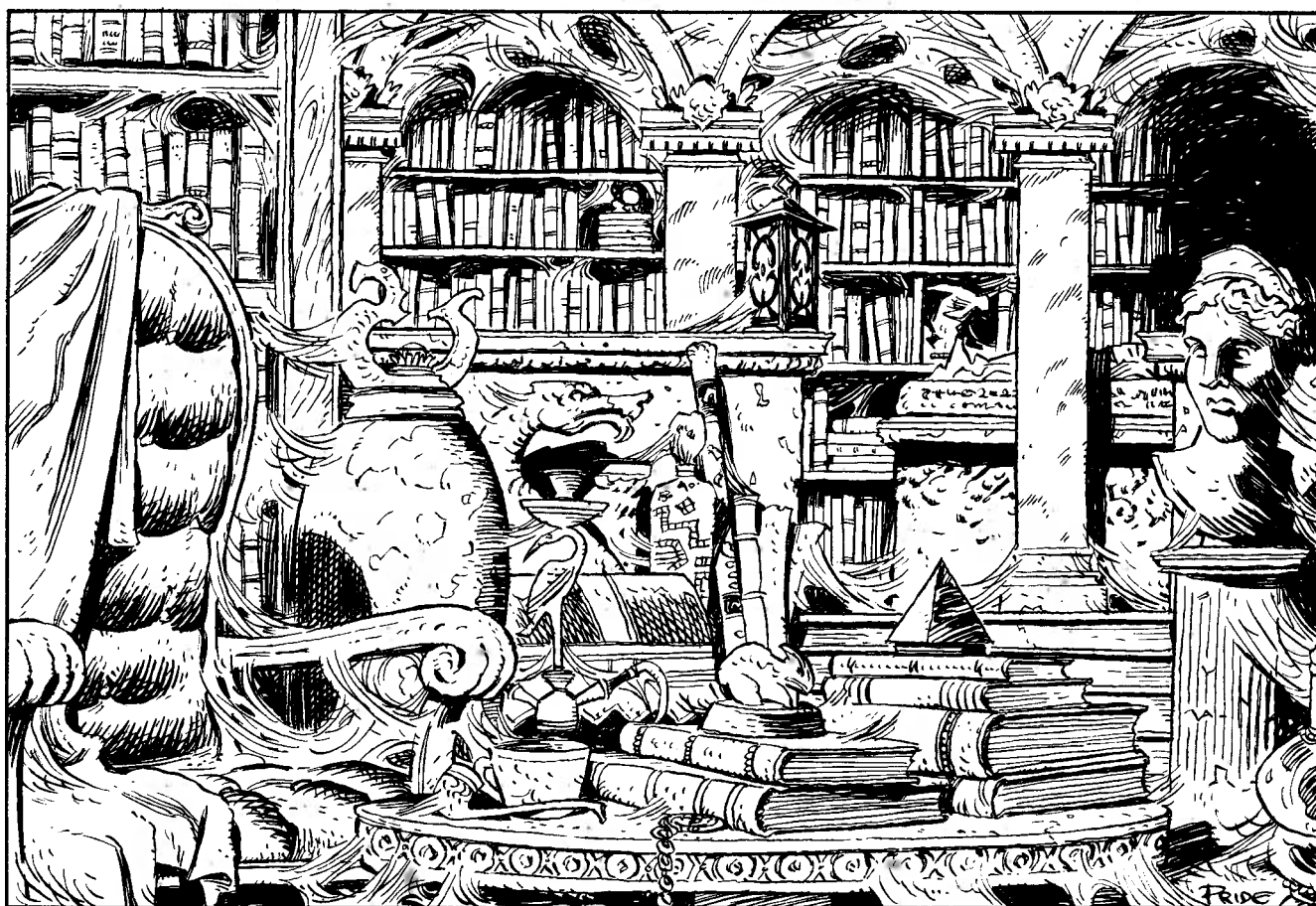
## *Justice Among the Awakened*

When magic enters the picture, so does the possibility of crimes committed against Sleepers (and other mages) that unAwakened authorities can do nothing about. The temptation to use magic for questionable purposes is strong even among the most ethical willworkers. Maintaining order among mages is difficult, but no city with a large Awakened population can exist without attending to such duties. Boston still uses the system put in place by the Stone Assembly over 300 years ago, modified by the Guardians of the Veil's Emerald Scroll cabal during its reign of power. The Consilium has made a few changes here and there to keep up with modern concepts of justice, but, overall, the system works much as it did a century ago.

A mage who feels she has been harmed, cheated or otherwise ill-used by another mage has recourse to the Consilium Council. A mage who feels that one of his fellows has wronged a Sleeper may lodge a complaint on behalf of the unAwakened.

The plaintiff voices her accusations and provides any and all salient evidence to the Councilors or the Provosts. After a brief review of the details (and possibly a subtle spell or two), the plaintiff is told if her case has merit or not. Unlike public servants in the Sleeping world, the Consilium won't waste time investigating frivolous accusations. Plaintiffs who make random or frivolous accusations are dismissed, but are reminded that they can always fall back on the Duel Arcane.

The case is then called to trial, with both parties called before the Council to present their cases and accept the Council's judgment. If necessary, the Consilium will designate an independent investigator (often a cabal) to examine the case, even traveling to the scene of the crime, to magically scrutinize all evidence and draw a conclusion as to which party is telling the truth.



For the most part, punishment consists of the redress of the wrongs. The offending party must somehow make right by the victim. Extreme crimes or the refusal to accept the Consilium's demands for redress can result in magically imposed oaths or *geases* (for a period dependant on the severity of the crime — from one day to one year or even longer).

#### **Banishment**

A mage who has proven herself unable to interact in a healthy, constructive way with her fellow mages is banished from the city for a period of time. The rationale for this goes something like this: It reflects well on a mage to live in the most civilized Awakened community he can be a part of. Doing so provides him with higher-quality magical resources, more enlightened peers and a better social environment. A mage banished from such a city has revealed himself to be unsuitable for such status, undeserving of the benefits of living in such a community. Likewise, the civilized members of that community have earned the right to live free of such unenlightened individuals.

A mage who does not accept his banishment and stays in Boston or returns before the completion of his term of banishment, is dealt with by the Consilium's Sentinels. These mages generally comprise some of the most accomplished combatants in the city, and they work together to track down mages breaking their banishment. These potent Sentinels overlook any differences they may have to work together, because keeping the peace among the city's

Awakened is considered extremely important by the members of all cabals.

While Boston's policy stipulates that these mages can do anything they see fit with mages breaking banishment (including kill them), more often the Sentinels devise creative magical means of dealing with the criminal. In the past, for example, an offending mage was placed in a deep, nightmare-plagued sleep for the duration of his banishment, while another was transformed into a sparrow. The specifics change from instance to instance, but the effects are always the same: the mage is no longer a danger to Boston.

Banishment may last for any length of time. Crimes may be punished by as little as a month's banishment, which can be immensely aggravating to a mage who wants to come back, because it means he has to decamp from Boston, only to move everything back to the city again in a month.

A mage banished from Boston may not reside in Boston and has 24 hours to leave town before the local mages can hunt him down. A banished mage may not have a residence in Boston, may not enter the city for any reason, may not claim affiliation with any Boston cabal and may not target any resident of Boston with magic. If the banished mage owns a Hallow, this becomes the property of whomever claims it first — although the mage can petition the Consilium for the Hallow's return upon his re-establishment. Whether or not he gets it back depends on how useful he can make himself to the Consilium.

## Vendettas and Conflict

For the most part, Boston's mages know better than to resort to blatant or unstructured magical conflict. On those occasions when the Awakened of Boston find themselves dealing with "irreconcilable differences" that they cannot or would rather not take to the Consilium, the Duel Arcane is the time-honored method of conflict resolution. For rules on the Duel Arcane, see **Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 286-289.

Though the Ebon Noose is the most powerful cabal in Boston, much of the local etiquette and custom of the Duel Arcane was established by the gentlemen's club of the Stone Assembly. For those hoary old patriarchs, the Duel Arcane was little more than an extension of Sleeper dueling, or what they called in jest "the Duel Mundane."

All Boston cabals are expected to conduct the Duel Arcane according to the default established by the members of the Stone Assembly in the early 18th century. While it's possible to ask for an exception to this tradition, such exceptions are rarely made. Furthermore, the one seeking this suspension of tradition had better have a better reason for wanting the change than ignorance of Bostonian customs.

### Etiquette

There was a time when etiquette and honor carried more weight than they do in the modern era. It was in that age that the Stone Assembly codified Boston's rules and traditions regarding the Duel Arcane. Some of these rules seem outright bizarre to those who've never before been saddled with such expectations, but Boston's mages are quite happy to take the high moral ground where the Duel Arcane is concerned, and those who violate these points of etiquette risk banishment or at least a severe loss of face and social standing for having done so.

Mages who have Awakened and learned magic in the Boston area will, almost unavoidably, be familiar with these customs, either through word of mouth, lectures from masters or by witnessing Duels Arcane firsthand. Those mages from outside the area, however, will have no understanding of what is expected of them and will need to be heavily coached if they are to successfully and honorably fight a Duel in Boston.

Following are some of the key points to participating in the Duel Arcane. Unless otherwise specified, these rules are applicable within the bounds of Boston, Brookline and Cambridge. Other local towns (Lexington, Quincy) use a variant of Boston's Dueling etiquette, but the particulars vary. Towns farther from Boston — and therefore less shaped by three centuries of the Stone Assembly's hegemony — (including Salem and Northampton) have established entirely different systems of etiquette determined by their own dominant cabals.

**Renegades** — Unless renegade mages (Tremere or Scelesti, for example) ask for the Duel Arcane, they are to be treated as rabid animals, and not mages. Renegade mages are not allowed the option of the Duel Arcane. The Duel Arcane is for honorable men, and, more often than not, renegades have entered into a Duel only if they believed they have some way of cheating. There is, therefore, no dishonor in turning down a Duel with a renegade mage. An mage may opt to enter into

the Duel Arcane with a renegade, but doing so and expecting her opponent to fight fairly is naïve.

**Spectators** — In Boston, the Duel Arcane is considered a public spectacle (akin to the public humiliations and punishments of the 17th century, like dunking or the pillory), and it is not to be fought in secrecy. If two members of the community want to engage in such behavior, they should be willing to do so before a community of their peers in order to ensure fair and honorable combat. Duels Arcane between high-profile mages are almost certainly watched by a large majority of Boston's mages, and the Duels' participants are always closely watched for even small signs of weakness, dishonor or new magical understanding.

**The Salute** — It is customary before the Duel commences for the two mages to make some gesture of salute to each other. This may be done in a myriad of ways, from bowing, shaking hands or simply nodding the head. This is a sign of respect for one's opponent and an indication that one intends to conduct oneself honorably on the field of battle.

**Acknowledging Defeat** — Unless a Duel is very close, it is considered more honorable for a Duelist who is close to defeat to concede the Duel Arcane rather than force his opponent to go through the motions of vanquishing him. Younger mages are given more leeway with regard to this, but a more experienced mage who refuses to show this courtesy to his opponent is considered petty or immature.

**Offering Advice** — It is expected that a mage who defeats another in fair combat will give the other mage advice on improving his Dueling technique, provided he dueled honorably. More than any other point of etiquette, this is the one that modern mages have the most difficulty accepting. However, in the age when Boston's rules for the Duel Arcane were established, a mage's civility was considered at least as important as winning the Duel, and any victor lacking the noblesse oblige to help a defeated opponent was considered a poor winner and lacking in honor.

### Rules

Distinct from the *etiquette* of the Duel Arcane, which stipulates tradition and niceties, the *rules* of the Duel Arcane represent laws of the Duel that must be observed, lest one or both parties be punished.

#### Just Cause

The Duel Arcane is a serious matter and not something to be engaged in lightly. Frivolously challenging another to the Duel Arcane is considered *very* bad form, and those who do it with too much frequency are given warnings. If the warning has no effect, the serial Duelist is banished from Boston.

#### Setting

Within the confines of Boston, Brookline and Cambridge, the Duel Arcane may only take place indoors, away from the eyes of Sleepers. Dueling out-of-doors is an egregious violation of tradition and potentially punishable by banishment of both Duelists.

#### The Second

Mages entering the Duel Arcane pick a "second" as a witness to the Duel and as a means of ensuring a fair combat. The second's primary purpose is to see to it that the Duelist



isn't unfairly ambushed. The second's other purpose is to see to it that the Duelist has an ally at the Duel who can take the Duelist home (or to a hospital) should he lose. In cities that allow for Duels to the death, the second is responsible for returning the Duelist's body to his family or friends. Last, the second can act as a stand-in for the Duelist, should he be unable himself to Duel. (But his opponent can refuse and postpone the duel until the Duelist is capable).

By custom, a mage can ask anyone in his cabal to be his second. In practice, asking someone to be a second in the Duel Arcane is an *enormous* favor, akin to asking someone to be the executor of one's estate or bear one's child. It's *possible*, and perfectly appropriate, to ask the most powerful member of one's cabal to be one's second. It's equally possible and appropriate for that mage to say no. Consequently, a mage is likely to ask only his closest friend or most trusted ally to be his second in the Duel Arcane.

### To the Death

Dueling to the death is strictly forbidden within the limits of Boston and Cambridge proper. Beyond the municipal boundaries of those cities, however, mages are free to do what they feel they need to do. Ignoring this rule can result in banishment for the survivor.

## The Adamantine Arrow

Throughout the history of local Awakened politics, most of the willworkers of the Adamantine Arrow adopted a very simple position: its members served the dominant regime, standing at the right hand of whoever was in charge. For a long time, this meant supporting the Guardians of the Veil. With the ascension of the Silver Ladder, the majority of the Arrow smoothly transitioned their loyalties and those scant few who did not either eventually died out (one way or another) or departed for greener pastures. For those who remained, affairs of state mattered little, so long as the Arrow were not kept from the execution of their sacred duty.

## The Exalted Knights of the Gryphon

Serving as the mailed fist of the Brotherhood of the Ineffable Truth (pp. 62-68), the cabal known as the Exalted Knights of the Gryphon (so named for the mythical beast's attributes of vigilant strength and courageous loyalty) is devoted above all else to mastery of the mystic arts of war and the Duel Arcane. Claiming descent from a number of the "Duelist cabals" that were particularly popular in some Awakened circles in western Europe during the 17th through 19th centuries, the Knights are, nevertheless, the product of modern ambitions. Due to unspecified pacts with the Ebon Noose, the services of the Knights are available to the Ebon Noose — Ferrum, the cabal's leader, serves as a Sentinel of the Consilium — via the Brotherhood.

Founded by the Arrow mage known as Ferrum upon his defeat of his mentor Apollonia, the cabal finds its purpose in the elementary precept that mysticism and intellect alone are insufficient for the Awakened to survive, thrive and, ultimately, reclaim their rightful place as the sorcerer-kings of the Earth. Decision making for the cabal is by consensus, with irreconcilable differences resolved, rather unsurprisingly,

through the use of the Duel Arcane. However, orders issued by either Potestas or Aurem of the Academy (p. 62) are obeyed without hesitation or question, per oaths sworn by every member of the cabal (part of the terms of their continued use of the Academy's resources). This loyalty has already cost the life of Ares, youngest of the Knights and Ferrum's little brother.

## The Temple of the Gryphon (Sanctum Size ●)

Occupying the north wing of the building that houses the Academy, the Temple of the Gryphon (also known simply as the Temple) is the barracks, drilling field and school for the Exalted Knights. The cabal has living quarters in the Temple, allowing its members to be on hand, should there be trouble; at least two members must be present at all times (unless the cabal as a whole is sent away on a mission). The Temple is spartan, with basic amenities and few real luxuries, though the Dueling room has exquisite architecture, reminiscent of Moorish structures just prior to the Spanish *Reconquista*. Other chambers are less interesting, emphasizing the austere warrior lifestyle of the Knights.

The Temple contains no Hallow of its own, but the Knights have Mana bestowed upon them once a month by the members of the Brotherhood (see "The Oath of the Knights," below). The library is nowhere near as grand as that found in the Academy, and contains information on a very narrow range of subjects (the Awakened in warfare and the Duel Arcane).

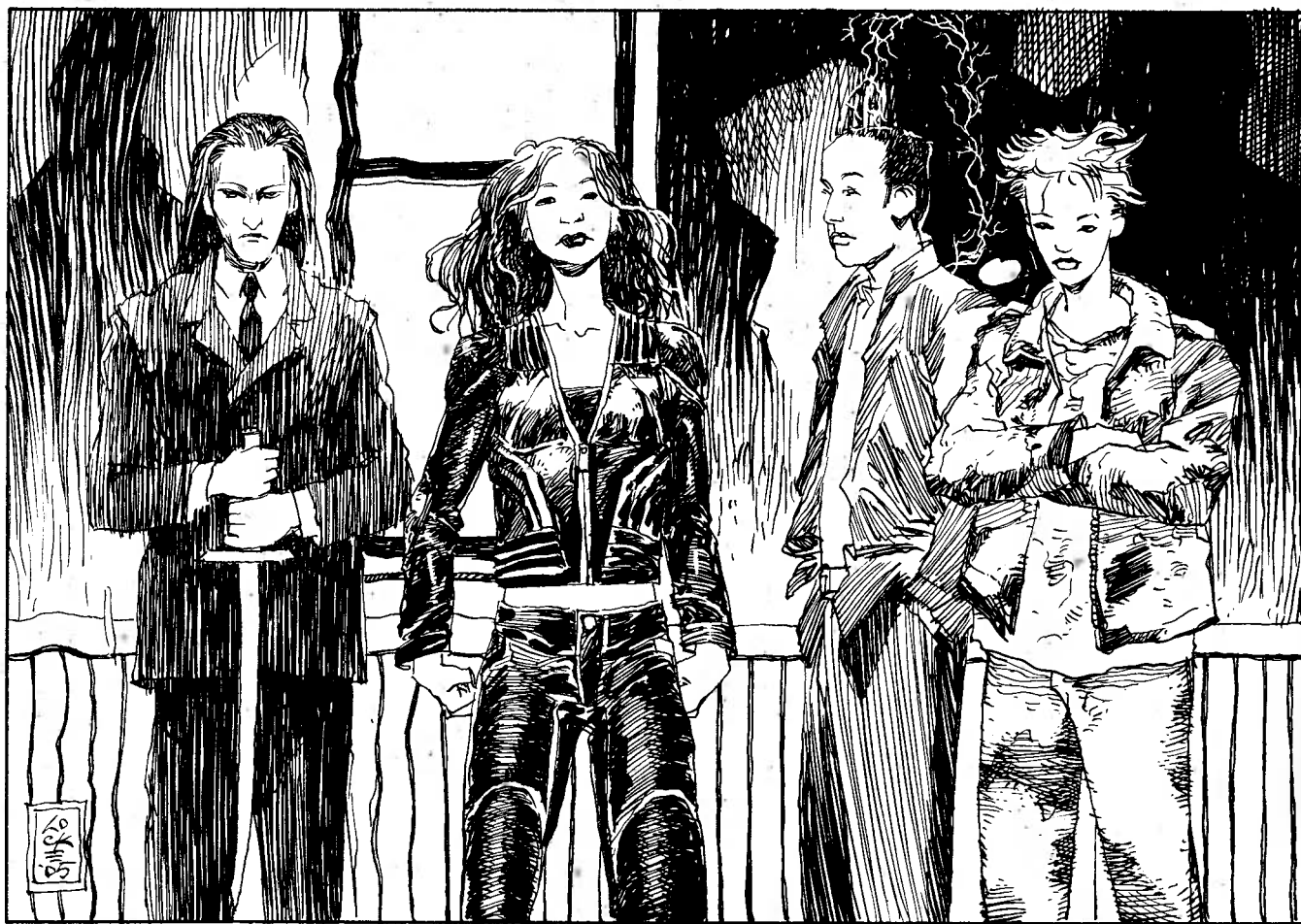
## The Oath of the Knights

This oath has been taken by every member of the Exalted Knights of the Gryphon, sanctified by the Fate magic of Vajra, a former member of the Brotherhood of the Ineffable Truth only recently returned to his native India. The exact wording of the oath is as follows:

I, [cabal member's full given name], known among the Awakened as [cabal member's shadow name], swear to honor and defend the willworkers of the Brotherhood of the Ineffable Truth, and to faithfully serve Carlo Fendi, called Potestas, and Zachary Harcourt, called Aurem. I vow to perform any task demanded of me by either of these two men or any other offered authority over me by one of them. My obedience shall be given first to Potestas, then to Aurem and then to any other given leave by one of these two to command me.

In exchange for this service, I shall be given leave to access the resources of the Brotherhood in time of battle, and I and my companions shall have from the Brotherhood 40 measures of Mana for each full cycle of the moon. In addition to this, I shall be given quarters, in which to live and to hone my skills, by the Brotherhood, and enjoy the freedom to peruse its library of lore.

Should I defile this sacred vow in time of peace, and forsake my honor for lies, then let me be outcast from my cabal, branded with shame and banished from the Boston Consilium. Should I turn my back upon this oath in time of battle, then my life is forfeit, and may I perish in direst agony, as an example of the fate of those who swear falsely.



This vow was sworn under a Fate 4 "Sanctify Oath" spell (see *Mage: The Awakening*, pp. 157-158). While the language of the oath specifies all sorts of terrible consequences for breaching it, these are a matter for the Brotherhood and the other Knights to enforce.

Note that this pledge is not written down or recorded in a permanent form, since it reveals the real names of the parties involved. It is considered a breach of the oath to reveal those names to anyone.

### *Ferrum (Consilium Sentinel)*

**Quote:** To say that the strong should serve the weak is like asserting that the farmer should plow for the oxen. Power conveys responsibilities, of course, but to abase oneself as a slave before one's lessers is not among them.

**Background:** Andrew Cain was born to both loving and wealthy parents living in an upscale town north of Boston. His childhood was a happy one, shared with a brother two years his junior. He attended fine schools, and was always a popular youth, surrounded by friends and hangers-on. His Awakening at the age of 16 was, in many ways, the ultimate expression of his natural good fortune and forceful personality. After Andrew's eyes were opened to the truths of the world, he was taken in by the willworkers of the Academy (under the guise of a school for "exceptional students") and

given an education in his unique new abilities. His parents were thrilled that his brief "troubled phase" was quickly surmounted. Four years later, his younger brother, Derek, joined him. During this time, Andrew came under the tutelage of Apollonia, one of the mages of the Brotherhood of the Ineffable Truth, and seemed slated for the fast track to success within that august cabal.

As he came into his own within the Academy, however, Andrew became fascinated with the Duel Arcane and the ethic of personal might espoused by many antiquated Awakened scholars — not merely power for its own sake, but power as a vehicle to perfection of the self. Reflecting upon his own life, Andrew came to see the ways in which he had squandered the near-boundless strength he already possessed and devoted himself to honing his abilities. He took the shadow name Ferrum ("Iron") to proclaim his martial focus and his battle prowess. In 1999, at the age of 20, he defeated his teacher in a Duel, demonstrating the heights to which his philosophy had raised him, and gathered up a few of the Academy's most promising students, his younger brother among them, to serve as a cabal of gentlemen warriors.

Ferrum received the news of his brother's death two years ago with stoic silence and watched impassively his parents' descent into despair, over what they had been told was a "gruesome motorcycle accident," culminating with their suicides just over a year ago. He has nightmares, of course, and sometimes looks at their pictures and cries, but he puts on an unyielding façade for Potestas and Aurem, and for his

cabal. In Ferrum's darkest hours, he wonders if this, the eradication of all human weakness (that which binds him to the crude and contemptible Fallen World), is not all for the best. He maintains a small personal Hallow in West Newbury, near where he grew up, with which he supplements the Mana given to his cabal by the Knights' pact with the Brotherhood.

**Description:** Ferrum is a painfully handsome young man, with his long, black hair falling freely down his shoulders and back, giving him the bearing of a warrior of old. His ice-blue eyes look forcefully and unflinchingly upon any who meet his gaze. He stands tall and proud, always impeccably attired in dark, expensive suits. His voice seems almost too deep for his angelic countenance, and he usually speaks quite softly but with the simple confidence of a commander who is used to giving orders in the heat of battle and being obeyed.

His Nimbus manifests as a warping in the air around his body, as though from intense heat.

**Storytelling Hints:** Ferrum, put simply, takes no shit from anyone. He bristles when even the likes of Potestas and Aurem talk down to him, though his oaths of loyalty and service, married to an antiquated sense of Duelist's honor, enable him to check his anger while still saving face. On occasion, melancholy over what he has lost overtakes him, and he retreats into solitude, but, just as often, he meets his sorrow head-on and refuses to yield an inch to it, though he often becomes more short-tempered than usual during such times.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Steel wand

**Real Name:** Andrew Cain

**Path:** Obrimos

**Order:** Adamantine Arrow

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 5, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Classics) 3, Crafts 2, Investigation 2, Medicine 3, Occult 3, Science 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Firearms 1, Larceny 2, Stealth 1, Survival 2, Weaponry (Swords) 4

**Social Skills:** Intimidation (Physical Threats) 4, Persuasion (Seduction) 3, Socialize (Formal Events) 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Artifact, Disarm, Fast Reflexes 2, Fighting Style (Kung Fu) 3, Hallow 1 (Personal), High Speech, Language (Latin), Library (Shared; The Awakened in Warfare, The Duel Arcane), Quick Draw (Weaponry), Resources 5, Sanctum (Shared) 1, Status (Consilium 3, Order 4), Striking Looks 4, Weaponry Dodge

**Willpower:** 8

**Wisdom:** 6

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Wrath

**Initiative:** 9

**Defense:** 5

**Speed:** 13

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 4

**Arcana:** Forces 4, Life 3, Matter 3, Prime 2

**Notes:** *Forces* — Nightsight (•), Unseen Shield (••), Telekinetic Strike (•••), Energetic Attack (••••); *Life* — Cleanse the Body (•), Self-Healing (••), Honing the Form (•••); *Matter* —

Dark Matter (•), Alter Accuracy (••), Armor Piercing (•••); *Prime* — Dispel Magic (•), Squaring the Circle (••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 13/4

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Size	Special	Dice Pool
Brawl	(B)	—	—	6
Artifact Sword	3(L)	2	8 again	11

**Armor:** 5/4 (reinforced clothing and "Unseen Shield," Forces ••)

## Tanshien's Thorn (Artifact •••••)

Durability 6, Size 2, Structure 8

**Mana Capacity:** Maximum 11

This sword is a long, single-edged weapon with a very slight curve along the blade, which, along with the guard and pommel, appears to be of mirrored white gold, set with glyphs of a pearl-like substance, unknown even to the most erudite scholars of Atlantean lore. The hilt is wrapped in metallic wire of a very pale gray-blue hue. The Artifact originated in Arcadia, and provides extraordinary good fortune to any stroke of the sword (a persistent Fate 3 "Superlative Luck" effect; see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 156).

## Archer

**Quote:** *Fight if you can, run if you must, but never submit while there's still life left in you.*

**Background:** Born the daughter of two hardworking parents in Revere, just north of Boston, Adrianna Reilly had instilled in her from a very young age the notion that there was a right way and a wrong way to live, and that honest labor was its own reward. Her parents were decently devout, and they wanted their daughter to be more faithful than they, so they took turns bringing her to church on Sundays, and made certain that she attended a Catholic school. None of that turned out to be particularly helpful to her when her father's younger brother began sexually abusing her at the age of 11.

Adrianna was meek by nature, and her uncle played on that to make her feel that what was happening to her was a shameful secret and something she had brought on herself. She kept quiet and prayed for release from the anguish she was feeling. Truly convinced that her abuse was her own fault, she begged God to help her to be someone worthy of not being preyed upon. After years of being answered only by her own muffled sobs, she concluded that God wasn't going to answer, and took matters into her own hands. A typewritten letter saying only, "I'm so sorry" was found next to where he lay, facedown, on his own kitchen table, a pistol in his hand and about a dozen photographs of his tearful, 19-year-old niece in various states of undress. The young woman confirmed her uncle's depredations, and no one much seemed to care whether or not he had taken his own life. At the very moment he was lowered into a pauper's grave, his family unwilling to see to even the final disposition of his corpse,



Adrianna found herself in a place of perpetual dusk; at the foot of a great tower of lead, where no winds blew and no sound disturbed the silence.

After her Awakening, Adrianna retreated into herself. Her new senses and abilities frightened her, and she didn't know what to do with them. She was in such a state that Potestas found her, during one her rare forays out of the house. She was living in her parents' basement, trying to forget the world in darkness and solitude. He brought her to the Academy and arranged for Ferrum to train her. The young warrior taught her to seize the world by the throat, to fear nothing and to destroy those who would subjugate her. She became to him the sister he never had, and a potent addition to his cabal. Now, known as Archer, the Exalted Knights' gunman, she locks away the pain of her years-long abuse, drowning it out with the report of her pistols.

**Description:** Archer is tall and slender, perhaps a bit too thin. She is pretty, but has a hollow, haunted look to her that most find at least a little unsettling. Her blond hair is worn short and spiky, and she has a scar that starts at the middle of her hairline and drops to just above her right eyebrow. She often smirks, but, for the most part, no trace of her smile reaches her blue-green eyes. Archer usually dresses in boots, heavy jeans, T-shirts and a leather jacket from under which she seems to be able to produce numerous pairs of firearms when needed.

Archer's Nimbus appears as rapidly condensing frost, clinging to her hair, skin and clothing. While her Nimbus is active, her breath is also visible, as if from the cold.

**Storytelling Hints:** Archer is, in many ways, still defined by the abuse she suffered as a child and young woman. She allows no one to get too close to her, save perhaps for Ferrum, who taught her to harness her rage and pain and use them as weapons, but knew nothing of helping her to surmount the feelings. Despite what she may believe, and despite his best intentions, he did her no favors in the long term. She is at least somewhat distant even with her other cabalmates, and her inner life is a constant and desperate struggle not to succumb to despair. The mindset that helped her to survive a traumatic youth followed by a cold and ominous Awakening and a life of tightly leashed rage is threatening to rob Archer of her humanity.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Pocket mirror

**Real Name:** Adrianna Reilly

**Path:** Moros

**Order:** Adamantine Arrow

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 5

**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Crafts (Gunsmithing) 3, Investigation 2, Medicine 1, Occult (Ghosts) 2, Science 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Firearms (Pistols, Rifles) 5, Larceny 2, Stealth 3, Weaponry 2

**Social Skills:** Intimidation (Interrogation) 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 1

**Merits:** Ambidextrous, Fast Reflexes 1, Gunslinger, High Speech, Language (Latin), Library (Shared; The Awakened in Warfare, The Duel Arcane), Quick Draw (Firearms), Resources 2, Sanctum (Shared) 1, Status (Consilium 1, Order 2)

**Willpower:** 9

**Wisdom:** 4 (Depression, Inferiority Complex)

**Virtue:** Justice

**Vice:** Wrath

**Initiative:** 9

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 11

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 2

**Arcana:** Death 3, Matter 2, Space 2, Spirit 1

**Notes:** *Death*—Soul Marks (•), Corpse Mask (••), Devouring the Slain (•••); *Matter*—Dark Matter (•), Alter Accuracy (••); *Space*—Omnivision (•), Apportation (••); *Spirit*—Exorcist's Eye (•)

**Mana/per Turn:** 11/2

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Clip	Size	Special	DicePool
Light pistol	2(1)	20/40/80	17+1	1	—	12

**Affector:** 3 ("Entropic Guard," Death ••)

*Ikazuchi*

**Quote:** *Is that all you've got?*

**Background:** David Sasaki never quite fit in. He was the only Asian American kid in his class in elementary school, the son of two second-generation Japanese Americans. His parents tried to instill in him a respect for his cultural heritage, but he was having none of it. Likewise, he found it hard to make friends, as his ethnicity made him an easy target for the petty cruelties of the other children. Eventually, he stopped trying to make friends entirely. David slacked off in school and spent almost all of his time alone. His parents first became angry, and then worried, as their only child retreated more and more into himself.

Upon graduating from high school, he drifted from job to job, never settling down. Working as an overnight clerk at a motel north of Boston, his third such job in as many years, he heard a crackling explosion, as a transformer outside was hit by lightning. Curious, he stepped out to look at the wreckage from a respectful distance, and was suddenly overwhelmed by a feeling of dread. *Another bolt is coming*, he realized, *and if I don't catch it, it will kill me*. Without understanding why he did so, David reached out his hand, even as every hair on his body stood on end, and saw a key, wreathed in golden flame, suspended in the air, just beyond his fingertips.

David awoke in the ICU, with the doctor telling him that he was extraordinarily fortunate to have survived. David was too busy making sense of the things he had seen and heard while unconscious to pay much heed. Soon after, drawn by the second-page newspaper story David's experience had earned, Ferrum contacted him and, learning of his Awakened nature, offered to take him in and teach him of the path of the Obrimos and the way of the Adamantine Arrow. Adopting the shadow name Ikazuchi ("Thunder"), David discovered that he finally understood his purpose, his place, in things: a warrior who has spurned his roots, a master of the elements, forged by lightning and tempered by magic.

**Description:** Ikazuchi is a handsome man, if not remarkably so, possessed of rugged good looks. His hair is cut very short, and he wears neat, thin sideburns. He usually dresses in fashionable clothes that tend toward the formal, clothing

suitable for clubbing in upscale establishments. There is a certain air of distance in his demeanor, though, an almost palpable sense of isolation. His voice is low and gravelly, as though somewhat unaccustomed to speech. He has few distinguishing mannerisms, save perhaps for his tendency for silence and stillness.

His Nimbus appears as a wreath of tiny electrical arcs or Lichtenberg figures (fernlike branches of electricity) coming off his body.

**Storytelling Hints:** Ikazuchi is fairly unfriendly, far more interested in his inner life and his personal quest for perfection than in any external relationships. To him, people are just means to ends. Even Ferrum, whom Ikazuchi considers about the closest person he has to a friend, is a stepping stone on his path to dominion over the elements. Of course, he is quite capable of being polite and well mannered, but there is a coldness in even his kindest words; a vague sense that those to whom he speaks are little more than inanimate objects to him.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Pocket knife

**Real Name:** David Sasaki

**Path:** Obrimos

**Order:** Adamantine Arrow

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 1, Manipulation 3, Composure

**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Computer 1, Crafts (Repair) 2, Medicine 1, Occult 1, Science 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Drive (Motorcycles) 2, Stealth 1, Weaponry 2

**Social Skills:** Expression 1, Intimidation (Staredowns) 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** High Speech, Iron Stamina 2, Language (Japanese), Library (Shared; The Awakened in Warfare, The Duel Arcane), Resources 3, Sanctum (Shared) 1, Status (Consilium 1, Order 1)

**Willpower:** 6

**Wisdom:** 5 (Narcissism)

**Virtue:** Temperance

**Vice:** Pride

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 2

**Arcana:** Forces 3, Matter 1, Prime 2

**Rotes:** Forces — Nightsight (•), Influence Electricity (••), Call Lightning (•••); Matter — Alter Conductivity (•); Prime — Dispel Magic (•), Squaring the Circle (••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 11/2

**Armor:** 3 ("Unseen Shield," Forces ••)

### *Cathubodva*

**Quote:** *This world belongs to the bold.*

**Background:** Born Jennifer Hanson, the girl who would one day become the warrior Cathubodva had a childhood that was anything but normal. Since she could first speak, she talked of things hiding at the corners of vision and in the shadows, but she was not afraid of them. Quite the contrary, she considered them friends. When she was 19, while dreaming, she followed

a great black raven to a towering tree, where the shadows revealed themselves and spoke to her. Soon after, she was discovered by the willworkers of the Academy while experimenting with Spirit Arcanum magic and taught to use her abilities. She particularly identified with the Gaulish Celts, her mother's remote ancestors. Upon the completion of her training, she took the shadow name Cathubodva, which means "Battle Raven," a goddess of war and death.

When the Exalted Knighthood was convened, Cathubodva was the first one Ferrum invited into the cabal. In many ways, she is the only Knight he considers to be (nearly) an equal. Her fury in combat is matched only by her bluster (whether on the field or off it), though the Knights (with the notable exception of Ikazuchi) find it to be an endearing characteristic. She is the Knight who chafes most at the control of the Brotherhood and the proxy authority of the Ebon Noose.

**Description:** Cathubodva has an athletic but voluptuous build. Her wild mane of dark brown hair falls over black, almond-shaped eyes. She usually wraps her breasts in a simple swatch of dark cloth in lieu of a shirt or blouse and wears tight-fitting studded leathers, both a jacket and pants, that seem more like armor than clothing. When out and about, she wears heavy boots, but almost always goes barefoot in combat when able to prepare for it, preferring to feel the earth directly beneath her feet, and often shrugs off her jacket, trusting to her skills above any mundane protection. When expecting a fight, she sometimes paints her exposed skin with Celtic knot work patterns.

Her Nimbus appears as a tremendously intricate pattern of writhing pale blue knotwork, weaving around her body at a distance of about six inches.

**Storytelling Hints:** Cathubodva is every inch the warrior-maiden of old and is a firm proponent of the time-honored martial tradition of boasting. What's the point of accomplishing great things, she reasons, if you keep such accomplishments to yourself? She seeks ways to bring the Knights out from under the Brotherhood's thumb, without violating the spirit of her cabal's oaths (which, even were they not enforced by magic, would be extremely important to her). She is cunning and crafty, but prefers to leave the deep thinking to others; let them chronicle history while she is busy *making* it.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Knife, Celtic tattoos (Life magic)

**Real Name:** Jennifer Hanson

**Path:** Thyrsus

**Order:** Adamantine Arrow

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Crafts (Weaponsmith) 3, Medicine (Emergency Care) 3, Occult 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Survival 3, Weaponry (Spears) 4

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 3, Intimidation (Bluster) 3, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 1

**Merits:** Disarm, Destiny 3 (Bane: "A man with a blade of shadows"), Fast Reflexes 2, High Speech, Iron Stamina 1, Language (Breton), Library (Shared; The Awakened in Warfare, The Duel Arcane), Sanctum (Shared) 1, Status (Order 1), Striking Looks 2

**Willpower:** 5

**Wisdom:** 7  
**Virtue:** Faith  
**Vice:** Pride  
**Initiative:** 5  
**Defense:** 3  
**Speed:** 11  
**Health:** 8  
**Gnosis:** 2

**Arcana:** Fate 2, Life 2, Spirit 2

**Notes:** *Fate* — Quantum Flux (•), Exceptional Luck (••); *Life* — Cleanse the Body (•), Self-Healing (••); *Spirit* — Spirit Sight (•), Ephemeral Shield (••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 11/2

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Size	Special	Dice Pool
Brawl	(B)	—	—	5
Spear	3(L)	4	+1 Defense	11

**Armor:** 2 ("Organic Resilience," Life ••)

help gain an audience with the Brotherhood of the Ineffable Truth or even lend some much-needed backup in a perilous situation.

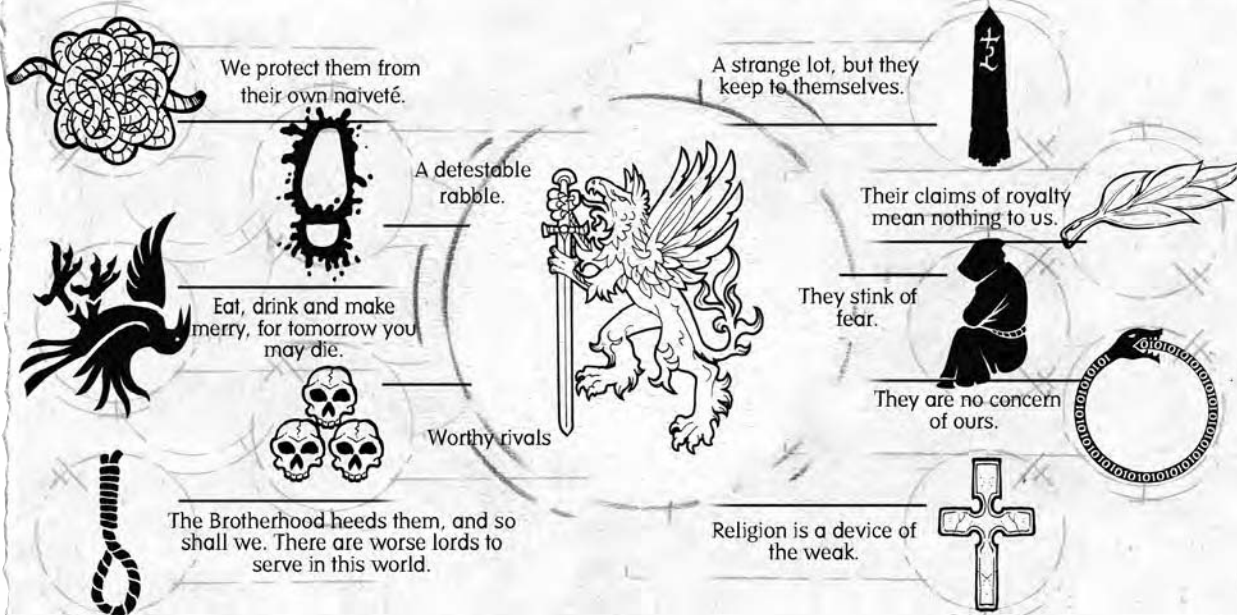
Of course, an outspoken critic of the Duel Arcane (perhaps a Free Council mage or one of another order who personally finds the practice barbaric and distasteful) will discover that the Knights hold nothing but scorn for him, unless he is capable of proving his strength in other ways. Indeed, should such a character need access to the Brotherhood of the Ineffable Truth, the Knights may actually actively work to stymie him and foul any relations he might have with them, using their close ties to the more venerable cabal to deny him access. Given that the Knights serve in many ways as a buffer between the Brotherhood and the rest of the Awakened community, such efforts can end up costing the character valuable time and may even get him flatly denied an audience. To prove his worth, he may be required to defeat a Knight in the Duel Arcane. (How exactly he will manage to do so is *his* problem, as far as the Knights are concerned). Or, he may be administered a test of strength (which is apt to encompass physical prowess, mystic might and strength of character).

## Story Hook — The Duellists

If any of the characters display an interest in the Duel Arcane, the Knights may well invite such individuals to swap stories, trade lore and perhaps even spar. The Knights are always on the lookout for new techniques to use in their Duels, and they are interested in the philosophies practiced by other Duellists, both masters of the art and novices alike. If a character acquits herself particularly well (either in terms of her knowledge of the Duel Arcane or her performance during one), she will find herself with the respect of the Knights and perhaps, in time, their friendship. For such a character, the Knights may prove willing to share old knowledge (especially regarding famed Duellists or Awakened warriors),

## The Gravediggers

For nearly 300 years, on and off, there has been a cabal in the Boston area using a bronze ouroboros as its calling card. Killing has been its business. If any Awakened know for certain whether or not such cabals trace a straight line of descent from master to student, they are not saying. The most recent such fellowship to operate locally is known as the Gravediggers. Like their predecessors, the Gravediggers an-





swer to the Consilium and address threats to the stability of Awakened affairs in a discrete but permanent fashion.

It is said that membership in the cabal requires all manner of oaths, as well as elaborate induction ceremonies. Furthermore, it is rumored that an induced near-death experience is the final test for prospective members, and that failures watch as impotent shades as their corporeal forms are destroyed by magic. Most Awakened doubt such rumors, dismissing them as part of the Gravediggers' carefully crafted mystique. In whatever case, they must certainly be good at their jobs, as two members of the cabal are empowered to act as Sentinels for the Consilium, and all but one of the rest are often brought along on the Hierarch's "martial errands."

### The Gravediggers' Oath

The Gravediggers made dire vows when they first came together as a cabal, vows that were sanctified by Hydra. Violation of the Gravediggers' oath is punished by a Fate 2 "The Evil Eye" spell (see **Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 151-152). The vows are as follows:

*I shall keep sacred the bonds between the living and the dead. I shall bring death where it is needed, and tend it where it grows. I shall never forget my responsibilities as a shepherd of the dead, and will defend Windham Manor to the last, against all enemies, no matter their origin or their strength. I will not betray my fellows, or may I be fed to the sea, devourer of the wicked, and my bones come to rest in the lightless depths, from which there is no succor.*

### Windham Manor

(Sanctum Size ●●●●●; Hallow ●●●●●)

Windham Manor is perched on a sea cliff in Gloucester. A network of caves extends beneath the house, carved into the rock by millions of years of tides. A sprawling graveyard is located at the back of the property, overlooking the water, but it is almost completely overgrown. The house itself is badly in need of repair in a number of places, with the roof sagging here and there, and water leaking into some of the upstairs rooms. Footfalls from no Earthly tread are often heard in the night, pale lights sometimes dance among the graves and the roar of the ocean in the caves below occasionally sounds like tormented moaning, especially on moonless nights.

Windham Manor's Hallow (a 4-dot shared Hallow) is found in the sea caves, which are accessible from the dank, dripping recesses of the house's basement. The progress is treacherous, and no light gets down there (save perhaps for that carried by unquiet spirits), so those seeking to harvest Mana must bring their own illumination. In the depths of the caverns, black salt crystals, infused with tass, grow with almost unnatural swiftness on strangely carved and half-submerged altars of unknown purpose. In recessed shelves, beneath a great, corroded bronze ouroboros, rest a number of human skulls, each of them belonging to a member (whether by blood or by marriage) of

the Windham family. Carved into each skull is a pattern of sigils, a cipher that has been passed down through the generations, that, translated, constitutes the Gravediggers' library (Ancient Horrors of the Sea, Hauntings, Local Conspiracies, Old New England Families).

### Hydra (Consilium Councilor)

**Quote:** *You young folks seem to have taken a wrong turn somewhere. Surely, you weren't trying to get here, were you? No, surely not. Please, allow me to direct you back to the main road.*

**Background:** Eugenia Windham is the last of the Windhams, having buried her younger brother, Byron, five years ago. She has been Awakened for nearly as long as she can remember, daughter of a house possessed more than a few blessed with the "the gift." Hers was the only generation in recent memory to boast two mages (herself and Byron), and her parents' had none. Still, old Hephzibah Windham, Eugenia's grandmother, instructed her in the family's secret arts — the power to kill with a glance, to strike down the enemies of the Consilium and to keep Boston and environs safe for "lesser willworkers." At the end of her instruction, Eugenia took the name Hydra, the serpent that rises up from each wound, stronger than before.

The death of Byron was the death of Hydra's first cabal, the Bleak Wind, as the other two members (both about 10 years Eugenia's senior) had already passed years before. It was purely by chance that she had occasion to learn of Reinga, as he summoned up one of the spirits of her ancestors, using an antique silver goblet that had once belonged to the family. The two made contact through spectral intermediaries, and Reinga eventually brought his nascent cabal to Windham Manor, whereupon dire oaths were sworn and the Gravediggers were born.

The wisest and, by far, eldest member of the cabal, Hydra is content to allow the younger, more dynamic mages to do the field work and claim the lion's share of the glory for themselves. Only a handful of local willworkers, mostly Adamantine Arrow mages and high-ranking members of the Consilium (in which she serves as a remote and rarely heard Councilor), even know that Hydra is a member of the Gravediggers. For the most part, Hydra no longer leaves Windham Manor, whiling away what hours are not spent counseling or using her powerful magics for the other Gravediggers in caring for the house and the unquiet shades that walk its halls and the caverns below. Though she has not yet come up with a satisfactory way to broach the matter to him, she is considering marrying Reinga, not out of any romantic interest but instead to forge a direct line of inheritance that her semi-departed kin will honor when she is gone.

**Description:** Hydra looks the part of a wealthy, kindly old New England spinster. She dresses in clothing better suited to the late 19th century than the early 21st and moves with all the quiet dignity and grace of a proper, old-fashioned lady. Her voice is soft and carries the deliberate quality of New England aristocracy. She sometimes whispers softly to the shades of the dead, which can be a disconcerting habit for those not possessed of a sense for such things (or years of familiarity with her). Despite her almost grandmotherly bearing, Hydra is surrounded by a terrible sense of foreboding, a feeling of clinging horror that closes in around all those she deals with.

Her Nimbus manifests as an aura of shadows that ripples outward from her aged frame, rustling her clothing like a strong, circling breeze.

**Storytelling Hints:** Hydra is weary and jaded, and there is a part of her that is eager to pass on and join her ancestors in the next world. Still, she feels that the Gravediggers need her, and she cannot rest until they are secure in their power and their place in the hierarchy of the Consilium, perhaps by arranging for Reinga to be elected Councilor in her place. She often visits Byron's grave and tries to find some trace of him in the realms of the dead, but he seems to have passed on in peace, for nothing, not even the faintest shadow of his spirit, answers her call. After those times, she is maudlin, sometimes for days on end, but does her best not to let it show.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Ornate hand mirror, deck of playing cards (Fate magic)

**Real Name:** Eugenia Windham

**Path:** Moros

**Order:** Adamantine Arrow

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 5

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 5

**Mental Skills:** Academics 4, Crafts (Sewing) 2, Investigation (Autopsy) 3, Medicine 2, Occult 5, Science 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Firearms 1, Larceny (Sleight of Hand) 4, Stealth 3, Weaponry (Knives) 3

**Social Skills:** Empathy 2, Expression (Correspondence) 2, Intimidation (Torture) 3, Persuasion 1, Socialize 3, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Dream 3, Fighting Finesse (Knives), Hallow (Shared) 4, High Speech, Language (French, Latin), Library (Shared; Ancient Horrors of the Sea, Hauntings, Local Conspiracies, Old New England Families), Meditative Mind, Occultation 3, Resources 4, Sanctum (Shared) 5, Status (Consilium 5, Order 3)

**Willpower:** 10

**Wisdom:** 5

**Virtue:** Hope

**Vice:** Envy

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 5

**Arcana:** Death 5, Fate 4, Matter 4, Mind 1, Prime 1

**Rotes:** *Death*—Speak with the Dead (•), Soul Jar (••), Ghost Gate (•••), Haunting (••••), Quicken Ghost (•••••); *Fate*—The Sybil's Sight (•), Exceptional Luck (••), Monkey's Paw (••), Sanctify Oaths (••••); *Matter*—Craftsman's Eye (•), Shape Water (••), Armor Piercing (•••), Raw Creation (••••);

**Mind**—Aura Perception (•); **Prime**—Inscribe Grimoire (•)

**Mana/per Tum:** 14/5

**Armor:** 5 ("Entropic Guard," Death ••)

*Reinga (Hydra's Provost)*

**Quote:** You find your ghosts, or they find you. Either way, there must come a reckoning.

**Background:** Thomas Moana is proud of his Maori heritage, but prouder still of his duty as an intermediary between the living and the dead. His parents died in a car crash the day before his 18th birthday. The next day, they visited him while he grieved, and he lapsed into a deep trance, during which they guided him down among the dead, and placed a lead coin in his hands, with which to buy passage to whichever world he chose: that of the living or that of the dead. In the end, he chose both, and Awakened to the power within him. Soon, after a brief period of instruction in the ways of the Adamantine Arrow from a wandering shaman, Thomas found himself in the company of others, gifted like him, but not quite the same.

When he discovered Hydra, all of that changed. The young man who had come to call himself Reinga (after the name for the Maori underworld) saw in the much-older woman a kindred spirit, someone who could understand the weight he carried. When she proposed forming a cabal with Reinga and his two friends, he was overjoyed. He had a family again. Now, he is a warrior and a

todian of the dead,  
shepherding them  
as best he may,



and aiding them in finding peace in the next world. He is seen as a leader by the Gravediggers, and it is a role that pleases him. He sometimes worries for Hydra, when dark moods overtake her, but knows that the day is not long in coming when he will lead her to her final rest, and her house will finally have peace and closure.

**Description:** Most people are intimidated by Reinga's appearance. His features are blunt and severe, and his head, save for a braid at the back of his scalp, is clean-shaven. Almost all of the exposed skin of his head, his face included, is covered in traditional Maori tattoos. He often goes shirtless, revealing still more tattoos on his chest, shoulders and back. A few whale-bone talismans hang around his thick neck on leather cords. He favors loose jeans, belted tightly at his broad waist, and goes barefoot as often as he can. In colder weather, he wears thick sweaters and sneakers (boots in the snow).

Reinga's Nimbus reveals itself as a spray of sea mist and a slight darkening of the area immediately around him.

**Storytelling Hints:** Reinga is stoic but not taciturn. He is actually a rather eloquent speaker, a fact that some find off-putting, given his appearance. He loves Hydra like a dear old aunt and would do almost anything to protect her. He takes his role as the de facto leader of the Gravediggers seriously, but he keeps Hydra's involvement with the cabal a secret by her request. Were she to ask for a position of public leadership, he would happily cede it to her. He tries to be a friend to the dead, but recognizes that not all of them need the same sort of friendship. With the living, he is somewhat more reserved, knowing that the Consilium could, at any time, send the Gravediggers to kill anyone, and, given the Nemean's flair for the perverse, the marked mage may well be someone Reinga likes.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Mirrored cigarette case, finger bone (Death magic)

**Real Name:** Thomas Moana

**Path:** Moros

**Order:** Adamantine Arrow

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Crafts 2, Investigation 2, Medicine 3, Occult (Ghosts) 3, Politics 1, Science 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Swimming) 3, Brawl 3, Larceny 2, Stealth 2, Survival (Fishing) 3, Weaponry 3

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 3, Empathy 2, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 1

**Merits:** Destiny 3 (Bane: "Lifeless and undying, it will come to claim that which you call your own."), Fighting Style (Boxing) 3, Hallow (Shared) 4, High Speech, Iron Stamina 2, Language (Maori), Library (Shared; Ancient Horrors of the Sea, Hauntings, Local Conspiracies, Old New England Families), Sanctum (Shared) 5, Status (Consilium 2, Order 2), Strong Back

**Willpower:** 6

**Wisdom:** 7

**Virtue:** Charity

**Vice:** Envy

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 12

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 3

**Arcana:** Death 3, Life 2, Matter 1, Prime 2

**Notes:** *Death*—Soul Marks (•), Entropic Guard (••), Quicken Corpse (•••); *Life*—Cleanse the Body (•), Self-Healing (••); *Matter*—Dark Matter (•); *Prime*—Dispels Magic (•), Unseen Spy (••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 12/3

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Size	Special	Dice Pool
Brawl	(B)	—	—	7

**Armor:** 3 ("Entropic Guard," Death ••)

*Seraphim*

**Quote:** *You have no secrets. I know your sins and they are many, and now you must answer for them.*

**Background:** Robert Hale started calling himself Seraphim some time before his Awakening, or, at least, he's fairly certain that he wasn't yet Awakened when he first adopted the name. Even as a child, he heard the voices of angels, commanding him to do this and that. Sometimes, the things they told him to do didn't seem very nice, but Robert was a good Catholic boy, and good Catholic boys did as angels bade them. Sometime around the age of seven, he stopped telling his parents that many of the things he did were charged to him by a heavenly authority. He had gotten tired of spankings on account of the truth.

As a teenager, he studied Judeo-Christian theology, both mainstream and heretical. It was at that time he began to use the name Seraphim, seeing himself as a messenger, herald and helpmeet of the powers that demanded his loyalty and service. One of his angels, faceless and terrible, brought him before a mountain, shot through with cracks from countless gnarled roots. He scaled that mountain, to find a great forest atop it, where he drank from a cup of carved basalt, and so Awakened to the power within him. He wandered for two years, unable to shut out the voices. At last, a strange old sorcerer in the wilds of Maine found him; the older willworker taught him that the beings he spoke with were not angels, or, if they were, then no angels found in any book, holy or otherwise, that he had ever laid eyes upon. Thus transformed, Seraphim's faith nevertheless survived, though he sees his relationship with the divine in a somewhat different light now, and knows that the name he chose for himself years ago is the right one.

**Description:** Seraphim is a tall, lean man. His straw-colored hair spills down around his shoulders and frames his face. A few days' growth of beard is on his cheeks and chin. He is soft-spoken and almost never raises his voice in anger, which makes his sentences of death all the more chilling to hear. He favors dark clothing, especially his long, unadorned coat (which allows him to somewhat more credibly produce objects out of thin air). He always moves as though with purpose; there is little wasted motion in his actions, regardless of what he is doing.

His Nimbus manifests as a soft radiance and luminous, half-seen, falling feathers that fade away as they float down and slowly away from him.

**Storytelling Hints:** Seraphim stopped being a vehicle for the petty desires of spirits long ago and resolved to become an



angel, or the closest thing he can to such. To that end, he seeks out hidden lore and attempts to shed what he perceives as his human frailties — physical, spiritual and ethical alike. As he sees it, those spirits he has put in bondage will one day constitute his court. That he has had to become accustomed to killing seems natural to him now; creatures like those into which he is metamorphosing have been granting and taking life since before mankind first tamed fire.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Pocket Bible

**Real Name:** Robert Hale

**Path:** Thyrsus

**Order:** Mysterium

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Theology) 4, Computer 1, Investigation (Artifacts) 3, Medicine 3, Occult (Angelic Phenomena) 4

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Drive 1, Weaponry (Swords) 3

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 2, Empathy 3, Expression (Flute) 3, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 1, Socialize 1, Subterfuge (Hiding Emotions) 3

**Merits:** Dream 5, High Speech, Holistic Awareness, Language (Arabic, Aramaic, Hebrew, Latin), Occultation 1, Resources 2, Sanctum (Shared) 5, Status (Consilium 1, Order 2), Weaponry Dodge

**Willpower:** 8

**Wisdom:** 5 (Narcissism)

**Virtue:** Faith

**Vice:** Lust

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 3

**Arcana:** Life 3, Prime 1, Spirit 4

**Roles:** *Life* — Healer's Trance (•), Self-Purging (••), Healing Heart (•••); *Prime* — Supernal Vision (•); *Spirit* — Spirit Tongue (•), Lesser Spirit Summons (••), Greater Spirit Summons (•••), Spirit Guardian (••••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 12/3

**Armor:** 4 ("Ephemeral Shield," Spirit ••)

*Eve (Consilium Sentinel)*

**Quote:** *We're not here to listen to your excuses. We're here because it's already too late for you.*

**Background:** Layla Walker lived a fairly uneventful life through her childhood and young adulthood. She was active in sports and very popular, but nothing about her was truly exceptional. Despite that, for years she wandered in dreams and visions to a tower woven of great stone serpents, in the middle of a primordial wilderness. While she was a junior in college, Layla took severely ill, and was unconscious for days. During that time, she made her longest, and final, journey to that tower, in which she took up a jagged and razor-edged book of obsidian, calling herself Eve, after the biblical first woman, full of power and potential.

She met Reinga through mutual Sleeper acquaintances, and the two got along famously, right from the start. He helped her as best he could to get a handle on her magic and inducted her into the Adamantine Arrow. When he started looking for willworkers to bring together as the Gravediggers, she was a natural choice and the first person he contacted. While hot-tempered and not exactly the peacemaker of the cabal, Eve contributes a great deal to the vitality that holds the Gravediggers together and impels them onward as a group.

**Description:** Eve is a beautiful woman in her mid-20s, with a rich, coffee-colored complexion. She wears her black hair in scores of thin braids, and almost always wears a leather choker, ornamented with pieces of bone. She dresses simply, in clothing suitable for combat. Her demeanor is passionate, and her emotions run strong, whether for good or for ill. She speaks with authority, but without arrogance, and expects people to listen to her when she's talking about something she knows.

**Storytelling Hints:** Eve is temperamental, but her heart is in the right place. Sometimes, her darker emotions get the better of her; she can be a real bitch at those times, but the Gravediggers are well aware of her foibles by now, and just give her room and time to blow off steam. Only Hydra is immune to her temper, as Eve sees the older woman in a grandmotherly light. Eve's abruptness and blunt honesty can be seen as rudeness by those who don't know her.

Her Nimbus appears as crawling and slithering phantom vines that rise up from the ground to entangle themselves around her legs and torso.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Knife

**Real Name:** Layla Walker

**Path:** Thyrsus

**Order:** Adamantine Arrow

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics 1, Crafts (Leatherworking) 2, Investigation 2, Medicine 4, Occult 2, Science 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl (Kicks) 4, Drive 2, Firearms 1, Larceny 1, Stealth 2, Survival 3, Weaponry (Knives) 2

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 3, Empathy 1, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 1

**Merits:** Fast Reflexes 1, Fighting Style (Kung Fu) 4, Fleet of Foot 2, High Speech, Resources 2, Sanctum (Shared) 5, Status (Consilium 2, Order 1), Striking Looks 4

**Willpower:** 6

**Wisdom:** 7

**Virtue:** Justice

**Vice:** Wrath

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 11

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 2

**Arcana:** Fate 1, Forces 2, Life 3, Spirit 2

**Roles:** *Fate* — Quantum Flux (•); *Forces* — Nightsight (•), Influence Fire (••); *Life* — Healer's Trance (•), Organic

Resilience (••), Healing Heart (•••); *Spirit*—Second Sight (•), Gossamer Touch (••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 11/2

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Size	Special	Dice Pool
Kick	(B)	—	—	7

**Armor:** 3 ("Organic Resilience," Life ••)

### *Hades (Consilium Sentinel)*

**Quote:** *Truly, I'm sorry that it's come to this, but we each have our roles to play. Are you of a mind to go peacefully, then? No, I thought not.*

**Background:** Since childhood, Ronald Napier had to get used to the idea of looking down on people. It was difficult for him, as he was shy by nature. Some kids liked to pick fights with him, attacking him in numbers and laughing as the gentle youth ran home, crying. The one time he stood up for himself, he broke another boy's arm and was severely punished. He learned to keep his strength to himself after that and not to harm those who would try to hurt him since they were, almost without exception, ignorant and cowardly. It was a mindset that served him well, until the night he got word that his mother had been killed and his father critically wounded by a burglar.

Ron fell into a deep depression, somehow feeling that he had failed. He spent months looking for answers at the bottom of a bottle, and, one morning, as the sun rose, came to a realization: some people, according to their actions, *deserved* to be hurt. That night, Ron heard screaming in an alley near his apartment building. He investigated, and found a young man standing over a woman he had just stabbed to death. Ron remembers only that his fists fell repeatedly on the man (he still has a scar on his right palm from the killer's knife), and that he then stood over two bodies, while gray lightning split the mad, roiling black clouds and a heavy rain fell.

Strangely, the coroner concluded that the killer had seemingly died of a coronary, despite no evidence of heart disease, heavy drug use or any other telltale symptom of such an end at his young age. For some reason still unknown to Ron, he was taken by Culsu, of the Shadow Chorus; dubbed Hades and taught the ways of both the Path and order. At the end of his instruction, she released him to find his own way. He went without a cabal for some time, five years ago accepting Reinga's offer of alliance in a new cabal. Now, Hades serves the Gravediggers as both looming executioner and voice of conscience, protecting the innocent from things they were not meant to know and evils that were never meant to befall them.

**Description:** Hades towers over most people, with a massive, powerful build. His wiry, black mane of hair and bristling beard lead most people to think that he is an ignorant brute, but his manner of speech shows him to be a man of some intelligence, if not an intellectual. He dresses simply, in clothes that are easily repaired or replaced, often shopping at Army/Navy surplus stores. His tread is heavy and ponderous, but he can be quite agile when need be.

Hades' Nimbus reveals itself as flickering crimson light from below, as if from distant flames or the glow of churning magma.

**Storytelling Hints:** Hades is a calm, gentle man by nature. He doesn't like to hurt people, but now recognizes that some people (and some *things*) in this world understand only the language of violence. Still, he tries to find a peaceable solution whenever the opportunity presents itself. He is still somewhat shy, and prefers to let others (usually Reinga) do the talking, though he will step in and speak if he feels that his opinion is not being adequately represented.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Lead pipe

**Real Name:** Ronald Napier

**Path:** Moros

**Order:** Guardians of the Veil

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure

3

**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Crafts 1, Investigation 1, Medicine (First Aid) 1, Occult 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Stealth 1, Survival 1, Weaponry (Axes) 3

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken (Dogs) 2, Empathy 2, Expression 2, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 1, Socialize 1

**Merits:** Brawling Dodge, Fighting Style (Boxing) 2, Giant, High Speech, Sanctum (Shared) 5, Status (Consilium 2, Order 1), Strong Back

**Willpower:** 6

**Wisdom:** 8

**Virtue:** Charity

**Vice:** Sloth

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 13

**Health:** 9

**Gnosis:** 2

**Arcana:** Death 2, Life 2, Matter 2, Prime 1

**Rotes:** *Death*—Forensic Gaze (•), Decay (••); *Life*—Cleanse the Body (•), Self-Healing (••); *Matter*—Detect Substance (•), Steel Windows (••); *Prime*—Discern Phantasm (•)

**Mana/per Turn:** 11/2

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Size	Special	Dice Pool
Brawl	(B)	—	—	9
Great axe	5(L)	4	9 again	14

**Armor:** 2 ("Unseen Aegis," Matter ••)

## Story Hook —

### Target of Liquidation

Someone important to one or more of the characters (preferably a Sleeper, someone who has apparently done nothing to warrant death) has been targeted by the Gravediggers. Since Reinga is a reasonable man, and not particularly happy about this assignment, he seeks out the cabal and offers them a chance to get the job called off. The only catch is that it comes down directly from the Nemean, who is not often

inclined to change his mind once he has decided that someone needs to die. He won't discuss his reasons for the killing, though he will entertain pleas to spare the individual's life — a situation made all the more frustrating by the fact that the characters likely lack the means to figure out why he wanted the target killed in the first place.

The Gravediggers know that the Nemean regards the individual's continued existence as "potentially dangerous." Perhaps divinations or omens have led the Nemean to such a conclusion. Perhaps he's simply lying, and the unknown third signatory of the Secret Concord desires this person dead for reasons not disclosed. The sentence of death may have come down for very nearly any reason — maybe even to test the loyalty of the Gravediggers to the Consilium. The members of the cabal also know that the Nemean wants the person killed quickly, and they are actually chancing his wrath by granting this stay of execution. They won't go out of their way to mention that latter fact to the characters, but anyone who knows anything of the Hierarch is well aware that he is not apt to react well to any delay.

## Free Council

The Free Council in Boston is, as everywhere, an eclectic band of willworkers, counting among its numbers radicals, crackpots and malcontents alike. Once, their war with the local Guardians of the Veil laid low the Guardians' hegemony over Boston's Consilium, but times have changed and

the Council's fortunes have also waned. In recent years, these mages have existed on the fringes of society, neither influential nor outcast. For the most part, they prefer things that way, free of power and the responsibility it entails. There are exceptions to the rule, of course, but the order's members know that the Silver Ladder isn't going to compromise its clout in any way and that, if it did, it would be the Guardians of the Veil who took the first crack at them. As the Free Council see it, it is far safer, and wiser, to keep the low profile they've been maintaining in and around Boston.

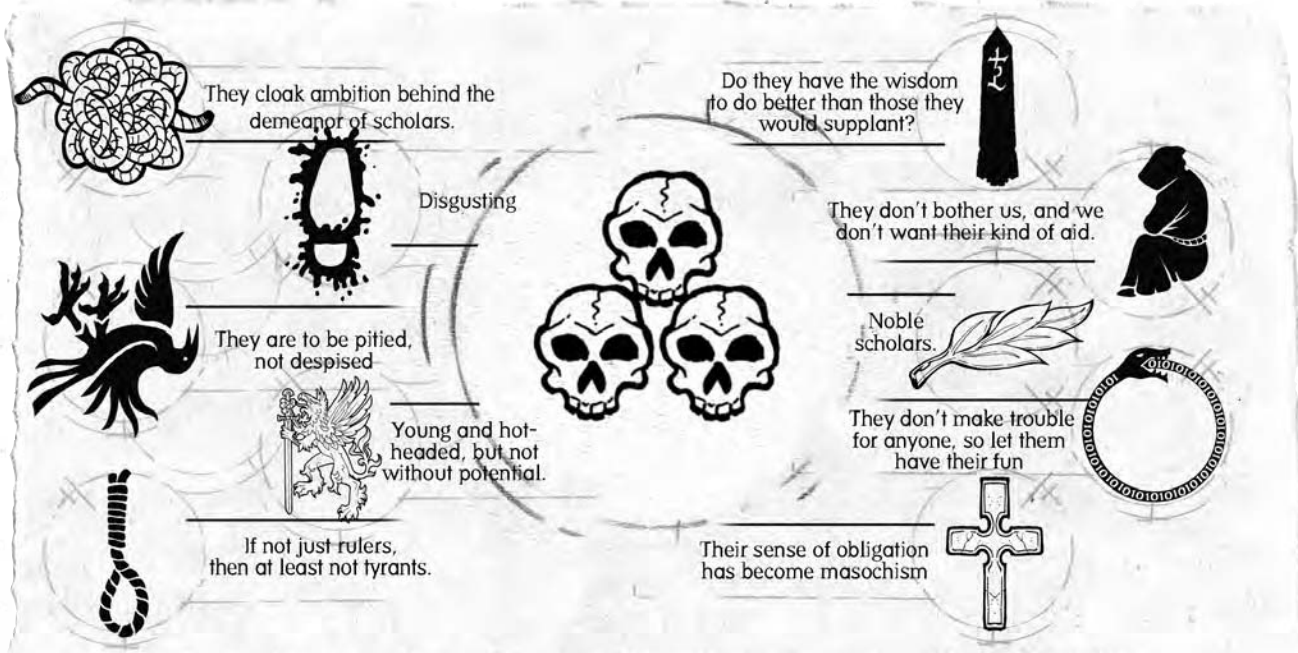
## The Dead Wrens

Pirates and vagabonds, the Dead Wrens do their collective best to remain out of the struggles of the Awakened. While the cabal considers itself a member of the Consilium, the Wrens only reluctantly involve themselves in politics. After all, there's little profit to be made there if you're a little fish, and one never knows if and when the Guardians of the Veil may attempt to extract a pound of flesh from the easiest nearby target that presents itself. Instead, this cabal of miscreants eats, drinks and makes merry, driving back the shadows with laughter, and doing what they can to make peace with those shadows that fail to flee.

The nominal ringmaster of the Dead Wrens' sanctum, the Emerald Scroll, is the modern-day buccaneer, Davy Jones (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. pp. 383-384 and p. 389, for details on both Davy and the sanctum). In addition to the Scroll, the Wrens maintain some dock space along Boston's waterfront (see "Downtown," p. 23), in order to have ready access to the sea.

## Ishmael

**Quote:** If it's 'Avast!' and 'Yo-ho!' you're looking for, then it's Davy you're after. If you're in the mood for strong spirits, then





*you want Annie. If you need — what? Oh, me? I just kinda sit around and soak up the local character . . .*

**Background:** Antonio Aceveda was never comfortable with the spotlight. Given the choice, he always preferred to be the sidekick to a more capable and charismatic person. In elementary school, Antonio ran with the good-natured troublemakers and took more than his fair share of the blame for their mischief when things went wrong and none of the credit when they went right. In high school, he was the long-suffering but high-spirited fall guy for the popular kids. Right around graduation, he did some soul-searching and came to terms with the notion. Without the inclination or the grades to enter college, Antonio took up working on the docks in Boston, and was content, if not really happy, for a time.

Like Davy's, Antonio's Awakening came at sea, but his involved a near-death experience by way of drowning. It was Davy who fished him out of the ocean. As Antonio was regaining consciousness, Davy, decked out in pirate finery that somehow made Antonio think of *Moby Dick*, asked him his name. Antonio could only think to quip, "Call me Ishmael." The name stuck, becoming Antonio's shadow name. Since then, he has been Davy's devoted sidekick and the glue that holds the Dead Wrens together.

**Description:** Ishmael is a trifle scrawny and a bit shorter than average, but with a scruffy and somewhat roguish look that some find appealing. His badly bleached hair is tangled from long hours at sea, and he rarely finds the time to properly maintain his thin mustache and the narrow strip of beard just under his lower lip. His dress is flamboyant, but not as much as Davy's, and Ishmael instinctively and comfortably falls in behind the other mage's lead.

His Nimbus manifests as a dappling of light all over and around him, as though from tropical sunlight reflected from gentle waves.

**Storytelling Hints:** Ishmael is a perpetual henchman, and he's quite good at the role. Furthermore, he's only truly comfortable when in the shadow of a more dynamic figure. Being in the spotlight as the butt of a friendly joke or when explaining his role in someone else's brilliant plan works fine for him; being the life of the party or the one coming up with the brilliant plan, on the other hand, just isn't his style. He's also got the best handle on all of the Dead Wrens' disparate interests, though he would never knowingly betray that confidence.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Cell phone

**Real Name:** Antonio Aceveda

**Path:** Acanthus

**Order:** Free Council

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics 1, Computer 1, Crafts 2, Investigation 1, Medicine (First Aid) 1, Occult 2, Science 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Swimming) 2, Brawl 1, Drive 2, Firearms 1, Larceny 2, Stealth (Crowds) 3, Survival 1

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Empathy (Motives) 3, Persuasion 3, Socialize (Bar Hopping) 2, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge (Spotting Lies) 2

**Merits:** Barfly, Contacts (Coast Guard, Dock Workers, Port Authority), Hallow (Shared) 3, High Speech, Language (Spanish), Library (Shared; Local Legends, Witchcraft, Haunted Ships), Resources 2, Sanctum (Shared) 5, Status (Order 1)

**Willpower:** 5

**Wisdom:** 7

**Virtue:** Charity

**Vice:** Lust

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 1

**Arcana:** Fate 2, Mind 1, Prime 1, Space 1, Time 2

**Notes:** *Fate* — Reading the Outmost Eddies (•), Fortune's Protection (••); *Mind* — Third Eye (•); *Prime* — Discern Phantasm (•); *Space* — Finder (•); *Time* — Temporal Eddies (•), Temporal Dodge (••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 10/1

**Armor:** 2 ("Temporal Dodge," Time ••)

*Rabid Annie*

**Quote:** *Storm's comin'. Bad one, too.*

**Background:** Laura Passius loved to listen to her mother's stories of her ancestor, "Rabid Annie" Shaw, whom she was told was a pirate who sailed the Spanish Main. Of course, as she got older, Laura learned that "Rabid Annie" was likely nothing more than a bedtime fable made up to put a hyperactive tomboy to sleep with tales of high-seas adventure. Somehow, that struck the young girl as terribly unfair and, at the age of nine, she resolved to become Rabid Annie when she grew up.

Laura had no one particularly qualified to teach her about sailing ships, so she taught herself through a combination of books, television and raw intuition. Her peers laughed at her in middle school and high school, but she didn't particularly care for their opinions on much of anything, anyway. When she finally dropped out during junior year and ran away from home, she booked passage on a ship bound for Europe and spent some time in a sleepy fishing village in Greece, learning the unglamorous basics of her self-appointed vocation: knot work, predicting the weather and the like.

She doesn't speak of her Awakening, but returned to America a willworker, going by the name of her imaginary ancestor. She drifted for a few years, only settling down in Boston after meeting Davy Jones at sea. (Both were in stolen boats at the time). Her brewer's skills, picked up here and there, made her an instant hit with the newly formed Dead Wrens, and she was quickly voted in as a member. Since then, she has been with the Wrens, and has been Davy's on-again, off-again lover.

**Description:** Had her life taken a different course, Rabid Annie might have been a very pretty woman. Though weathered by sun and sea, she's still handsome, despite looking well older than her 30 or so years. No one is quite certain of her ethnic background judging by her appearance alone, but it is obvious that at least some of her ancestry is Mediterranean. She habitually wears a heavy, leather long coat (once black and now a dark and battered brown), and is

often clad in leather pants, engineer's boots and tight-fitting shirts. When at sea, far from the eyes of the authorities, she's known to keep an ornate cutlass belted at her left hip.

Rabid Annie's Nimbus shows as a flickering of afterimages, like stutters of her movement, lagging behind her in space.

**Storytelling Hints:** Rabid Annie fancies herself a modern-day pirate, rather than one in the traditional mold, like Davy Jones. She prefers her two speedboats and small modern yacht to any old-fashioned schooner or sloop. She isn't terribly practical, but is far more so than Davy, and can make him see reason when others fail to — a role she has comfortably adopted within the Dead Wrens. Annie is also a veteran carouser and can drink any of the Wrens (and most people besides) under the table.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Silver hipflask

**Real Name:** Laura Passius

**Path:** Mastigos

**Order:** Adamantine Arrow

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Crafts (Brewery) 2, Medicine 1, Occult (Nautical Phenomena) 1, Science 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Swimming) 3, Brawl (Dirty Tricks) 2, Drive (Speed Boats) 2, Firearms 1, Larceny 3, Stealth 1, Survival 1, Weaponry 3

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken (Birds) 1, Empathy 1, Intimidation (Bluster) 2, Persuasion (Fast-Talking) 2, Socialize (Carousing) 2, Streetwise 2

**Merits:** Allies (Smugglers) 1, Direction Sense, Familiar (embodied macaw; see below), Hallow (Shared) 3, High Speech, Imbued Item 4, Language (Greek), Library (Shared; Local Legends, Witchcraft, Haunted Ships), Resources 2, Sanctum (Shared) 5, Status (Order 1), Toxin Resistance

**Willpower:** 6

**Wisdom:** 5 (Irrationality)

**Virtue:** Hope

**Vice:** Envy

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 11

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 2

**Arcana:** Life 2, Mind 2, Space 3

**Roles:** Life — Sense Life (•), Organic Resilience (••); Mind — Third Eye (•), First Impressions (••); Space — Spatial Awareness (•), Untouchable (••), Portal (•••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 11/2

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Size	Special	Dice Pool
Imbued cutlass	3(L)	2	*	9

\* Rabid Annie's imbued cutlass can be used to cast the Prime 3 "Celestial Fire" spell as a contingent power (in addition to serving as a normal cutlass).

**Armor:** 3 ("Untouchable," Space ••)

**Mister Higgins, Annie's Macaw Familiar**

The familiar spirit known as Mister Higgins takes the form of a particularly large and colorful macaw. For the most part,

he keeps his silence and acts the part of an ordinary animal when around those outside Annie's cabal. Occasionally, however, especially around Sleepers (particularly if he's mad at Annie for something or just feeling perverse), he likes to say things that have no business coming out of a parrot's mouth. While he knows that his mischief will earn him something foul for dinner, the comedic value is (usually) worth the price.

Beyond his questionable sense of humor, Mister Higgins is rather wise and well versed in many paranormal secrets, as well as a keen student of human nature. His insights into potential business partners (often whispered into Annie's ear while she steps away to grab a few drinks for people) have proven quite valuable to the cabal in more than one instance.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 1

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Occult 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Larceny 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1

**Social Skills:** Empathy 2, Persuasion 3, Subterfuge 4

**Willpower:** 3

**Max Essence:** 10

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 15 (flight only; species factor 10)

**Size:** 2

**Health:** 4

**Armor:** 3 (Annie's "Avoidance Tactics" spell, Space •••)

**Influence:** Cunning 2

**Numina:** Innocuous, Reaching

**Ban:** Mister Higgins may not refuse any food offered to him, no matter how unpleasant or dangerous it may be.

## Menelaus

**Quote:** *Where's your taste for adventure, boy? Better to die young, in the jaws of something unspeakable, than at home, in bed, surrounded by weeping faces!*

**Background:** Damien Charles III lived a reasonably humdrum life up until graduate school in archaeology. He was cataloguing a dig site in the Cambodian jungle when the visions came to him. His team thought he had fallen ill, and he ranted about a "book of stone, covered in vines" and "an ancient evil." They confined him, but his strength seemed almost unnatural. He broke the ropes that had been used to bind him, and disappeared into the wilds. Two years after all efforts to find him had ceased, he emerged, having at long last bested the dark spirit he sensed.

Charles wandered the world aimlessly, stumbling upon adventure after adventure, and began to fancy himself a modern-day Menelaus, who learned the secrets of safe passage across the seas from the god Proteus, adopting the name as his own. He met up with Davy Jones in Iceland; both men were searching for the same piece of Viking treasure, only to find that it had been looted perhaps a century before. Despite the difference in their respective ages, the two men hit it off

## The Seal of Nar-Khedai (Artifact ....)

Durability 5, Size negligible, Structure 5

**Mana Capacity:** Maximum 11

This ivory pendant is elegantly carved into the stylized image of a grinning hyena's head, and is considered by some scholars to have once been the personal seal of the Atlantean exile Nar-Khedai, a powerful Mastigos. A small loop at the back of the Artifact allows it to be threaded on a thin cord of some sort. (Currently, it is worn on a slim leather thong). The seal is believed to have originated in Pandemonium, and allows its bearer to manipulate others' initial impressions of him — a contingent Mind 2 "First Impressions" effect (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 208) that is activated by touching the pendant lightly, whether directly or through clothing.

grandly, and Menelaus returned to Boston with the younger willworker, eager to offer his knowledge and experience to the Wrens, a task he performs with the same gusto he devotes to all the pursuits of his colorful life.

**Description:** Menelaus looks like an old salt now, with a weathered face, a thick beard, gray-streaked hair and a nose swollen from one too many old breaks. He dresses simply, favoring heavy, dark wool coats (to ward off the ocean's chill) and

sturdy boots. In warmer weather, he sheds the coat, revealing worn jeans and light, comfortable shirts. Somewhere along the line, he started smoking a pipe, and now boasts an impressive collection of them, often cycling a new one into use every two weeks or so. Smiles come easily to him, and his peals of laughter can be heard booming over all but the stormiest seas.

His Nimbus manifests as phantom scenes of ancient battles, perceived just around him, seen as though through a swirling fog.

**Storytelling Hints:** Menelaus wants to sail the seas, find treasure, fight monsters and otherwise do all the things heroes in ancient tales do. He's a seasoned traveler and knows a little something about most any port of call. His academic background makes him knowledgeable, and his experiences make him wiser than he often lets on. He sees Davy as a younger brother — or perhaps even a son (even he's not sure which) — and as a comrade-in-arms, a fellow seeker of the world's mysteries. The rest of the Dead Wrens are all seen in an unambiguously paternal light.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Personal journal

**Real Name:** Damien Charles III

**Path:** Thyrsus

**Order:** Mysterium

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Archaeology) 4, Crafts (Shipwright) 2, Investigation (Artifacts) 4, Medicine 2, Occult (Superstitions) 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Firearms 1, Larceny 2, Stealth 1, Survival 2, Weaponry 1

**Social Skills:** Empathy 1, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 1, Socialize 2, Streetwise (Ports) 3, Subterfuge 1

**Merits:** Contacts (Black Market, International Shipping), Direction Sense, Encyclopedic Knowledge,

Hallow (Shared) 3, High Speech, Language (Ancient Greek, Arabic, Cambodian, Cantonese, Filipino, Italian, Latin, Portuguese, Spanish), Library (Shared; Local Legends, Witchcraft, Haunted Ships), Resources 3, Sanctum (Shared) 5, Status (Consilium 1, Order 2)

**Willpower:** 6

**Wisdom:** 8

**Virtue:** Hope

**Vice:** Gluttony

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 3

**Arcana:** Fate 2, Life 3, Spirit 4, Time 2





**Notes:** *Fate*—Flight of Birds (•), The Butterfly Effect (••); *Life*—Healer's Trance (•), Body Control (••), Control Median Life (•••); *Spirit*—Spirit Tongue (•), Peer Across the Gauntlet (••), Harm Spirit (•••), Spirit Road (••); *Time*—Perfect Timing (•), Divination (••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 12/3

**Armor:** 4 ("Ephemeral Shield," Spirit ••)

### Sunjata

**Quote:** *I shall have it for you at the appointed hour, but in exchange, you must do for me those favors we agreed upon. Do we have a bargain? Good. Then let our pact be sealed in blood.*

**Background:** Sunjata doesn't remember where he comes from, anymore. He has vague recollections of a great battle at sea, with cannons roaring and men with swords, but knows that such memories cannot be. And, yet, so many things are alien to him. Cars and computers baffle him, but the sea is comforting: it is eternal, and, when the winds blow just right, from east to west, there is a hint of memory, just on the edge of his consciousness, that he cannot quite get hold of. It is enough for him, though; it has to be.

Sunjata found the Wrens when the cabal was vacationing in Jamaica. He knew where to look for them, and that he needed to find them (but not why) — and could not recall what he was doing on the island or how he had gotten there. After a few bottles of spirits, Sunjata and the Dead Wrens came to the agreement that he should join the cabal. Davy called it "good fortune," and everyone left it at that. Since coming on board, Sunjata has tried to encourage the rest of the cabal to take a more active hand in the Consilium's politics but has thus far met with little success, despite his own inroads into the local power structure.

**Description:** Sunjata is a towering, muscular man. His hair is worn in long, thick dreadlocks, and his complexion is a deep, rich brown, contrasting sharply with the white gleam of his perfect teeth when he flashes one of his dashing, dangerous smiles. Gold hoops dangle from his earlobes. When on land, he wears one of his many tasteful suits. (He claims that the garb, combined with his wild mane of hair and looming height, serves to put others off balance). At sea, he dresses far more simply: jeans and little else, save in the most frigid weather. His voice is a low, dignified rumble, and his pronunciation of all of the languages he knows is flawless and eerily unaccented.

Sunjata's Nimbus is the image of a ghostly lion, sometimes appearing as the great cat's head and mane around his own head and shoulders, and sometimes weaving around from behind him to curl its lips back in an unheard roar.

**Storytelling Hints:** At his core, Sunjata is a lost man, without a past and disconcerted at the prospect of what the future holds. He is aware that his name (which he somehow knows was adopted, not his real name) means "Hungry Lion" and, beyond that, has only a few flashes of images and some inexplicable memories. Two are scents (jasmine and pine), and the other is a short sentence (a sibilant voice hissing the words, "I know where she is," in German). He wants to see the Dead Wrens take on a position of prominence and influence, in the hopes that doing so will enable him to discover more about who he really is, but he is coming to

believe that such is not truly why he is here, now, with Davy and the rest.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Antique gold Indian Madras Presidency Star Pagoda coin (with five-pointed star)

**Real Name:** Unknown

**Path:** Acanthus

**Order:** Silver Ladder

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics 1, Crafts 2, Investigation 1, Occult (Witchcraft) 3, Politics 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Distance Running) 2, Brawl (Grappling) 4, Survival 2, Weaponry 2

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 2, Empathy 2, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge (Misdirection) 3

**Merits:** Artifact 4, Brawling Dodge, Fighting Style (Boxing) 1, Giant, High Speech, Language (English, French, German, Portuguese), Sanctum (Shared) 5, Status (Consilium 2, Order 1), Striking Looks 2

**Willpower:** 6

**Wisdom:** 5

**Virtue:** Justice

**Vice:** Greed

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 11

**Health:** 9

**Gnosis:** 2

**Arcana:** Death 1, Fate 4, Time 3

**Notes:** *Death*—Grim Sight (•); *Fate*—Reading the Outmost Eddies (•), The Evil Eye (••), Fortune's Protection (••), Superlative Luck (•••), Sanctify Oaths (••••); *Time*—Perfect Timing (•), Shifting Sands (••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 11/2

**Armor:** 4 ("Fortune's Protection," Fate ••)

### Story Hook — Pandora's Box

The Dead Wrens need to get rid of a relic of some sort, and quickly. They're willing to pay handsomely (in whatever commodities the characters desire, within reason) to see the item taken from them quickly and quietly, and disposed of with a minimum of fanfare. The Wrens have put the object in a locked box that is constructed to ward against mystic scrutiny (a Space 2 "Ward" spell; Potency 5), and Davy Jones would like to see the box *remain* sealed.

They seem to be in an awkward position with the object, and will offer to increase their price to seemingly unreasonable amounts, so long as no questions are asked, the chest is not opened and the characters *never* speak to anyone of having performed any such service for the Dead Wrens.

Naturally, any number of parties could want the box's contents for any number of reasons. If the characters accept the terms of the deal, it is likely that whatever the Wrens offer the characters probably isn't enough for the amount of trouble this parcel is going to cause them. It may be that the box contains the soul stone of a powerful Scelestus, an Artifact associated with the reign of the Guardians' regime in Boston or even something connected to the Secret Concord (some object or shred of writing that may shed some light on the details of that grim pact).

Depending upon what you want to put inside that box, the characters could end up hunted by the Ebon Noose, vengeful ghosts or monstrosities that beggar the imagination.

## The Special Media Group

Operating in and around MIT, the Special Media Group (or the SMG for short) is considered a "rogue" cabal, operating completely outside the auspices of the local Consilium. For the most part, though, neither side bothers much with the other. The SMG is beneath the Nemean's notice, and the SMG takes especial care not to tread on any toes. Of course, given the cabal's particular focus, it is perhaps unsurprising that the SMG has more than its fair share of discretion. While using magic to fleece casinos elsewhere in the country isn't strictly illegal, it is the sort of thing that can get a person killed, even by Sleepers who don't know the half of why the house lost most of those last few big hands.

The SMG does more than gamble, however. Its members are also devoted to the idea of reducing the universe and all its variables into predictable strings of code. After all, if the

SMG can master the nuances of cosmic motion, free will and destiny, then nothing, absolutely *nothing*, is beyond their power. While that exalted goal is a long ways off (not that the SMG readily admit as much), they have managed to integrate the use of computers into their magic in ways that no one else in the area has seen before.

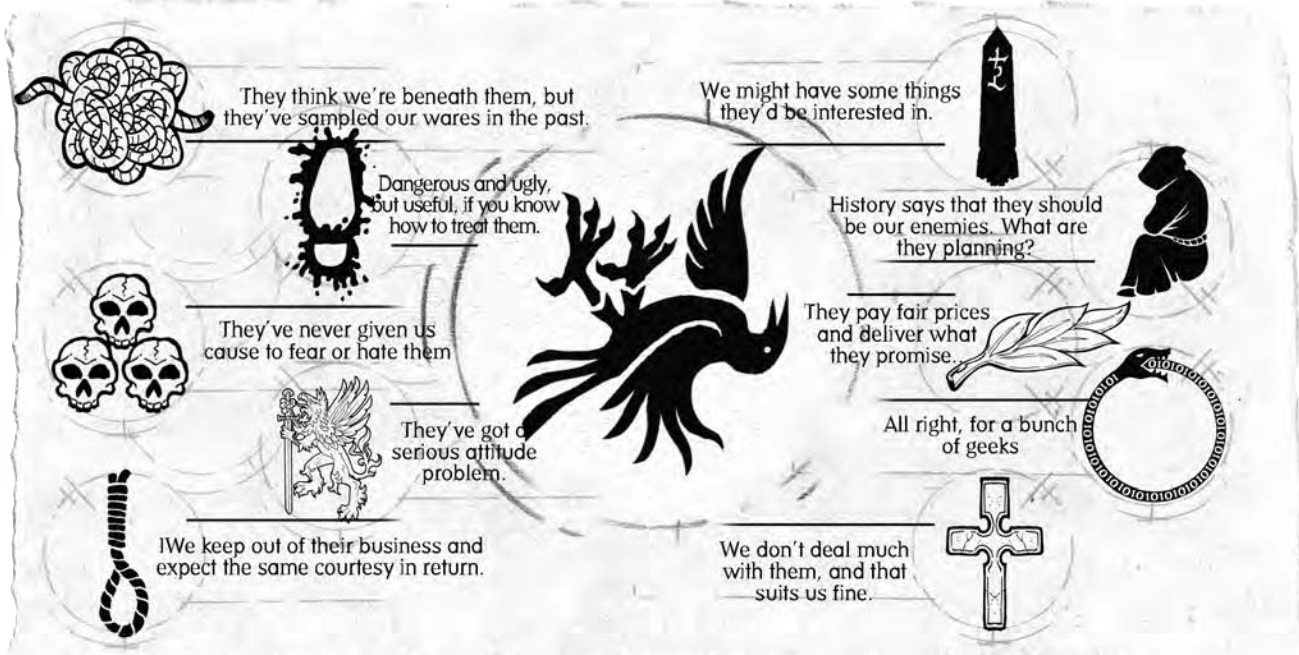
*The Fortress (Sanctum Size ●●●, Security ●●●; Hallow ●●●)*

The SMG's sanctum, called the Fortress, is located in a small brownstone near MIT's campus. The cabal uses the top two floors for living space, the ground floor for parties and the expansive basement as offices to coordinate their moneymaking operations. Despite the foreboding name, the Fortress is comfortable and well appointed. Each member of the cabal decorates his or her private quarters according to taste, but the common areas are all furnished in an elegant, minimalist fashion with vaguely Asian overtones.

The sanctum's Hallow is located at the top of the stairwell leading to the roof. Light sources, natural or otherwise, grow dim there, taking on a faint reddish tinge, causing the spiderwebs in the upper recesses of the stairwell to sparkle like thin strands of rust-colored pearl. The webbing, harvested, boiled, dried and then crushed into powder, yields up tass (a 3-dot shared Hallow). The SMG's Library is contained almost completely on CD-ROM and covers the following topics: Casino Operating Procedures, Chaos Theory, Computer Coding, Computer Engineering and Mathematics.

*Elegera*

**Quote:** *It's a common misconception that the odds favor the house. In reality, the odds favor the party that controls them. In your standard scenario, that would be the house, but this isn't your standard scenario.*



**Background:** Justin Hill always had a genius for mathematics. He understood numbers far better than he comprehended people. His parents worried about him, of course. Other than his introversion and social awkwardness, however, he seemed perfectly normal. He was picked on a good deal as a child, but, as he grew into a teenager, his long, gangly limbs began to fill out and his baby face narrowed. The dissonant mishmash of his childhood features metamorphosed into those of a strikingly handsome young man.

Justin's social skills grew with his confidence, but he never forgot his love of numbers. He doesn't speak of his Awakening, but, based on conversations, the other members of the cabal suspect that it took place right around his high school graduation, or maybe a couple of years later. He has never named the mage who brought him into the Free Council, but the rest of the SMG strongly suspect that Justin got (or at least refined) many his views on mathematics, probability and the universe from that individual. However, Justin's decision to use all of that knowledge in a gambling scheme to fund his research was patently all his own. He took the name Eleggua (one of the Yoruba orishas, a god of crossroads and possibilities), mainly because he thought it sounded cool, but, years later, he has grown into the moniker, demonstrating wisdom and understanding far beyond his years.

**Description:** Eleggua is of slightly taller than average height, with a lithe build. He shaves his head and touches up his goatee every day, and so always appears impeccably groomed. His suits are custom tailored and the best that money can buy. Even his casual clothes are expensive and tasteful. He projects an aura of calm confidence and almost never gets flustered. Though during discussions of subjects he finds interesting Eleggua can grow quite animated.

Eleggua's Nimbus manifests as harshly glowing sigils, orbiting his head like a crown at a distance of about one foot. These sigils look like mathematical calculations, but the characters are of completely unknown origin.

**Storytelling Hints:** Eleggua is a habitually cool and collected person. Long hours spent considering mathematical problems beyond all save the most brilliant of minds have taught him patience and given him a degree of intellectual detachment that makes him come off as suave and sophisticated. Some find it a bit infuriating (as he does his best to maintain a veneer of tranquility during even the most tense situations), but others find it appealing, a sure sign of his powers of reason. However, sometimes, when discussing topics dear to him, some of Eleggua's inner geek resurfaces, and he demonstrates an almost child-like eagerness.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** PDA

**Real Name:** Justin Hill

**Path:** Mastigos

**Order:** Free Council

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 5, Wits 4, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics 3, Computer (Hacking) 5, Investigation (Scientific Experiments) 3, Occult 2, Science (Theoretical Mathematics) 5

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Drive 2, Firearms 1, Larceny (Sleight of Hand) 2, Stealth 2

**Social Skills:** Empathy (First Impressions) 3, Intimidation 1, Persuasion (Fast-Talking) 2, Socialize (Casinos) 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Barfly, Eidetic Memory, Hallow (Shared) 3, High Speech, Library (Shared; Casino Operating Procedures, Chaos Theory, Computer Coding, Computer Engineering and Mathematics), Resources 4, Sanctum (Shared) 6, Status (Order 2), Striking Looks 2

**Willpower:** 7

**Wisdom:** 7

**Virtue:** Prudence

**Vice:** Greed

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 3

**Arcana:** Fate 2, Mind 3, Space 3, Time 2

**Notes:** *Fate* — Winds of Chance (•), Shifting the Odds (••); *Mind* — Aura Perception (•), Emotional Urging (••), Multi-Tasking (•••); *Space* — Finder (•), Scrying (••), Multispatial Perception (•••); *Time* — Momentary Flux (•), Flip of the Coin (••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 12/3

**Armor:** 3 ("Untouchable," Space ••)

*Knave*

**Quote:** *Did you know that Sleeper scientists have already managed to transform inert matter into raw information? Give it ten years, tops, and they'll figure out how to return it to its original state. If that isn't a sure sign of the rightness of our theories, I don't know what is.*

**Background:** How Harold Dunn Jr. was born to his parents was anybody's guess. The son of a tall, hefty, belligerent and none-too-bright construction worker and his game-show-addicted ignorant harridan of a wife, "Harry Jr." was frail but remarkably intelligent. Of course, Harry Sr. wanted a son he could toss the football around with, a son who would accomplish all of the athletic and career highs that he himself had missed out on, and so his boy became an object of scorn, ridicule and resentment. Young Harry managed to get a full ride to MIT and left all of that behind him, vowing never to return to the unfortunate surroundings with which he was cursed as a child.

Harry was brilliant in school, and entertained hopes of scoring some ridiculous government contract and living the high life. However, graduation came and went, and he had no such luck. Instead, he worked an unrewarding drone job and scribbled out his theories in his free time. It was in this manner that he began to delve into a mathematical equation so complex and encompassing that its resolution led him to a tower of iron, where he scribed his name with a pen of steel. Eleggua, who knew Harry in passing from prior meetings, saw his newfound potential, and, despite their very different personalities, the two discovered common ground in common interests. It took only a matter of weeks for Eleggua to convince Harry to join the Free Council, and a few days after that to partake in the gambling scam. Soon after, he adopted the shadow name Knave. He had once heard that it was an archaic way of referring to the jacks in a deck of cards. Now, he is the somewhat asocial nerve center of the SMG's



operations, though the life he sought continues to elude him, not on account of lack of opportunity, but instead due to his own awkwardness with people.

**Description:** Knave looks like a classic early '90s high school nerd who has finally managed to become a bit distinguished. He's not handsome, but he's also not unattractive. Knave could easily be any of a million anonymous souls, equally at home in a financial district, a computer lab or an Atlantic City casino. He dresses well but simply, favoring turtlenecks and light blazers when around the Fortress and standard "clueless tourist" garb when working over the casinos.

His Nimbus shows as a narrow column of stark, pale green light, casting a sickly illumination on him and his immediate surroundings.

**Storytelling Hints:** Knave isn't incredibly interested in people, but he gets around that hang-up in one of two ways. Either he's working some unfortunate dealer and keeps his mind on the numbers, or he's trying to get laid and keeps his mind on that. Naturally, he has a good deal more success with the former than with the latter. He has a somewhat terse bearing with those who are obviously considerably less intelligent than himself. Despite his occasionally abrasive demeanor, his interactions with the other members of the SMG are all cordial, since they're the only real friends he's ever had. Elegua, however, is the only one who can disagree with Knave and get him to concede a point.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Digital watch

**Real Name:** Harold Dunn Jr.

**Path:** Mastigos

**Order:** Free Council

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 5, Wits 5, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Computer 5, Investigation (Puzzles) 4, Occult 1, Science (Non-Euclidean Geometry) 5

**Physical Skills:** Drive 1, Firearms 1, Larceny 1, Stealth (Crowds) 3

**Social Skills:** Empathy 1, Persuasion 1, Socialize 1, Subterfuge (Misdirection) 4

**Merits:** Dream 1, Eidetic Memory, Hollow (Shared) 3, High Speech, Library (Shared; Casino Operating Procedures, Chaos Theory, Computer Coding, Computer Engineering and Mathematics), Occultation 1, Resources 4, Sanctum (Shared) 6, Status (Order 1)

**Willpower:** 5

**Wisdom:** 7

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Envy

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 2

**Arcana:** Mind 5, Prime 1, Space 2



**Rotes:** *Mind*—Third Eye (•), Incognito Presence (••), Multi-Tasking (•••), Befuddle (••••), Network (•••••); *Prime*—Dispel Magic (•); *Space*—Omnivision (•), Scrying (••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 11/2

**Armor:** 5 ("Misperception," Mind ••)

*Babbage*

**Quote:** Gimme a sec and I'll have those projections for you. Hmmm. I'm not liking the odds here. I suggest you get out while the getting's good.

**Background:** Adler and Rolanda French did their best to raise a normal boy, or so they lamented almost constantly to young Norman, their third-born child. His obsessions with computers, roleplaying games and magazines in which scantily clad women got in swordfights with alien overlords were a perpetual embarrassment to the family, with its aspirations to respectable society. For his own part, Norman didn't care what his family thought, and was more than happy to carry on in whatever manner made him happiest. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief when Norman finally packed up and made for the East Coast, to attend MIT.

Eleggua followed the threads of possibility and saw great potential in Norman. Eleggua engineered events that helped to guide Norman toward the edge of Awakening, but it was the young man's own desire for more that saw him through the perils of the Watchtower of the Golden Key. For his shadow name, he chose Babbage, to honor one of the men whose work set the foundations for modern computer technology. Now, Babbage works for the SMG as an operations coordinator, keeping the other members of the cabal apprised of one another's doings when "on the job" (via one of Knave's telepathic "Network" spells).

**Description:** Babbage is a stereotypical nerd. He wears faded T-shirts that advertise for his favorite MMORPGs. He is scrawny, but has a small gut from too much takeout and soda. His personal grooming skills could use a great deal of improvement, and he sometimes forgets to shower for a day or two. He no longer gets more than the occasional outbreak of acne, but his cheeks are scarred from years of skin problems. He looks like he hasn't had a day of sun in a decade, which is not quite true, but he is also prone to sunburns whenever he gets more than two or three hours of strong direct sunlight during the warmer months.

Babbage's Nimbus is revealed as a transparent, coiling crimson dragon, winding around his body and trailing ribbons of swirling flame.

**Storytelling Hints:** Babbage fancies himself a creature of two worlds. On the one hand, he is a technological savant and, on the other, a literal wizard, like out of the games he played in his parents' garage with his friends in high school. His reflexes and mental reaction time are sufficient to keep up with three real-time games on three different monitors, and he often expects others to think and act just as quickly. He prizes his time spent on online gaming and has no people skills whatsoever, but Eleggua and Knave can keep him in line (and working) with regular "pep talks" (which are usually halfway between scoldings and inspirational speeches).

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Nintendo Gameboy

**Real Name:** Norman French

**Path:** Obrimos

**Order:** Free Council

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 5, Resolve 1

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 1, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics 3, Computer (Online Gaming) 5, Investigation 2, Occult 3, Science (Probability) 4

**Physical Skills:** Firearms (Video Games) 2, Larceny (Security Systems) 3, Stealth 1

**Social Skills:** Expression (Online) 2, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Contacts (Online Gaming Community), Fast Reflexes 2, High Speech, Iron Stomach, Language (Spanish), Resources 3, Sanctum (Shared) 6, Status (Order 1)

**Willpower:** 5

**Wisdom:** 6 (Fixation)

**Virtue:** Prudence

**Vice:** Sloth

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 1

**Arcana:** Forces 3, Mind 1, Prime 2, Time 1

**Rotes:** *Forces*—Tune In (•), Transmission (••), Transform Energy (•••); *Mind*—One Mind, Two Thoughts (•); *Prime*—Supernal Vision (•), Squaring the Circle (••); *Time*—Perfect Timing (•)

**Mana/per Turn:** 10/1

**Armor:** 3 ("Unseen Shield," Forces ••)

*Rennard*

**Quote:** Easy money . . .

**Background:** No one imagined that Elizabeth Hague would grow up to be a pretty woman. It even took her by surprise when, sometime during high school, her baby fat melted away and her frizzy, mousy hair began to yield to all of the work she had done on it. Around that time, she started experiencing weird "hitches" in time, lingering senses of *déjà vu* that lasted for days, and an uncanny sense for things that were about to happen. Everything came together when she was 21. Her grandmother, for years a willworker, gifted her with an antique silver pocket watch, and explained to her that time and the immutability of fate were lies. Her grandmother served as a mentor, guiding Elizabeth through her Awakening.

Soon after, Elizabeth felt — more than realized — that her path lay elsewhere and departed for the East Coast. She took the shadow name Rennard ("Fox"), and wandered for a few years, settling on Cambridge after spending an evening in conversation with Eleggua. She rounded out the SMG's membership to four, adding an intuitive element that the cabal lacked. She cares little for the SMG's work of trying to decode the universe, but does greatly enjoy time spent at casinos, seeing the whole thing as an exciting and dangerous game. She and Eleggua are occasional lovers, but they are by no means exclusive to one another.

**Description:** Rennard is a wholesome-looking, pretty woman in her mid-20s to whom laughter comes easily. She wears little or no makeup, making no effort to conceal the tiny network of crow's feet at the corners of her eyes, and typically pulls her wavy, light-brown hair back into a pony-

tail. She likes to wear comfortable clothing, and often wanders around the Fortress in sweatpants and an oversized T-shirt, supplemented in colder weather by thick, colorful socks and a sweatshirt. When out and about, she tends toward simple, functional clothes, like jeans, sneakers and any of her old, slightly threadbare sweaters.

Her Nimbus is formed of glittering silver motes of light that revolve around her, flickering like stars.

**Storytelling Hints:** Rennard is playful and imaginative, seemingly very much out of place among the other, scientifically minded members of the SMG. But she gets by on a healthy dose of charm and an infectious sense of joy — even Knave is hard-pressed to remain his usual intellectually elitist self around her. The SMG's casino operations really *are* nothing more than a game to her, and she doesn't mind saying so.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** iPod

**Real Name:** Elizabeth Hague

**Path:** Acanthus

**Order:** Free Council

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 4, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Computer 2, Crafts 2, Investigation 1, Occult 3, Science 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Larceny 2, Stealth (Darkness) 2, Survival 2, Weaponry (Improvised) 1

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken (Cats) 2, Empathy 3, Expression 2, Persuasion 3, Socialize 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Barfly, High Speech, Imbued Item 6 (her grandmother's antique silver pocket watch, with a Time 5 "Stop Time" contingent power; see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 267), Resources 3, Sanctum (Shared) 6, Status (Order 1), Striking Looks 2

**Willpower:** 6

**Wisdom:** 7

**Virtue:** Hope

**Vice:** Lust

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 11

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 2

**Arcana:** Fate 3, Mind 1, Spirit 1, Time 2

**Notes:** *Fate* — Winds of Chance (•), Fortune's Protection (••), Superlative Luck (•••); *Mind* — Third Eye (•); *Spirit* — Coaxing the Spirits (•); *Time* — Temporal Wrinkles (•), Augury (••)

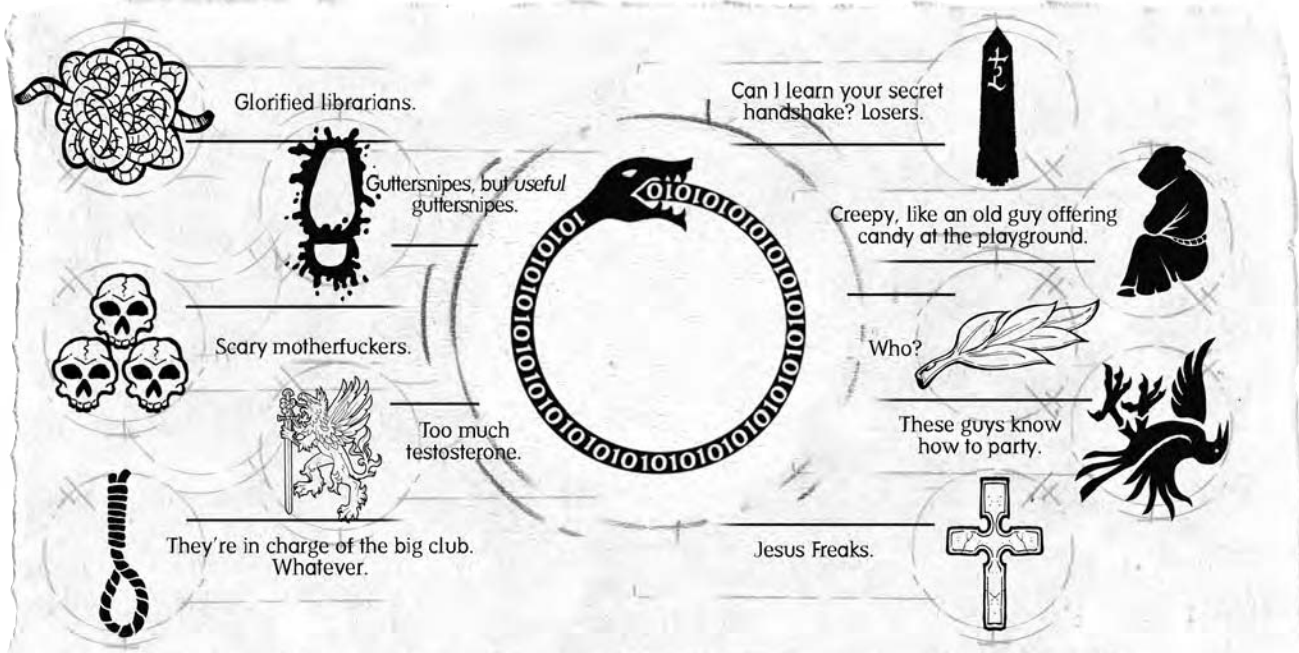
**Mana/per Turn:** 11/2

**Armor:** 3 ("Fortune's Protection," Fate ••)

## Story Hook — Ticking Clock

The SMG's illegal gambling activities have been confirmed, but not by any Sleeper authorities. Instead, the Seers of the Throne Scorpio cabal (see pp. 106-108) is hunting them. These dangerous willworkers are having trouble making headway, but it is likely only a matter of time until the SMG is tracked back to the Fortress. Rather than going to the Consilium with this problem (since the Hierarch's response is anyone's guess, but apt to be unpleasant), the cabal seeks out the characters and practically begs for their help. The SMG can offer money, Mana or favors, to be repaid in the future (perhaps the most valuable commodity of the three).

The characters can deal with the problem in one of a few ways. They could, of course, offer





their assistance to the SMG. If the characters succeed in thwarting the Seers (one way or another), the SMG will be eternally grateful, and consider the characters to be allies and, indeed, treasured friends. The characters could also report the SMG to the Nemean or another Councilor (as anything that brings down the scrutiny of the Seers of the Throne on the Consilium is bad for everyone). Provided that the SMG survives the experience, they will forever regard the characters as enemies. Other solutions are also possible, but time is of the essence, so the characters must think quickly.

## *The Guardians of the Veil*

Once, the Guardians of the Veil numbered the Hierarchy of Boston's Consilium among its ranks, and wielded great influence over Awakened affairs in the area. Once, but no longer. Dethroned by a war with the willworkers of the Free Council, the Guardians were forced to watch their authority gradually dissolve. Of course, internal divisions, as well as overly ambitious manipulation of Sleeper secret societies and, perhaps, a measure of willworking on the part of the cabals of the Secret Concord similarly contributed to the order's downfall. Now, the order finds itself with no more respect or power as a whole than that afforded to the "trash" of the very order that laid them low, mages whose continued existence in Boston mocks the Guardians' lost glory.

## *The Shadow Chorus*

Heirs to the lore and traditions of the previous local Guardians of the Veil, the Shadow Chorus plays its hand close to its vest. Its members mask themselves in any Awakened dealings, save perhaps (if rumor is to be believed) when dealing with the leadership of the Consilium, or maybe just when in the presence of the Nemean himself. The Chorus is the most roundly distrusted of the cabals associated with the Consilium. The masks certainly do little for the Chorus' trustworthiness, as do the (mostly short-lived) Sleeper cults, fortified with subtle feats of Awakened magic, that crop up around causes seemingly important to the cabal. Also, the Chorus is known to offer its aid cheaply or (apparently, at least) free as well as giving unsolicited clues to other cabals regarding such things as the whereabouts of lost Hallows or Artifacts.

At times, unmasked individuals claiming to be members of the Shadow Chorus (and offering knowledge and advice) appear to willworkers in and around the city. Of course, no name has the same face attached to it more than once, and there are those who wonder if these people truly are the mages of the Chorus, or even people at all. For their part, the Shadow Chorus says nothing either to confirm or deny the suppositions.

## *The Oubliette (Sanctum Size ●●●●, Security ●●●●●; Hallow ●●●●●)*

The creation of Februs' Space Arcanum Portal magic, this hidden stronghold of the Shadow Chorus can normally only be accessed through the personal residences of the cabal's members. Naturally, the locations of these points of access are unknown to the Awakened community at large, though sometimes a doorway (always a pair of double doors) is opened elsewhere — usually in a graveyard, under a bridge or somewhere beneath the earth. These doors are invariably elaborate, of shining black metal — though the designs upon them vary from manifestation to manifestation. The doors are always set into the ground, and a long, shadowed flight of stairs descends from them, eventually culminating in the convoluted morass of corridors that encompasses the sanctum. Most visitors claim to have seen a dimly lit chamber in which the Shadow Chorus was seated high above them, although one or two have described some manner of cavernous scriptorium.

Allegedly, deep within the Oubliette lays the corpses of willworkers long dead (a 5-point shared Hallow). According to the rumor, each night at moonrise, the gaping mouths of the desiccated bodies must be filled with a mixture of wine, rare herbs and blood — tass, which becomes saturated with Mana. None who speak of this have ever seen the Shadow Chorus' Hallow, however, so the story remains just that. The library of the Oubliette is said to be adjacent to the scriptorium, accessed through a secret passage. The subjects referenced therein are: The Abyss, Ghosts, Local Awakened History, Monsters and Thanatology.

## *Culsu*

**Quote:** *Most speak, a very few listen, and the barest fraction understands . . .*

**Background:** As is the case with all of the members of the Shadow Chorus, nothing is known of the true identity of Culsu, named for an Etruscan demoness, the guardian of the gates to the underworld. One hint allegedly dropped by the Nemean is that this shadowy figure is a wealthy and influential heiress, numbered among Boston's elite, but no one has been able to concretely track that rumor back to the mage. If asked directly, the Nemean smiles mysteriously and neither confirms nor denies saying anything of the sort.

**Description:** Culsu wears a grotesque theatrical mask in all Awakened dealings. She (for Culsu at least *seems*, by voice, mannerisms and build, to be female) has chosen for her image that of a hideous, snarling, fanged hag, the mask seemingly cut from gleaming black stone or metal. Her black robes are voluminous and billowing, her hood deep and shadowed and the black gloves on her hands are of form-fitting leather. For those rare few who have caught a glimpse within the cowl, Culsu's eyes seem to be either green or blue — though one or two mages claim that they are red. Her voice is soft and quiet, and her words are usually both cryptic and carefully chosen.

Culsu's Nimbus projects itself as crawling shadows that move against the light, creating ominous shapes on the walls, floor and ceiling.

**Storytelling Hints:** Culsu projects an image of omniscience. By choosing the times and circumstances of as many of her interactions as possible, she is able to seem virtually all knowing. Her advice and clues are obviously part of some larger scheme, but, thus far none — not even the wisest and most powerful mages of the Consilium — have been able to figure out what it is for certain. Whatever Culsu offers has a price, but never the obvious one. Often such a cost is paid not by the one who accepts her aid, but instead by his or her friends, allies and associates, whether they know it or not.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Mask

**Real Name:** Unknown

**Path:** Moros

**Order:** Guardians of the Veil

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 5, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 5

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Research) 3, Investigation (Puzzles) 5, Medicine 2, Occult 4, Politics 3

**Physical Skills:** Larceny 3, Stealth (Shadowing) 4, Weaponry (Knives) 2

**Social Skills:** Empathy (Emotions) 3, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 2, Socialize (Awakened Gatherings) 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge (Lying) 4

**Merits:** Dream 3, Eidetic Memory, Hallow (Shared) 5, High Speech, Language (Latin), Library (Shared; The Abyss, Ghosts, Local Awakened History, Monsters and Thanatology), Meditative Mind, Occultation 3, Quick Draw (Weaponry), Resources 4, Sanctum (Shared) 10, Status (Consilium 3, Order 4)

**Willpower:** 8

**Wisdom:** 6

**Virtue:** Hope

**Vice:** Envy

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 4

**Arcana:** Death 4, Fate 3, Matter 1, Mind 3

**Rotes:** *Death* — Shadow Sculpting (•), Suppress Aura (••), Ghost Gate (•••), Revenant (••••); *Fate* — Interconnections (•), The Evil Eye (••), Superlative Luck (•••); *Matter* — Dark Matter (•); *Mind* — Aura Perception (•), Memory Hole (••), Augment the Mind (•••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 13/4

**Armor:** 4 ("Entropic Guard," Death ••)

*Angerona*

**Quote:** *What ails you? Speak truthfully, and perhaps I might recommend a balm for your pain.*

**Background:** Angerona's history is truly unknown. Even the ranking willworkers of the Consilium claim to have no knowledge whatsoever of her background. Her shadow name is taken from a goddess of secrecy, a reliever of pain, a protector or any combination of the three. As to the name's significance, she will not say, only that it carries some clue as to her nature and her chosen task.

**Description:** Angerona's mask is cut from what appears to be alabaster, and depicts the face of a serene, attractive

woman with her mouth closed and bound. Her robes are midnight blue and billow out with the slightest movement. Her only exposed flesh is her hands, which are long-fingered and delicate. She speaks quietly, with a note of compassion, whether offering aid or promising terrible consequences for foolish actions.

Angerona's Nimbus appears as entangled threads, wrapped around her body and fading into invisibility perhaps two feet or so from her.

**Storytelling Hints:** Of all of the members of the Shadow Chorus, Angerona is probably the most kind-hearted and benevolent. Like Culsu, she chooses her encounters carefully so as to give the impression of tremendous knowledge. Unlike Culsu, Angerona at least *appears* to offer her aid for unselfish ends. She is also the member of the Shadow Chorus likeliest to be seen alone, though always in some dark and out-of-the-way place.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Silver key

**Real Name:** Unknown

**Path:** Acanthus

**Order:** Mysterium

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics 3, Computer 2, Investigation (Puzzles) 3, Medicine 4, Occult 4, Politics 2, Science 3

**Physical Skills:** Firearms 1, Larceny (Pickpocketing) 2, Stealth 4, Weaponry 1

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 2, Empathy 3, Expression 2, Intimidation 2, Persuasion (Inspirational Speeches) 3, Socialize 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Hallow (Shared) 5, High Speech, Language (Latin), Library (Shared; The Abyss, Ghosts, Local Awakened History, Monsters and Thanatology), Occultation 2, Resources 4, Sanctum (Shared) 10, Status (Consilium 1, Order 2)

**Willpower:** 7

**Wisdom:** 7

**Virtue:** Charity

**Vice:** Pride

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 3

**Arcana:** Fate 4, Life 3, Prime 1, Time 2

**Rotes:** *Fate* — Interconnections (•), The Perfect Moment (••), Lucky Coin (•••), Probable Cause (••••); *Life* — Sense Life (•), Self-Purging (••), Healing Heart (••); *Prime* — Analyze Enchanted Artifact (•); *Time* — Temporal Wrinkles (•), Postcognition (••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 12/3

**Armor:** 4 (Fate 2 "Fortune's Protection"; see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 152)

*Februs*

**Quote:** *One way or the other, you will be cleansed. Tell me, are you afraid to die?*

**Background:** Februs is the most overtly sinister member of the Shadow Chorus. He seems to delight in making

others uncomfortable — fitting for a man who has taken his name from a god of death and purification (later known as the patron deity of malaria). It is clear that most of the leaders of the Consilium, the Nemean included, do not much care for this man.

**Description:** Februs appears to be of average height and build. His mask is of a frowning old man, fashioned out of what seems to be cracked and pitted, mottled-gray stone. His elaborate, many-layered robes are of an extremely dark brown. His hands are covered with black leather gloves, and his feet with black leather boots of an antiquated style. His voice is a menacing rasp, sounding almost as though it is being whispered directly into the ear of the listener.

His Nimbus is a cloud of large, reddish-black flies that issues from within his robes and clusters, soundlessly, in the air close to his body.

**Storytelling Hints:** More so than any other member of his cabal, Februs goes out of his way to disturb people. His aid is always very obviously a double-edged sword, and he seems to take no end of joy in forcing others into situations in which they must choose between evils. While he rarely appears to others outside of the presence of the rest of the Shadow Chorus, Februs is known to send his words to others with magic, occasionally even into the hearts of their very sanctums.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Mask

**Real Name:** Unknown

**Path:** Mastigos

**Order:** Guardians of the Veil

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 5, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics 3, Crafts 2, Investigation 4, Occult (Conspiracies) 4, Politics 3, Science 2

**Physical Skills:** Larceny 3, Stealth (Shadows) 4, Weaponry 2

**Social Skills:** Empathy (Motivations) 3, Intimidation (Veiled Threats) 4, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 4

**Merits:** Dream 2, Eidetic Memory, Hallow (Shared) 5, High Speech, Language (Ancient Greek, Latin), Library (Shared; The Abyss, Ghosts, Local Awakened History, Monsters and Thanatology), Occultation 3, Resources 4, Sanctum (Shared) 10, Status (Consilium 1, Order 1), Toxin Resistance

**Willpower:** 8

**Wisdom:** 5

**Virtue:** Temperance

**Vice:** Wrath

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 3

**Arcana:** Death 1, Mind 4, Prime 1, Space 5

**Rotes:** *Death* — Soul Marks (•); *Mind* — Aura Perception (•), Alter Aura (••), Universal Language (•••), Breach the Vault of Memory (••••); *Prime* — Inscribe Grimoire (•); *Space* — Correspondence (•), Scrying (••), Portal (•••), Suspension (••••), Hide Space (••••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 13/3

**Armor:** 4 ("Misperception," Mind ••)

**Notes:** Februs has grimoires containing the following rotes: "Alter Aura" (Mind 1; see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 207) and "Hide Space" (Space 5; see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 242).

*Discordia*

**Quote:** I know what you want, and it is within my power to offer it to you.

**Background:** Discordia, named for the Roman incarnation of Eris, is almost never seen without another member of the Chorus. She plays the part of the devil on one's shoulder, offering gifts

that must eventually culminate in strife. She is encouraged in this by Februs, while Culsu and Angerona work to curb her tendencies. Because Discordia exists in the shadow of other members of the Chorus, so to speak, she is a



genuine cipher, virtually without an individual identity of her own, save as a purveyor of chaos-inducing temptations.

**Description:** Discordia's mask looks to be wrought of white gold, and depicts a beautiful woman, most often with eyes half-closed and full, lush lips curved upward into a mischievous smile. The mask is occasionally known to at least appear to change expression, sometimes within a single conversation. Her robes are of the darkest red, and she wears boots and gloves of the same shade. Her voice is deep and husky, with a note of malicious playfulness about it.

Discordia's Nimbus is a brilliant, silver-white flame that limns her form, curling lazily in the air, with leaping sparks that spin off into the air and dissipate.

**Storytelling Hints:** Based upon her actions, it seems that Discordia wants to see the Consilium collapse into turmoil. She is kept in check by Culsu and Angerona, but sometimes manages to let some secret slip out that could potentially threaten the balance of power. (Why the Nemean hasn't done anything about her is anybody's guess, but some suspect that she is, in fact, acting on his authority.) Of course, just to keep people guessing, she is known to offer the rare bit of harmless information, no strings attached.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Talisman pendant with written parchment, ruby pendant (Prime magic)

**Real Name:** Unknown

**Path:** Obrimos

**Order:** Mysterium

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics 3, Computer 2, Crafts 1, Investigation 3, Occult 3, Politics (Scandals) 3, Science 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Larceny (Sleight of Hand) 2, Stealth 3

**Social Skills:** Empathy (Motives) 3, Expression 2, Persuasion 3, Socialize 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Hallow (Shared) 5, High Speech, Language (Latin) 1, Library (Shared; The Abyss, Ghosts, Local Awakened History, Monsters and Thanatology) 2, Occultation 2, Resources 4, Sanctum (Shared) 10, Status (Consilium 1, Order 1)

**Willpower:** 5

**Wisdom:** 6

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Gluttony

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 2

**Arcana:** Forces 2, Matter 3, Prime 4

**Rotes:** *Forces* — Read Matrices (•), Control Sound (••); *Matter* — Dark Matter (•), Transmute Water (••), Plasticity (•••); *Prime* — Discern Phantasm (•), Activate Enchanted Item (••), Controlled Dispellation (•••), Marionette (••••)

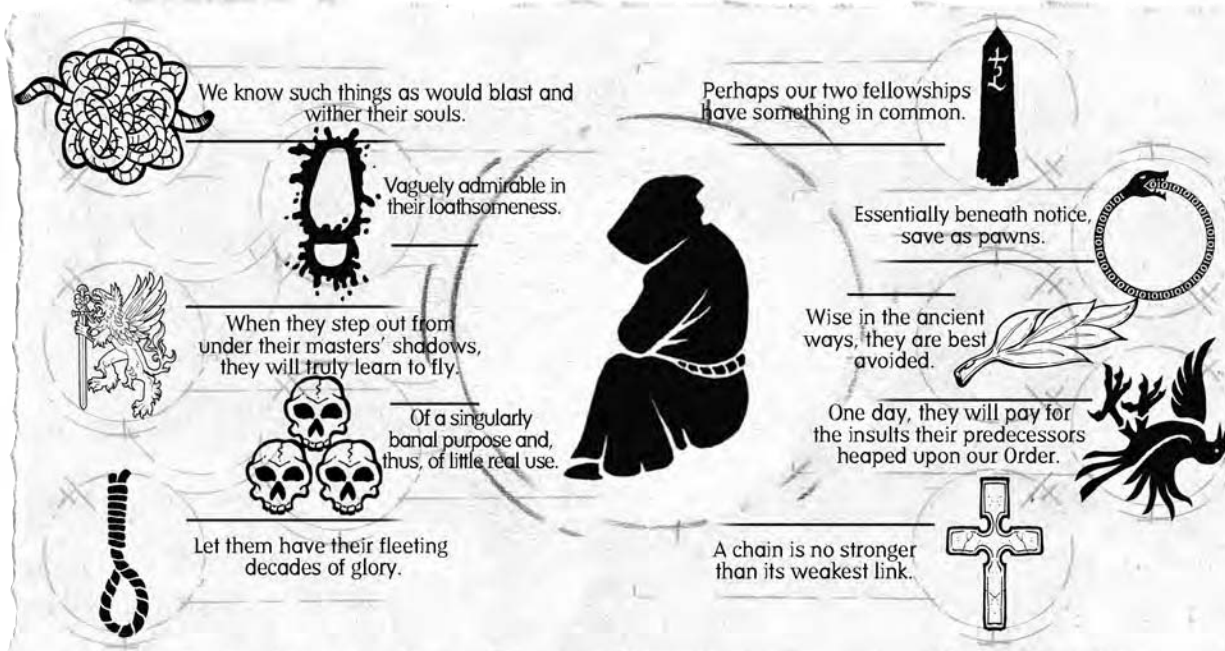
**Mana/per Turn:** 11/2

**Armor:** 3 ("Unseen Aegis," Matter ••)

**Magic Shield:** 4 ("Magic Shield," Prime ••)

## Story Hook — Who's Who

The Shadow Chorus is a genuine unknown quantity. Great power will rest in the hands of the cabal that figures out the truth behind who is the Shadow Chorus. It is taken for granted that the Hierarchy and perhaps the Councilors know who the members of this cabal are, but all of that could be an elaborate ruse, concocted to keep the scrutiny of the "usurping" Silver Ladder at bay. It may be that the Nemean hires the characters (rather than going through the Ebon Noose, for the sake of plausible deniability) to dig into the pasts of the members of the Shadow Chorus, just to be certain they're on the level (or,





at least, as on the level as they seem to be). Perhaps the other Councilors don't actually know who the members of the Chorus are, and want them investigated. Or, of course, the characters may simply take the matter into their own hands and pry into those secrets on their own initiative.

Perhaps the willworkers of the Chorus are all involved in city government, living secret Awakened lives. Or, maybe they're a cabal of homeless vagrants with inexplicable resources. The truth behind their identities will help to define the real agenda of the Shadow Chorus and, just as importantly, the motivations behind the cabal's actions. For instance, the chosen heirs to the secrets of the old regime of the Guardians of the Veil will have an entirely different perspective on local politics than a group that migrated to Boston, who see only a power vacuum in the local presence of that order.

## *The Mysterium*

For long years, Boston's Mysterium has played its hand in a significantly different manner than the Adamantine Arrow, but to much the same effect. Rather than serving the victor in local political struggles, the Mysterium maintains an amicable and somewhat distant neutrality, willing to offer kind words of support — but little else — to the dominant regime. In recent times, this has led to occasional clashes with the Nemean (who would prefer to see his constituents a bit more fearfully compliant), but the two dominant cabals of the order (the Brotherhood of the Ineffable Truth and the Sanguine Laurel) have maintained a degree of solidarity. Thus, the order has retained the credibility required to successfully voice dissent on the few occasions on which its leadership has felt it necessary to do so.

## *The Brotherhood of the Ineffable Truth*

The Brotherhood of the Ineffable Truth claims an illustrious line of descent from a variety of powerful Mysterium cabals in England, France and Germany, one or two of which have persisted for centuries. Of course, nowadays all of that means precious little to the willworkers of Boston as a whole. It did, however, serve to give the Brothers' predecessor cabals a position of strength, a prestigious lineage of generations of mentors that Potestas capitalized upon in 1956, when he founded a cabal of his own. In 1978, when Ariadne, the Master of the Academy (and, effectively, the leader of its governing cabal), succumbed to old age, Potestas was there to deftly maneuver his own cabal into the pre-eminent position within the shared sanctum.

Since that time, the Brotherhood has more or less controlled affairs at the Academy, though internal struggles between the cabal's two most powerful members — Potestas and his onetime student Aurem — have become ever more

frequent, as the elder master wanders deeper into his twilight years. To outsiders, though, the cabal presents a front of solidarity that is only just a little bit frayed around its edges. Neither of the two masters wants non-members to perceive more division than is absolutely unavoidable, lest the Brotherhood's authority slip. For the time being, the issue is effectively moot, given the short leash on which the Exalted Knights of the Gryphon have been placed, but, as Aurem has been known to point out, "That allegiance is just one spell away from dissipating like fog at sunrise."

*The Academy (Sanctum Size ●●●●, Security ●●●, Hallow ●●●●●)*

The stronghold of the Brotherhood of the Ineffable Truth, the Academy is a place of rigorous discipline and esoteric study. It is a bastion of mystic scholarship in a fallen world. On the outside, the building is nondescript — a large, walled-in apartment building in the Beacon Hill area. The north wing has been offered to the Exalted Knights of the Gryphon, and serves as their sanctum. However, within the Academy proper, tasteful opulence abounds. Most of the décor tends toward dark colors: reds, purples and greens dominate, accented by gold or silver. All of the flooring on the first level is of marble (black, white or a combination of the two), and a number of the rooms boast lavish wood paneling, stained into rich, dark hues.

Each day, when the sun reaches its zenith, one or more of the members of the Brotherhood light scores of candles located around a massive orrery on the top floor of the Academy (a 5-point shared Hallow). Mana condenses as tass in the melted wax. For the most part, Potestas and Aurem control the flow of Mana, and, between them, always set aside the Exalted Knights' allotted portion, in honor of their bargain with the warrior cabal. Naturally, the Academy's library is expansive, encompassing the better part of the second floor. Walls were long ago knocked out to allow for a single, tremendously huge repository of knowledge, with the shelves arranged along arcane patterns (Ancient Ruins, the Awakened in Politics, Cryptozoology, Goetia and Numerology).

*Potestas (Consilium Councilor)*

**Quote:** Do you think yourself wise, young one? Important? Powerful? You are none of these things. You are a whelp with delusions of grandeur. Allow me to illustrate to you your insufficiencies.

**Background:** Potestas has been at the Academy for as long as anyone can remember. He is seen as akin to the sea, both tempestuous and eternal. Despite his obvious desires to the contrary, he has never and, at this point, will never hold the office of the Hierarch, though he has been a Councilor through the reign of the Nemean. It is a position Potestas has held since early in the ascension of the Nemean and from which the Nemean could not dislodge him, despite the other's efforts. Potestas is the loyal opposition, devoted to the Consilium, even as he stands against the power of the Ebon Noose and the White Putnams.

Potestas has a lot of ties among Boston's Awakened, more than anyone else cares to admit. Some believe that he has at least one spy in all but one or two of the other cabals of the area, though this is almost certainly an exaggeration. He is a

master of misdirection, keeping enemies at one another's throats and leaving allies guessing as to his true capabilities and motivations. Despite Potestas' inability to wrest control of the Consilium away from the Noose, the Nemean regards him as his only credible rival, the one man who can challenge the will of the Hierarch and get away with it.

Potestas' Demesne is located within his private sanctum, hidden somewhere in Concord. It is but a single chamber, opulently appointed and two full stories underground. Potestas' soul stone is hidden within an ever-burning font of silver-white flame (manifested through the Prime Arcanum, and inflicting aggravated damage upon those that touch it).

**Description:** Potestas is a tall, lean man with an intimidating presence. Now in his mid-80s, he looks as though he keeps standing solely on account of his unwillingness to yield to age or weakness. His beard and receding white hair are worn short, and his face is a network of wrinkles, deepening to shadowed grooves when he frowns in displeasure, which is often. He invariably wears fine suits, often in black, dark gray or dark blue, and uses a small, glittering black gemstone of unknown composition (he claims it is Atlantean) as a tie tack. His grammar is impeccable, though he always sounds a little hoarse. His instinct is to talk down to others, and he holds it in check with great difficulty (and then only when he truly wishes to).

His Nimbus manifests as a roiling tempest of seething energy, draped over his body like a kingly cloak and blazing brilliantly around his head like a crown.

**Storytelling Hints:** Potestas believes that wisdom conveys the right to power, not the other way around. He is tremendously disappointed with the fact that he was never able to successfully break with the Mysterium's unspoken policy of remaining a second-tier power in Boston, but pretends to be far more bothered by it than he actually is. In his eyes, only a fool laments that which has already come to pass, unless he somehow possesses the power to change it. Instead, Potestas works on establishing a firm position for the next generation of the Academy, from which they might chip away at the influence of the area's Silver Ladder in general and the Secret Concord in particular. He is connected to many willworkers in the city, but has nowhere near the information network he has led others to believe. In truth, he finds great amusement in watching others scramble to figure out who his spies and informants are.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Watch with mirrored case

**Real Name:** Carlo Fendi

**Path:** Obrimos

**Order:** Mysterium

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 6, Wits 5, Resolve 5

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 5

**Mental Skills:** Academics 6, Investigation 4, Occult (Secret Societies) 5, Politics 5, Science 4

**Physical Skills:** Brawl 2, Drive 1, Firearms 1, Larceny 1, Stealth 2, Survival 4, Weaponry (Swords) 3

**Social Skills:** Expression 3, Intimidation 4, Persuasion 4, Socialize (Awakened Society) 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 5

**Merits:** Contacts (Academia, Occult Community) 2, Eidetic Memory, Hallow (Personal) 2, Hallow (Shared) 5,

High Speech, Language (Ancient Greek, French, German, Hebrew, Latin, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, Turkish), Library (Shared), Ancient Ruins, the Awakened in Politics, Cryptozoology, Goetia and Numerology), Resources 5, Sanctum (Personal) 5, Sanctum (Shared) 7, Sleepwalker Retainer 4, Status (Consilium 5, Order 5)

**Willpower:** 10

**Wisdom:** 6

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Pride

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 6

**Arcana:** Fate 2, Forces 4, Life 3, Matter 1, Mind 3, Prime 5, Space 2

**Notes:** *Fate* — Quantum Flux (•), Shifting the Odds (••); *Forces* — Control Sound (•), Kinetic Blow (••), Personal Invisibility (•••), Control Velocity (••••); *Life* — Sense Life (•), Self-Healing (••), Honing the Form (•••); *Matter* — Dark Matter (•); *Mind* — One Mind, Two Thoughts (•), Mental Shield (••), Augment the Mind (•••); *Prime* — Dispel Magic (•), Magic Shield (••), Celestial Fire (•••), Supernal Dispellation (••••), Siphon Mana (•••••); *Space* — Correspondence (•), Conceal Sympathy (••), Scrying (••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 15/6

**Armor:** 4 ("Unseen Shield," Forces ••)

**Magic Shield:** 5 (Prime ••)

**Grimoires:** In his Demesne, Potestas has grimoires (see **Mag: The Awakening**, pp. 220-221 for rules on grimoires) containing the following rites: "Personal Invisibility" (Forces •••), "Augment the Mind" (Mind •••), "Celestial Fire" (Prime •••) and "Supernal Dispellation" (Prime ••••).

*Aurem (Potestas' Provost)*

**Quote:** As far as we can tell, the protocol in ancient Atlantis for such a situation would — what? Because that is what is written. Well, naturally, such accounts are shrouded in symbolism and deliberate occlusion. Now, where was I?

**Background:** Aurem is Potestas' oldest surviving student, and he has inherited much of the elder willworker's contentious nature. Aurem is arrogant like his teacher but perhaps not quite as abrasive and blatant in his elitism. Potestas took the newly Awakened man under his wing while on a trip to Cambridge, England, while there to visit with an old associate he had met during the Second World War. Over time, Potestas and Aurem, so similar in personality, have come to clash over a number of issues and Aurem, long in his mentor's shadow, began to push for increased control over the Brotherhood. His appointment to the position of Potestas' Provost in 1990 has furthered his ambitions in some respects, and stymied them in others.

Now, the two divide control of the Brotherhood between them, as well as control over the Exalted Knights of the Gryphon. Still, Aurem is keenly aware that his day will only truly come when Potestas is out of the picture. Such knowledge pains Aurem on one level, but he comforts himself with the understanding that Potestas' vision of the rise of the Academy is bigger than any one person and the old man would want his onetime student to prosper by his demise.



Until that day, however, Aurem bides his time and hones his skills in the constant duel with Potestas for mastery of the Academy.

**Description:** Aurem is a stately older man, now in his mid-60s. His features are severe, and his dark brown skin is creased from long years spent squinting over old tomes. His gray hair is neatly trimmed at all times, as is his goatee. He tends toward suits in browns, beiges and grays, and walks with an unadorned cane of brass and ash. Increasingly, he is forced to resort to glasses with small, rectangular lenses and gold frames when reading. His British accent is undiminished by time and, depending upon his exact tone, makes all he says sound haughty, sophisticated or both.

His Nimbus appears as bolts of golden lightning, radiating outward from him and licking at every surface within 10 feet of his body.

**Storytelling Hints:** Well aware that Potestas' days in this world are few now, Aurem is getting all of his affairs in order, so as to best capitalize upon what he knows will be left to him when the older mage passes. Like Potestas, Aurem wants to see the Mysterium rise to become the dominant order of the region, and he knows that he's got at least another good decade, maybe two, left in him, barring ill fortune. Further, he's willing to set up another, a generation or two down the line, if need be, to assume leadership of the Consilium. His patience and calculation are reflected in his speech and his mannerisms, as is his great intellect. As he intends to disband the Brotherhood upon Potestas' death, Aurem is ever mindful of the doings of talented willworkers who might be persuaded to join him.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** British coin marked with a pentagram, sapphire ring (Prime magic)

**Real Name:** Zachary Harcourt

**Path:** Obrimos

**Order:** Mysterium

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 5, Wits 4, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics 5, Computer 2, Crafts 2, Investigation (Research) 4, Medicine 2, Occult 5, Politics 4, Science 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Drive 1, Stealth 1, Weaponry (Swords) 3

**Social Skills:** Empathy 2, Expression 2, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 3, Socialize 3, Subterfuge (Lies) 4

**Merits:** Dream 3, Hallow (Shared) 5, High Speech, Language (Ancient Greek, French, Hebrew, Latin, Spanish), Library (Shared; Ancient Ruins, the Awakened in Politics, Cryptozoology, Goetia and Numerology), Resources 4, Sanctum (Personal) 2, Sanctum (Shared) 7, Status (Consilium 4, Order 4)

**Willpower:** 8

**Wisdom:** 7

**Virtue:** Prudence

**Vice:** Pride

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 4

**Arcana:** Fate 2, Forces 4, Life 2, Matter 2, Prime 4, Spirit 3

**Rotes:** *Fate* — Interconnections (•), The Evil Eye (••); *Forces* — Read Matrices (•), Unseen Shield (••), Telekinesis (•••), Levitation (••••); *Life* — Pulse of the Living World (•), Self-Healing (••); *Matter* — Discern Composition (•), Steel Windows (••); *Prime* — Dispel Magic (•), Squaring the Circle (••), Celestial Fire (•••), Siphon Essence (••••); *Spirit* — Spirit Tongue (•), Peer Across the Gauntlet (••), Reaching (•••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 13/4

**Affinity:** 4 ("Unseen Shield," Forces ••)

**Magic Shield:** 4 (Prime ••)

## Apollonia

**Quote:** *What was that you wanted again, an anatomical text? Did you know that a trauma to less than one percent of the human body can be fatal, if properly executed? Sorry, just a bit of trivia.*

**Background:** Talia West has gone by the name Apollonia for so long, she sometimes needs to think about what she was called before. A exceptionally violent Awakening at the age of eight that left her parents dead brought her to the attention of Marduk, one of the founding members of the Brotherhood. As she had no other family, he adopted her as his daughter and educated her in the ways of the Ombros and the Adamantine Arrow. She had a natural talent for destructive magics, and, upon the completion of her studies (just after her 16th birthday), she was offered a place in the cabal. After Marduk's death in 1980 (a mysterious demise that has never been adequately explained), she became the foremost warrior of the cabal.

Her greatest accomplishment during her time with the Brotherhood is also her greatest failure. The martial prodigies Ferrum and Ares were her students, and their potential seemed limitless. Potestas mused that they might well be the infusion of new blood needed to catapult the cabal into a dominant position with the Consilium. Then came Ferrum's break and the founding of the Exalted Knights of the Gryphon. Two years ago, Ares perished while on a mission for Aurem, straining the bonds of trust, if not loyalty, that held the Knights to the Brotherhood. Since that time, Apollonia has pulled back from martial pursuits. She is still the chief defender of the Academy proper, but whiles away much of her time in the library, learning any path other than war.

**Description:** Throughout her youth, Apollonia was considered cute, if not beautiful. As the years have gone on, her girlish good looks have faded, though she still looks a bit younger than her age. She is a little shorter than average, with a toned, athletic build. These days, she favors pantsuits, tailored for both style and ease of movement. She is soft-spoken (a fact that takes many off guard, considering her order) and is just the slightest bit awkward in normal social interaction.

When Apollonia's Nimbus manifests, she seemingly bursts into blue flames and is wreathed in a brilliant tapestry of snaking tendrils of fire.

**Storytelling Hints:** Apollonia is tired of studying the arts of battle. It began with her defeat at her apprentice's hands. He simply wanted it more, and she knows that now. Still, a sense of duty holds her to her martial pursuits; and she will not fail the Brotherhood, even if it means continuing on at a task that no longer gives any sense of joy or fulfillment. Also, she carries a good deal of guilt over Ares' death. Perhaps, she muses, if she'd trained him better, he'd still be alive today. Despite these doubts, she puts on a stoic front and has been doing so for so long that even the most astute observer would have a hell of a time seeing through it.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Knife

**Real Name:** Talia West

**Path:** Ombros

**Order:** Adamantine Arrow

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics 3, Computer 1, Investigation 1, Medicine 3, Occult 2, Science 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl (Grappling) 4, Drive 1, Firearms 2, Larceny (Security Systems) 3, Stealth 3, Weaponry 2

**Social Skills:** Intimidation 2, Persuasion 1, Socialize 1, Subterfuge (Concealing Emotions) 4

**Merits:** Danger Sense, Fast Reflexes 2, Fighting Style (Kung Fu) 4, Hallow (Shared) 5, High Speech, Iron Stamina 2, Language (Latin), Library (Shared), Ancient Ruins, the Awakened in Politics, Cryptozoology, Goetia and Numerology 1, Occultation 1, Resources 4, Sanctum (Shared) 7, Status (Consilium 2, Order 3)

**Willpower:** 7

**Wisdom:** 7

**Virtue:** Temperance

**Vice:** Envy

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 12

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 3

**Arcana:** Forces 5, Life 3, Prime 2

**Notes:** *Forces* — Nightsight (•), Influence Electricity (••), Personal Invisibility (•••), Energetic Attack (••••), Radiation (•••••); *Life* — Cleanse the Body (•), Self-Healing (••), Honing the Form (•••); *Prime* — Analyze Enchanted Item (•), Squaring the Circle (••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 12/3

**Affinity:** 5 ("Unseen Shield," Forces ••)

**Magic Shield:** 2 (Prime ••)

## Draco

**Quote:** *The master's safety comes before all other concerns.*

**Background:** Nothing about James Cochran's life was easy. Sired by an unknown father upon an unfit mother and born into bad circumstances, James grew up poor and lonely. His temper got him into trouble all the time, and his mother, too busy getting drunk or high, never had any time for him. He ran with the worst crowds and first killed a man at the age of 15, in a crime that was never solved. He was bound for an early grave and would've found it, had he not Awakened at 24, after being shot twice in the stomach and left for dead in a Roxbury tenement building that was then set ablaze. Standing before a vine-covered statue of a towering dragon, he took up a white-hot tablet of stone and embraced the source of his power and his rage, mending his wounds and escaping from the inferno virtually unscathed.

Atlas, one of the founding members of the Brotherhood, discovered James shortly thereafter, unable to master his new magic. Atlas brought him to the Academy, where James learned to control the fury that roiled within him. Not long afterward, Atlas passed away, and the fierce loyalty that James, now Draco, had given him transferred to Potestas. Since that time, Draco has been the master's personal bodyguard, accompanying Potestas on all of his (now infrequent)



forays out of the sanctum — a shadow of menace that lurks nearby, reminding others of the consequences of lifting a hand against the aged lord of the Academy.

**Description:** Draco is of average height, but his entire frame is wiry, corded muscle. His blond hair is cut very short, so as to provide no grip for an enemy. He seems perpetually tensed and on the edge of violence, a storm held in check by will alone. He dresses well, but practically, in clothing that won't inhibit his movements in a fight. His voice is a low growl, but the vulgarity and slang of his youth have been almost completely suppressed, replaced by a much cleaner, if not far more expansive, vocabulary.

His Nimbus manifests as a deep crimson glow in his irises and plumes of smoke rising from his body, as though his internal temperature has suddenly climbed so high that his clothing is smoldering.

**Storytelling Hints:** Before the Brotherhood came into his life, Draco never belonged to anything of substance. No one ever looked out for him, and no one really cared whether he lived or died. Atlas was the father figure Draco never had. With Atlas' passing, Potestas became the center of Draco's world. He has killed for the old master, and would gladly lay down his life for him. He willingly leaves the defense of the Academy as a whole to Apollonia; he's well aware that she is far better suited to the task, anyway.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Wooden pen, emerald ring (Prime magic)

**Real Name:** James Cochran

**Path:** Thyrsus

**Order:** Adamantine Arrow

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Academics 1, Medicine 2, Occult 1,

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl (Boxing) 5, Drive 2, Firearms (Pistols) 2, Larceny 4, Stealth 1, Weaponry 1

**Social Skills:** Intimidation (Physical Threats) 4, Streetwise 3

**Merits:** Fast Reflexes 2, Fighting Style (Boxing) 5, High Speech, Iron Stamina 3, Resources 3, Sanctum (Shared) 7, Status (Consilium 1, Order 1)

**Willpower:** 6

**Wisdom:** 5 (Suspicion)

**Virtue:** Faith

**Vice:** Wrath

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 13

**Health:** 9

**Gnosis:** 2

**Arcana:** Life 3, Prime 3, Spirit 2

**Notes:** Life — Cleanse the Body (•), Organic Resilience (••), Honing the Form (•••); Prime — Supernal Vision (•), Magic Shield (••), Celestial Fire (•••); Spirit — Second Sight (•), Ephemeral Shield (••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 11/2

**Armor:** 3 ("Organic Resilience," Life ••)

*Agdos*

**Quote:** *The world is what you make of it.*

**Background:** Born to Awakened parents, Cybele Connelly grew up well aware of the paranormal world. Her mother, a skilled diviner, knew that Cybele would one day also wield the power of the Awakened, and so her training as a mage began long before she actually was one. When she recently Awakened as a Moros, however, neither her mother (an Acanthus) nor her father (a Mastigos) felt that they could adequately educate her in the use of her magic. Cybele was sent to a friend in the Mysterium, Vajra, a member of the Brotherhood of the Ineffable Truth. Now, her schooling and induction complete, she has opted to stay in her teacher's place, as he departed the cabal to return to his native India, that he might spend his last years with family.

Cybele took as her shadow name the aspect of the goddess for whom she was named in her aspect as a stone. The idea of divinity concealed within base matter appealed greatly to her, and she has become the Academy's foremost alchemist. Neither Potestas nor Aurem has anything bad to say about her (a true rarity, especially for a mage of the young generation). She is the most sociable and outgoing willworker of the Brotherhood and the only one with more than a purely mercenary interest in the happenings of the modern Sleeper world.

**Description:** Agdos is an attractive young woman of average height and slight build. She dresses comfortably and is almost never without her leather jacket. When riding her motorcycle, she often wears leather pants, but she much prefers jeans. Her red hair is worn long and unbound, and she is quick to smile, though her grin often makes her look like she's up to something. She has the alchemical symbol for the Sun tattooed on the inside of her right forearm in black ink. She speaks with confidence, and her tone always conveys a note of good humor.

Agdos' Nimbus is a wild aura of prismatic light that outlines her body, encompassing almost every color imaginable.

**Storytelling Hints:** Agdos has been a part of Awakened society all of her life. Despite this, she enjoys the world outside of the Academy's doors. For example, she's the only member of the cabal able to speak with any authority on what's currently showing in movie theaters. When not actively going about the business of the Brotherhood, she spends a lot of time riding her motorcycle and doing the sort of things normal people do. This isn't to say that she in any way shirks her duties; she is always certain to put the needs of the cabal ahead of her outside interests.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Lead coin

**Real Name:** Cybele Connelly

**Path:** Moros

**Order:** Mysterium

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Computer 2, Crafts 4, Occult 2, Politics 2, Science (Metallurgy) 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Drive (Motorcycles) 3, Firearms 1, Survival 1

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken (Dogs) 2, Empathy 1, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 1

**Merits:** Barfly, Contacts (Club Scene) 1, Familiar (embodied mastiff; see below), High Speech, Language (Latin), Resources 3, Sanctum (Shared) 7, Status (Consilium 1, Order 1), Striking Looks 2, Stunt Driver

**Willpower:** 6

**Wisdom:** 7

**Virtue:** Temperance

**Vice:** Pride

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 2

**Arcana:** Death 1, Forces 1, Matter 3, Prime 1

**Notes:** *Death* — Grim Sight (•); *Forces* — Nightsight (•); *Matter* — Discern Composition (•), Unseen Aegis (••), Repair Object (•••); *Prime* — Analyze Enchanted Item (•)

**Mana/per Turn:** 11/2

**Armor:** 3 ("Unseen Aegis," Matter ••)

**Cerberus, Agdos' Mastiff Familiar**

Cerberus is a large black mastiff. He is a particularly fit example of his breed and loyally follows at Agdos' side whenever she brings him out. He is extremely protective of her, though not aggressive or unfriendly. In fact, Cerberus likes to play and is very outgoing, though he doesn't know his own strength and has been known to bowl others over when he gets excited. For this reason, and despite his Ban, Agdos doesn't often let him play with, or around, children.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Investigation 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Stealth 1, Survival 2

**Social Skills:** Intimidation 4, Persuasion 2

**Willpower:** 6

**Max Essence:** 10

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 14 (species factor 7)

**Size:** 4

**Health:** 7

**Influence:** Loyalty 2

**Numina:** Innocuous, Wilds Sense

**Ban:** Cerberus may never intentionally cause harm to a living creature, unless directly ordered to do so by his master.

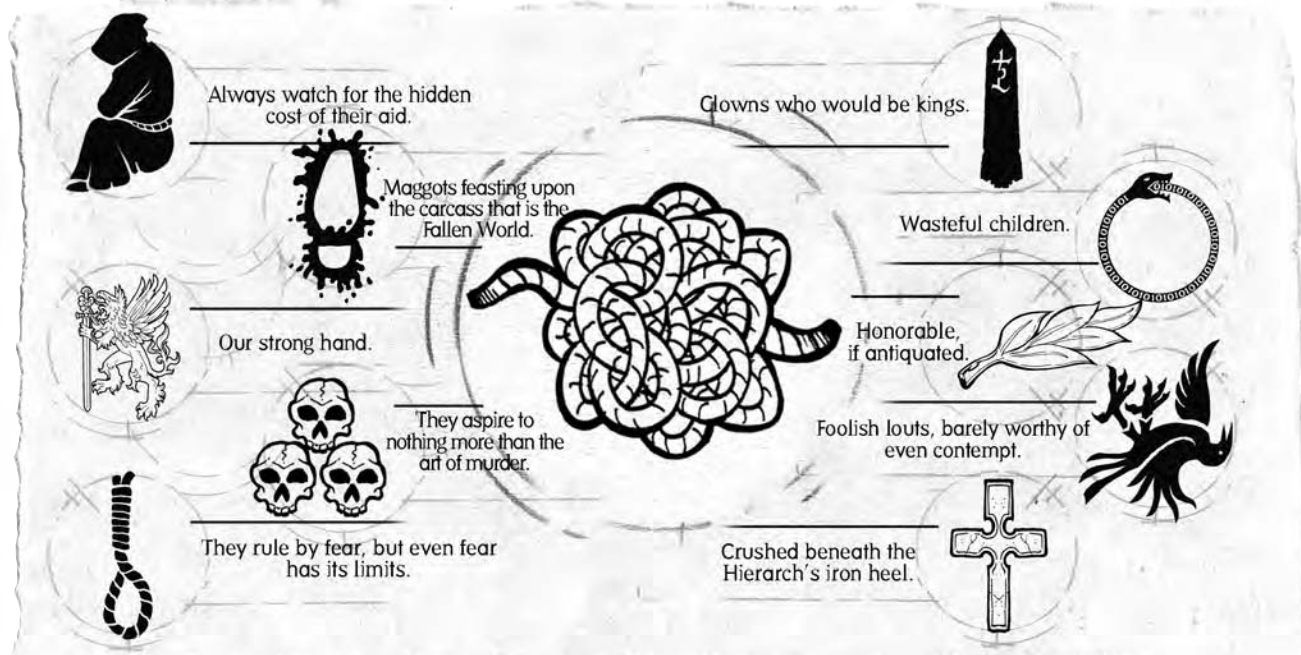
## Story Hook — Allies and Agendas

The Brotherhood seeks to enlist the aid of the characters' cabal in their efforts to make inroads into the power structure of the Boston Consilium.

Potestas knows that, if he is fortunate, he may have a decade left in him, and he wants Aurem to be able to come out swinging, politically speaking, immediately after his mentor's passing. Given the esteem and influence Potestas possesses, he knows that the Nemean will be hard-pressed to act directly against the Brotherhood, lest the

Nemean risk consolidating the city's Mysterium and any allied willworkers (or find himself thwarted by any of the spies for whom Potestas is infamous).

Potestas will be happy to play the cabal for fools, if that is what they prove themselves to be. He will sucker them in with promises of money,



magical aid or lore, and leave them holding the bag in an obvious play that weakens the standing of the Ebon Noose. Of course, he'll be much happier if the characters' cabal prove themselves competent, as they are apt to make better long-term allies for the Brotherhood that way. The Brotherhood will go so far as to offer to back one of the characters' in his petition for a role in the Consilium (such as Sentinel or Herald), and may be able to be convinced to back a character's play for Councilor (though they won't offer the latter), so long as the alliance favors the Brotherhood.

## *The Company*

A band of merry miscreants, the Company is essentially an Awakened conspiracy devoted to utter dominion over the New England criminal community — from the most esteemed of made men to the lowliest pusher pedaling crack in the vestibule of an abandoned tenement. Slowly but surely, the willworker calling himself Vision, the driving force behind the Company and the cabal's founder, has built the groundwork of this invisible empire. While it will take years at least to cement his hold (if indeed such a thing ever happens), he has certainly come closer to making it happen than any before or since. An especially impressive feat is that 19 out of 20 of his operatives don't even know who they work for and the other one can't point to any criminal activities in which Vision himself is directly involved.

The Company functions as a squad of Awakened mercenaries, dealing in favors, connections, illegal activities and "exotic commodities" in exchange for access to libraries, tass and such. No one likes the mages of the Company, but few can utterly dismiss the Company's potential usefulness. Vision is always careful to never allow "his" people to become beholden to any one interest, and also maintains a strict policy of neutrality in matters involving rival cabals, as he has no wish to be a casualty in the struggles of the Wise.

## *Shangri-La (Sanctum Size ●●; Hallow ●●)*

The Company's shared sanctum, Shangri-La, is tucked away near the Ruggles stop on the MBTA's Orange Line, just next door to Northeastern University in Roxbury. Located in a rundown but otherwise unremarkable tenement building, the sanctum also serves the cabal as living space. The heat and plumbing work intermittently and the place is rather hot during the summer, so Vision spends as little time there as possible, but the other members of the cabal are sufficiently strapped for cash and/or lazy that they're permanent residents.

In the darkest recesses of the building's basement lay the skeletons of hundreds, or perhaps even thousands, of rats. Each day, one of the willworkers of the cabal gathers up two fistfuls of these bones and grinds them into powder, in a process that yields up tass (a 2-point shared Hallow). No Library is to be found in Shangri-La. Vision is the only member of the cabal with any appreciable access to any useful lore, and he hoards such knowledge for himself. Two Sleep-

walker Retainers serve as permanent staff, acting both as security and as a buffer between the cabal and its customers.

## *Vision*

**Quote:** *Been having bad dreams, Rebecca? Remember to pay what you owe. I'm not a forgiving man, and you can't begin to imagine what I'm capable of doing to those that test my patience.*

**Background:** The man who calls himself Vision was born Timothy Novák to parents whose mixed ancestry included between them Hungarian, Rómany, Turkish, Cherokee, Irish, Hindi, Greek, Italian, Basque and Russian blood. Timothy's early years were years without roots or traditions of any sort. The Nováks moved often for just over the first 17 years of their son's life, and he never made any good friends or became attached to anyone. A latchkey kid, Timothy didn't even become particularly close to either of his parents. He was a perpetual outsider, without any opportunity to fit in anywhere. After a while, he lost the desire to fit in.

Timothy's teenage years were an attempt at rebellion, but no one noticed or cared. By the time he made an impression on the locals, it was time to move again. His parents were unbothered by his strange clothes and bad attitude, chalking it up to "a phase." Finally, the family settled in the Midwest. Timothy made his high school graduation with a class he had known since the end of winter break. He promptly left home and struck out for New England, a place he remembered relatively fondly from the two times he'd lived there. He integrated himself into the Boston and Providence club scenes, and became a purveyor of high-quality designer party drugs. Then, about four years ago, he suddenly stopped dealing all the drugs he was known for and went almost completely underground, becoming a myth of the local nightlife. He re-emerged as Vision, and began selling stranger concoctions, brews that put the imbibor into trance states with amazing hallucinations and vistas very nearly outside of the human experience, which he claimed were "designer dreams."

Today, Vision is regarded among most of New England's willworkers as an extraordinarily useful and resourceful cockroach, hidden in the dark and impossible to kill. He knows very nearly everyone, and, if he doesn't know a given individual, he definitely knows someone who does. He has learned which politicians' kids are hooked on something scandalous and who among local movers-and-shakers shares a bed with whom, with or without a spouse's knowledge or consent.

**Description:** Vision is a clean-shaven man who looks to be of Middle Eastern descent, with long black hair that's somewhere between badly tangled and almost dreadlocked, and dark circles under his eyes, as though he's strung out on drugs or hasn't slept in a week.

Vision's Nimbus is a pool of blood that wells up from under his feet, leaving bloody prints in his wake if he walks while it is manifested.

**Storytelling Hints:** Vision's goals are simple: he wants to run New England's drug trade and, from there, branch out into the better part of the region's underworld, all without ever having to directly involve himself in criminal affairs (something he considers himself past and that is now "beneath" him). To that end, he has developed an extraordinarily

extensive and lucrative network of contacts and connections. Without much exaggeration, it has been said that Vision can get word on anything that transpires within the Greater Boston Area within 15 minutes of it happening, should he choose to put in a bit of effort.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Watch with a pentacle design

**Real Name:** Timothy Novák

**Path:** Mastigos

**Order:** Mysterium

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Investigation (Dreams) 3, Medicine (Pharmaceuticals) 4, Occult 1, Politics (Scandals) 2, Science (Biochemistry) 2

**Physical Skills:** Brawl 1, Firearms 1, Larceny 4, Stealth 2

**Social Skills:** Empathy (Personalities) 1, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 3, Socialize 2, Streetwise 5, Subterfuge 4

**Merits:** Allies (Drug Culture 4, Gangs 4, Vice Squad 3), Contacts (Drug Culture, Gangs, Police, Politics), Hallow (Shared) 2, High Speech, Library (Personal; Mystic Narcotics), Resources 3, Sanctum (Shared) 2, Sleepwalker Retainer 3, Status (Order) 1, Toxin Resistance

**Willpower:** 6

**Wisdom:** 3 (Narcissism, Suspicion)

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Greed

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 3

**Arcana:** Life 2, Mind 4, Prime 3, Space 3

**Notes:** *Life* — Cleanse the Body (•), Self-Healing (••); *Mind* — Aura Perception (•), Mental Shield (••), Sleep of the Just (•••), Dream Traveler (••••); *Prime* — Supernal Vision (•), Counterspell Prime (••), Disguise Resonance (•••); *Space* — Correspondence (•), Scrying (••), New Threads (•••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 12/3

**Armor:** 4 ("Misperception," Mind ••)

*Hangman*

**Quote:** *Can't you hear them? They're asking us to join them. All they want is to taste your flesh, to bathe in your blood. It's not such a terrible price to pay, once you get used to it . . .*

**Background:** Hangman is a shaman, a modern primitive priest of ancient spirits, experiencing the invisible world through altered states of consciousness created by ritual narcotics and ecstatic pain. He just doesn't happen to be a very good shaman. Hangman's idea of sacramental hallucinogens falls a bit far on the side of bad street drugs and his use of sacred agony is more a testament to his sadomasochistic nature than any real affirmation of faith. While there are certainly ways one could live Hangman's life and perform the role of intermediary between humanity and the spirits well, he hasn't found any of those ways yet and displays little interest in looking for them.

This willworker deals with dark spirits, extracting what he needs from them through a combination of bribery, threats and promises that he sometimes keeps and sometimes neglects (or else simply forgets about). Hangman has slowly been building up a lot of enemies in the unseen world this way, but he lives for the moment. When the consequences of his actions come home to roost, he will likely find the support of his "friends" in the Company vanishing rapidly into the woodwork. Until that day, however, he serves as the Company's intermediary with the Shadow Realm.

Hangman is a creature of desires and is relatively easy to control through them, provided one understands the complexion of Hangman's particular needs. He uses the influence given him by his membership in the Company to indulge his tastes in dispensing and receiving pain, and to feed a decade-long drug habit spawned by an early inability to cope with what his Awakening revealed to him. While currently a sad excuse for a mage, Hangman is a soul in need of help and a genuine friend. Anyone who actually manages to break through the mage's bitter and defensive demeanor to actually deal with him like a human being may well earn a friend for life. Or an albatross she can't shake.

**Description:** Hangman is tall, rail-thin and looks every inch the junkie he is. He shaves his head, but often forgets to do so for days on end, leaving him with fuzzy stubble on his scalp. He also sports some patchy chin whiskers. He wears ripped-up jeans and T-shirts (often threadbare and stained), supplemented by a beat-up leather jacket in colder weather. When it's warm, he occasionally goes barefoot, even outdoors. On occasion, when badly strung-out, Hangman sometimes neglects to shower. He doesn't even bother attempting to conceal the track marks on his arms.

His Nimbus manifests as primal-looking pictographs of grim and terrible scenes, seemingly etched into his exposed flesh.

**Storytelling Hints:** Hangman wanders the world in a daze of drugs and twisted perceptions. He attracts the attentions of many of the most malicious sorts of spirits, and they don't hesitate to play with his senses and his emotions. He is often confused, groggy or both, and spends up to 16 hours a day asleep for days on end when he's at his worst. When he is lucid, Hangman says extremely disturbing, even frightening, things, and then he loses himself in a narcotic oblivion, in an attempt to forget the horror that lurks just beyond the edges of reality.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Paperback book ("How to Tell Your Children About Drugs")

**Real Name:** Brian Cook

**Path:** Thyrsus

**Order:** Mysterium

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 1

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Crafts 2, Medicine 1, Occult (Spirits) 3

**Physical Skills:** Brawl 1, Larceny 2, Stealth 2, Survival (Shelter) 1, Weaponry 1

**Social Skills:** Empathy 2, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Streetwise (Scoring Drugs) 3, Subterfuge 1



**Merits:** Dream 2, Hallow (Shared) 2, High Speech, Iron Stamina 1, Occultation 1, Sanctum (Shared) 2, Status (Order 1)

**Willpower:** 3

**Wisdom:** 4 (Depression, Irrationality)

**Virtue:** Faith

**Vice:** Gluttony

**Initiative:** 4

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 8

**Health:** 9

**Gnosis:** 1

**Arcana:** Death 1, Fate 1, Life 1, Spirit 2

**Roles:** *Death*—Speak with the Dead (•); *Fate*—The Sybil's Sight (•); *Life*—Pulse of the Living World (•); *Spirit*—Spirit Tongue (•), Peer Across the Gauntlet (••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 10/1

**Armor:** 2 ("Ephemeral Shield," Spirit ••)

*Mercy*

**Quote:** *I told you before, it's \$600 a hit. So, you can either reach in your wallet, and we can do business, or you can fuck off and hope I don't have Jay over there teach you a painful lesson about wasting my time.*

**Background:** Born Louise Harrington, the girl who would come to call herself Mercy came from a troubled home, in which a revolving door admitted all manner of men that her

mother tried to pass off as father figures. Some were merely unpleasant, while others could scarcely be called human. Louise ran away at the age of 15 and eventually ended up in Boston, working as a small-time independent prostitute. She Awakened at the age of 21 during a heroin overdose, and lost what little ability she had to cope with the real world shortly thereafter. Vision changed all of that.

The manipulative willworker discovered Louise wandering the streets of Roxbury. He took her in and christened her Mercy, mostly because he liked the sound of the name. He inducted her into the Mysterium and helped her clean up. To this day, Mercy wonders whether he did it out of any regard for her or what he thought she could eventually do for him. Truth be told, even Vision has never figured that out for certain. She has served him loyally since then, unaware of any other way to live. For better or for worse, Mercy's fate belongs to Vision now.

**Description:** Mercy's looks are and have always been a bit on the plain side. She cakes on pale makeup and goes for a certain trumpy chic that some people find attractive and others, repulsive, and she manages to convincingly pretend that she doesn't give a damn either way. Her hair is naturally dark brown, but it has been bleached enough that it's now a frizzy yellow-white ruin. She favors blood-red lipstick and heavy dark eye shadow but wears clothes that could almost pass for a professional wardrobe — a thin veneer of civility over the Company's unsavory practices.



Her Nimbus appears as a deathly pallor to her flesh, and hazy, indistinct shapes, little more than humanoid distortions in the air moving behind and just around her.

**Storytelling Hints:** Mercy fancies herself the den mother of the Company, the "legitimate businesswoman" of the cabal. In truth, her aggressively nihilistic demeanor ends up making her attempts at professionalism especially laughable. Her self-esteem issues (a number of which have their origins in her unrequited near-love for Vision) contribute heavily to her undiscerning promiscuity, and she'll hit on very nearly anything with a pulse.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Bone pendant

**Real Name:** Louise Harrington

**Path:** Moros

**Order:** Mysterium

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Investigation 2, Medicine 1, Occult 1 (Urban Legends), Science 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Brawl (Dirty Tricks) 2, Firearms 1, Larceny (Pickpocketing) 3, Stealth 2

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Empathy 2, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 3, Socialize 1, Streetwise (Shelter) 3, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Allies (Prostitutes 1), Contacts (Drug Dealers, Homeless, Prostitutes), High Speech, Resources 2, Sanctum (Shared) 2, Sleepwalker Retainer 1, Status (Order 1)

**Willpower:** 4

**Wisdom:** 5 (Inferiority Complex)

**Virtue:** Hope

**Vice:** Gluttony

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 6

**Gnosis:** 1

**Arcana:** Death 2, Fate 1, Matter 2, Space 1

**Rotes:** *Death* — Speak with the Dead (•), Touch of the Grave (••); *Fate* — Reading the Outmost Eddies (•); *Matter* — Craftsman's Eye (•), Unseen Aegis (••); *Space* — Spatial Map (•)

**Mana/per Turn:** 10/1

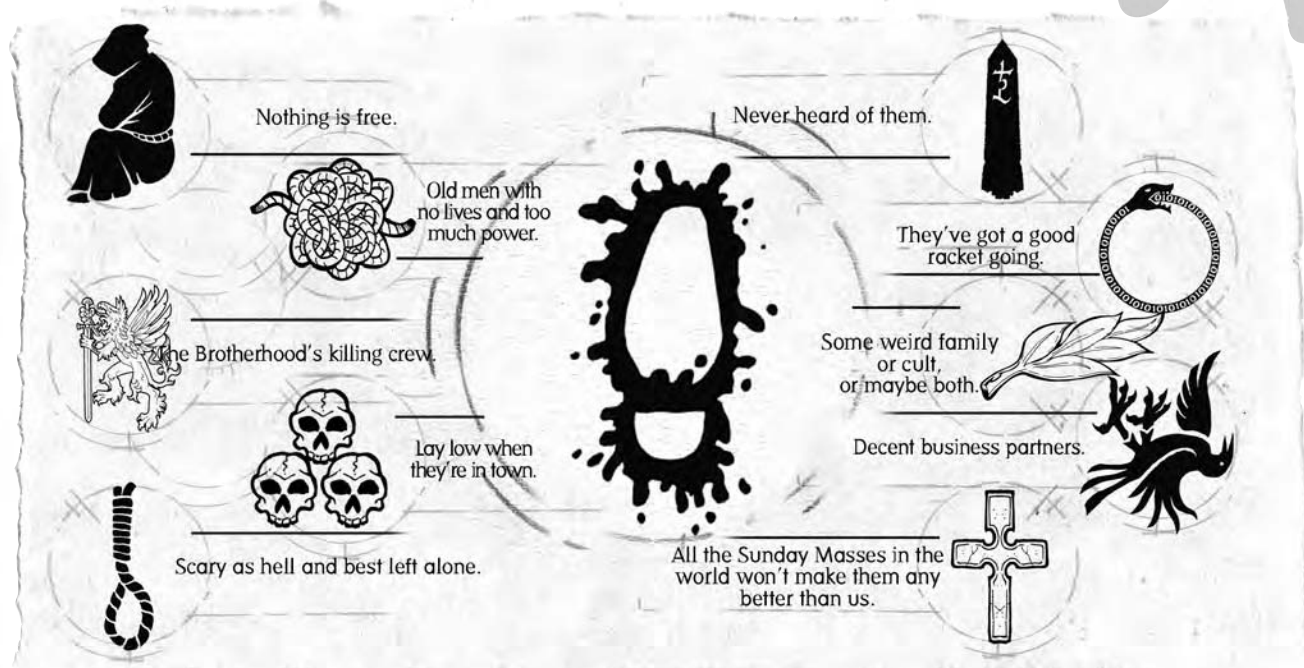
**Armor:** 2 ("Unseen Aegis," Matter ••)

*Avalon*

**Quote:** *I know where there's a good party. Wanna come along?*

**Background:** Avalon was born Sun Halloran (a lamentable first name for which he has never forgiven his hippie parents) in upstate New York, but went by "Sonny" whenever he could. He received no discipline of any sort as a child, and his parents encouraged him in the fantastic visions he saw from the age of about four. Shortly after his seventh birthday, in the early summer, he became lost in the woods behind his family's house, and returned two days later. His parents had only scarcely noticed his absence. As time went on, he turned ever more capricious and somewhat callous, but his mother and father wanted him to "find his own way" in life, and whim became his morality. When Sonny was 20 and still living at home, he felt a call drawing him back into those woods, and found his way through a great tangle of silver thorns. He emerged a new man.

He had already taken to calling himself Avalon when his mentor, another walker on his path, a woman named Titania, gave him a modicum of instruction in the abilities he now possessed. Shortly thereafter, he left home and made his way to Boston. His wastrel lifestyle soon landed him in the worst slums in the area, which is where he first made Vision's acquaintance. In Avalon, Vision saw the charisma to keep



drawing in new customers. In Vision, Avalon saw a place to crash, a ready source of recreational drugs and someone to back him up if things went poorly.

**Description:** Perhaps the only way to adequately describe Avalon is to say that he's a pretty man. His dark brown hair falls in waves down past his narrow shoulders, and his cheeks and chin are often darkened by just the faintest shadow of a beard. He smiles easily, and many think him quite friendly when they first meet him, given his confident charm. He usually wears a beat-up biker jacket, jeans and T-shirts. When around the sanctum, however, he often foregoes a shirt, revealing a tattoo that starts at his neck and works its way down to the small of his back of a pack of wolves running down a stag.

His Nimbus appears as a pattern of faintly luminous gray webbing, clinging to his exposed skin.

**Storytelling Hints:** Avalon is about as insincere and self-serving as they come. He and Vision understand one another quite well by this point, and both are completely comfortable with the business arrangement that they've got. Avalon likes to toy with both Hangman's and Mercy's emotions, but there is no true malice in his actions — only the wicked glee of an amoral child. Avalon feels that roping others in to become addicted to Vision's concoctions is something of a game, and Avalon plays with an almost innocent abandon.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Crystal rod, pair of metal dice (Fate magic)

**Real Name:** Sun Halloran

**Path:** Acanthus

**Order:** Free Council

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 5, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Crafts 2, Occult 3, Science 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Larceny 1, Stealth 3, Survival 2, Weaponry 1

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 2, Empathy (Emotions) 4, Persuasion (Fast-Talk) 3, Socialize 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge (Hiding Emotions) 4

**Merits:** Barfly, High Speech, Sanctum (Shared) 2, Status (Order 1), Striking Looks 2

**Willpower:** 5

**Wisdom:** 5

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Lust

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 11

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 3

**Arcana:** Fate 4, Life 1, Mind 2, Time 3

**Notes:** *Fate* — The Sybil's Sight (•), The Perfect Moment (••), Superlative Luck (•••), Probable Cause (••••); *Life* — Pulse of the Living World (•); *Mind* — Aura Perception (•), Emotional Urging (••); *Time* — Temporal Eddies (•), Flip of the Coin (••), Acceleration (•••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 12/3

**Armor:** 4 ("Fortune's Protection," Fate ••)

## Story Hook — Bad Dreams

Someone known to one of the characters (maybe a friend, relative or co-worker) has been having incredibly bad dreams lately. She may be addicted to one of Vision's concoctions and now is refusing (or unable) to pay him what she owes. Since Vision is notoriously good at covering the tracks of his willwork, it will be difficult, at best, to pin anything on him. Even if he were acting blatantly, the Hierarch isn't apt to care. Since the Company is a well-connected cabal, it would be unwise to attack them directly: a more diplomatic solution is probably in order.

On the other hand, perhaps Vision has absolutely nothing to do with these nightmares. If none of the characters are particularly skilled in the Mind Arcanum, Vision may be the only one who would (for a price, of course) be willing to assist with the problem. If someone like Vision has to be brought in, though, the dreams will likely have to be of such magnitude as to constitute a significant quality of life issue. Otherwise, whatever he charges for his aid is likely to be too steep a cost.

## *The Sanguine Laurel*

Heirs to the Circle of Alabaster, who were themselves heirs to the Winding Serpent, who were, likewise, heirs to another distinguished local cabal (and so forth, back through the area's history), the Sanguine Laurel is a fixture of Boston's Consilium politics. Without fail, the Laurel has served with honor and distinction, seeing out the will of the Consilium, just as its predecessors did before it.

The nominal head of the Laurel, Numa, acts as one of the Consilium's Councilors, advising the Hierarch often on matters of ancient lore and relations with willworkers from outside of the area, especially those from western Europe and those North American lands first colonized by Europeans. It is widely acknowledged that the Sanguine Laurel boasts among the most comprehensive libraries of knowledge pertaining to Atlantis and the genealogies of the Awakened.

*La Maison du Lion* (Sanctum Size ●●●●●, Security ●●; Hallon ●●●●●)

The "House of the Lion" has been the stronghold of the Léon family since they fled en masse from France during the Terror. Located in Ipswich, the sanctum is a sprawling estate, complete with manor house, carriage house, servant's quarters and a stable. The grounds are immaculately kept (by many of the Proximi of the family and by other trusted servants who value discretion above scandal and know when to forget what they may have seen or heard). The house itself is grand and glorious,

reflecting a wide variety of styles of décor, though tending toward 17th and 18th century French, as well as a smattering of Artifacts believed by the family to be remnants of the Atlantean culture.

In the center of the hedge maze behind the house, there grows on a white marble obelisk an ivy-like flowering plant of unknown origin, one which the family maintains was first cultivated in Atlantis (a 5-point shared Hallow). The small, multicolored, jewel-toned blossoms grow in winter and in spring, and persist through driving hail, fierce winds and severe droughts. No bee visits the plant, and it sheds no pollen. The petals of one flower may be consumed as tassa for a single point of Mana, or two or three flowers' worth may be steeped in hot water, creating a fragrant tea, for the same effect. The family's library is in the vaults below the estates, with the most precious tomes being kept in airtight, climate-controlled cases. The library contains information on the following subjects: Atlantis, Awakened Lineages, Legendary Artifacts, Local Spirit Courts and the Mysterium.

### *Numa (Consilium Councilor)*

**Quote:** Atlantean, you say? Please allow me to have my associates verify that. If your claim is genuine, then I will have my secretary draft you a check. If it is not, then I hope for your sake that you are simply ignorant and not deliberately trying to deceive me.

**Background:** Corbus Léon was born into a family of willworkers and Proximi, latest in a line that claimed (truthfully or otherwise) unbroken descent from the sorcerer-kings of Atlantis. Upon his Awakening at the age of 20, he was named heir to the rule of the family and given leave to form a cabal with the handful of other willworkers of his generation. Taking the name Numa (after Numa Pompilius, the legendary second king of Rome, a man said to have been of great wisdom, spiritual strength and moral conviction), he formed the first incarnation of the Sanguine Laurel with his half-sister Hildegard, and his cousin Grimoald.

Now, nearly 30 years later, Grimoald is dead, having been killed while abroad by what many family members in the know believe was a powerful Banisher, but Hildegard still remains by Numa's side, along with her daughter and son-in-law, both of whom are also willworkers. Since the death of his uncle Osric, Numa watches over the family, eager for the birth of another child fated to Awaken. While waiting, Numa searches for shreds of lore regarding lost Atlantis, seeking clues as to the origins of his house and the secrets of the long-vanished rulers of an undiminished world, a pursuit balanced by his responsibilities as a Councilor to the Consilium. Beyond the shared sanctum of his cabal, Numa maintains another, personal sanctum hidden in the Shadow Realm (a Spirit 5 "Spirit Manse"; see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 256).

**Description:** Numa is a tall, regal man with handsome features. He wears his wavy blond hair long and his beard full but neat. His clothing is expensive and tasteful, giving him the bearing of royalty. He laughs rarely, but, when he does, good humor seems to burst forth from some long-denied part of him. More often, he is solemn, even pensive, though outsiders rarely perceive that side of him. Instead, they see the haughty nobleman, the unbreakable pillar at the center of the Léon family.

Numa's Nimbus manifests as blazing, electric blue Atlantean glyphs on the palms of his hands, shining so brightly that even gloves and clenched fists cannot quell their brilliance.

**Storytelling Hints:** Worry consumes Numa's dark and lonely hours. He wonders if another Awakening will occur in his family during his lifetime; thus far, the omens have not predicted one. He is, therefore, at times a cloying patriarch to his family, but he truly loves them and wants what is best for them, whether they understand it or not. He sincerely believes that he and his family descend from the Awakened kings of Atlantis and considers it a sacred task to discover all he can regarding that ancient nation. He is concerned for his niece's future, considering her unfortunate origins, and does what he can to be certain that he will leave behind a better and stronger house than the one he inherited, for her sake.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Willow wand, diamond cufflink (Prime magic), wolf tooth (Spirit magic)

**Real Name:** Corbus Léon

**Path:** Thyrsus

**Order:** Mysterium

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 5, Manipulation 3, Composure 5

**Mental Skills:** Academics 4, Computer 2, Investigation 3, Medicine 4, Occult 5, Politics 4, Science 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Stealth 1, Survival 3, Weaponry (Axes) 3

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 4, Empathy 3, Expression 2, Intimidation (Veiled Threats) 3, Persuasion 3, Socialize (Awakened Society) 4, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Artifact 8, Contacts (Museums), Familiar (embodied raven; see below), Hallow (Shared) 5, High Speech, Language (French, German, Italian, Latin), Library (Shared; Atlantis, Awakened Lineages, Legendary Artifacts, Local Spirit Courts, the Mysterium), Resources 5, Sanctum (Shared) 7, Sleepwalker Retainer 5, Status (Consilium 5, Order 4), Striking Looks 2

**Willpower:** 9

**Wisdom:** 7

**Virtue:** Faith

**Vice:** Envy

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 11

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 5

**Arcana:** Life 4, Prime 4, Spirit 5

**Notes:** *Life* — Sense Life (•), Self-Healing (••), Transform Self (•••), Supreme Honing (••••); *Prime* — Supernal Vision (•), Activate Enchanted Item (••), Ley Lines (•••), Siphon Integrity (••••); *Spirit* — Spirit Tongue (•), Peer Across the Gauntlet (••), Greater Spirit Summons (•••), Road Master (••••), Spirit Court (••••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 14/5

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Size	Special	Dice Pool
Large Ax*	3 (1)	3	9 again	12

\* "Imadrillan," enhanced item; see below

**Armor:** 5 ("Ephemeral Shield," Spirit ••••)



## Imadrillan, Ancestral Axe of the Léon Family (Artifact .....)

Durability 7, Size 3, Structure 10

Numa is the custodian of *Imadrillan*, the ancestral axe of the family. Potentially dating back from the time of Atlantis (indeed, its title is believed to be an Atlantean term meaning "Star That Casts No Shadow"), the weapon is made entirely of a single piece of thaumium and can store up to 5 points of Mana. (It rolls 10 dice for its reflexive counterspell.)

Numa almost never brings the weapon out, save for ceremonial occasions. He has not actually used it in combat in more than 15 years. The perfectly mirrored metal has a fluid, almost organic appearance, and is completely unmarred by any chipping or scratches.

### Shadow, Numa's Raven Familiar

Shadow has been by Numa's side for decades now. This familiar takes the form of a large black raven, with eyes like polished onyx. He is capable of a full range of human vocal sounds and often holds lengthy conversations with his human friend. Shadow is none too shy about talking with others either, provided that Numa doesn't need to him to play the part of an ordinary animal. He spends a good deal of time away from the mage's side, seeking knowledge, some of which he shares and some of which he keeps to himself.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Investigation 3, Occult 3

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl (Eye Gouges) 3, Larceny 3, Stealth 1, Survival 2

**Social Skills:** Empathy 3, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 2, Subterfuge 2

**Willpower:** 7

**Max Essence:** 10

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 14 (flight only; species factor 10)

**Size:** 2

**Health:** 4

**Influence:** Secrets 2

**Numina:** Innocuous, Harrow

**Ban:** Shadow must pursue knowledge of a secret once he is aware of its existence.

### *Blanchefleur*

**Quote:** Welcome to the House of Léon. Please, have a seat and enjoy our hospitality while I see if my brother is available.

**Background:** Born Hildegard Léon, the woman who now calls herself Blanchefleur has lived a sad, unfortunate life.

From a young age, she understood that she was to be chattel in ritualized breeding between houses with the blood of willworkers, in particular after her Awakening at the age of 18. However, when she became pregnant out of wedlock less than a year later, the European families of mages and Proximi interested in her pedigree started looking elsewhere. Her daughter Jessica was born to little fanfare in the family's estate. After the birth, Blanchefleur was politely ignored by all save her half-brother Corbus and her cousin Grimoald, who remained close by her and watched over Jessica as if she were his own.

For just over a decade, she was happy in the first incarnation of the Sanguine Laurel with her brother and her dear cousin, but Grimoald's death on the day of her 31st birthday devastated her. For Jessica's sake, Blanchefleur has held herself together, but it has been a long, difficult struggle. Now, she is the matron of the family (despite the fact that a number of relatives are her elders, some of them by 30 or more years) — the solemn, dignified hostess of a house built on secrets as old as time, and some more recent.

**Description:** Blanchefleur is a graceful lady of about 50, once lovely and now with a mature, but slightly faded, beauty. Her honey-blond hair spills in lustrous waves over her narrow shoulders, and her green eyes sparkle with wit and intelligence. She dresses well, in clothing suitable to a traditional modern lady of taste and high station. She moves slowly and purposefully, never flustered, save by a threat to her half-brother or daughter. Even her warmest smile conveys a measure of sorrow.

Her Nimbus appears as a rain of fine, shimmering sand, pouring down on her from out of the ether and originating perhaps two feet or so above her.

**Storytelling Hints:** Blanchefleur takes the role of hostess very seriously, as it gives her something meaningful to cleave to, a task that aids the family, especially now that her daughter is, of necessity, growing away from her. Blanchefleur is the seer of the Léon household as well as its mother, though her visions are increasingly grim of late. She wonders if it is that the fate of the family is in doubt, or simply that she now dwells almost exclusively upon dark matters and such are reflected in her manifestations of the power. She loves her half-brother dearly, and there is little she would not do for him; for her daughter, though, she would kill or die. No crime is too great if it preserves her precious Jessica.

**Dedicated Magical Tool:** Glass fountain pen

**Real Name:** Hildegard Léon

**Path:** Acanthus

**Order:** Mysterium

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics 3, Crafts 2, Investigation 2, Occult 4, Politics (Behind the Scenes) 4

**Physical Skills:** Larceny 2, Stealth 2, Weaponry 1

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 3, Empathy 4, Expression (Singing) 5, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 3, Socialize 4, Subterfuge (Concealing Emotions) 3

**Merits:** Dream 4, Hallow (Shared) 5, High Speech, Language (French, Latin), Library (Shared) 2, Sanctum (Shared): Atlantis, Awakened Lineages, Legendary Artifacts, Local Spirit Courts, the Mysterium), Sleepwalker Retainer 4, Status (Consilium 1, Order 1), Striking Looks 2

**Willpower:** 5

**Wisdom:** 7

**Virtue:** Charity

**Vice:** Lust

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 3

**Arcana:** Death 2, Fate 4, Time 4

**Notes:** *Death* — Speak with the Dead (•), Entropic Guard (••); *Fate* — The Sybil's Sight (•), The Perfect Moment (••), Grant Fortune's Protection (••), Probable Cause (••••); *Time* — Temporal Wrinkles (•), Shield of Chronos (••), Shifting Sands (••), Prophecy (••••)

**Mana/per Tum:** 12/3

**Armor:** 4 ("Fortune's Protection," Fate ••)

### *Ranae (Numa's Provost)*

**Quote:** Look, my mother and uncle aren't around, so we can scrap the 'House of Usher' bullshit and talk like normal people.

**Background:** Jessica Léon always knew a lot more than others gave her credit for. When she was six, she knew why Grimoald treated her with such kindness

and affection, despite the fact that such a thing was always mentioned only as a rumor, and then in hushed tones by the senior members of the family. She figured out that Shadow the raven could talk when she was eight, even though he had been expressly forbidden to do so in front of her. For no greater reason than that she felt like it, she had mastered Latin, virtually without instruction, by observation and solitary study, by the time she was 10. When she was 12, she knew to whom she had been promised, though no one ever mentioned a word of it to her face.

Her Awakening at the age of 19, spurred on by a deathly illness that resisted all magical attempts at healing, was a surprise to most, but the family took it in stride. She adopted the shadow name Ranae ("Resurrected"), and made preparations for her wedding. Her marriage was a tearful thing, a bitter time that reminded her of how little choice she had in the circumstances of her own life. Still, matters have improved with time, and she is finally managing to get out from under what she considers to be the crushing scrutiny of her eternally grieving mother. Three years ago, she was named her uncle's Provost and now, at the age of 30, she feels as though she were coming into her own in the family.

**Description:** Ranae looks like a plainer version of her mother, 20 years younger, but with curly black hair rather than blond. Ranae dresses much more simply, usually in jeans and comfortable shirts with one of her many pairs of boots. Her bearing is not

that of a pensive noblewoman but instead of a person of modern times. Her voice is deeper and a bit huskier than her mother's, and she is much more used to the notion of raising her tone (and applying a little vulgarity) if need be.

Her Nimbus reveals itself as a rolling mist,



parted occasionally, here and there, by unseen figures.

**Storytelling Hints:** Ranae's life has, up until recently, been one of compromises. Only in the past five years or so has she had the freedom to exert her will over her own actions. While she at first resented her arranged marriage, she has, over time, come to care for Hrothwulf very much, despite the awkward circumstances of their union, and she now wants to have a child. She has not yet told either her mother or her uncle, though she suspects that they somehow know, regardless. Her devotion to her family is much more specific than the *noblesse oblige* of the two senior members of the cabal, and she is much likelier to go out of her way for those she personally cares about.

**Dedicated Magical Tool:** Golden locket with Atlantean runes

**Real Name:** Jessica Léon

**Path:** Thyrus

**Order:** Mysterium

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics (History) 2, Computer 2, Investigation 1, Medicine 2, Occult 3, Politics 1, Science 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Distance Running) 2, Brawl 2, Drive 1, Firearms 1, Stealth 1, Survival (Shelter) 2

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 2, Empathy 1, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Hallow (Shared) 5, High Speech, Language (French, German, Latin), Library (Shared; Atlantis, Awakened Lineages, Legendary Artifacts, Local Spirit Courts, the Mysterium), Resources 4, Sanctum (Shared) 7, Sleepwalker Retainer 2, Status (Consilium 4, Order 2)

**Willpower:** 6

**Wisdom:** 7

**Virtue:** Justice

**Vice:** Wrath

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 2

**Arcana:** Life 2, Spirit 2, Time 2

**Rotes:** Life — Analyze Life (•), Self-Purging (••); Spirit — Spirit Tongue (•), Lesser Spirit Summons (••); Time — Perfect Timing (•), Flip of the Coin (••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 11/2

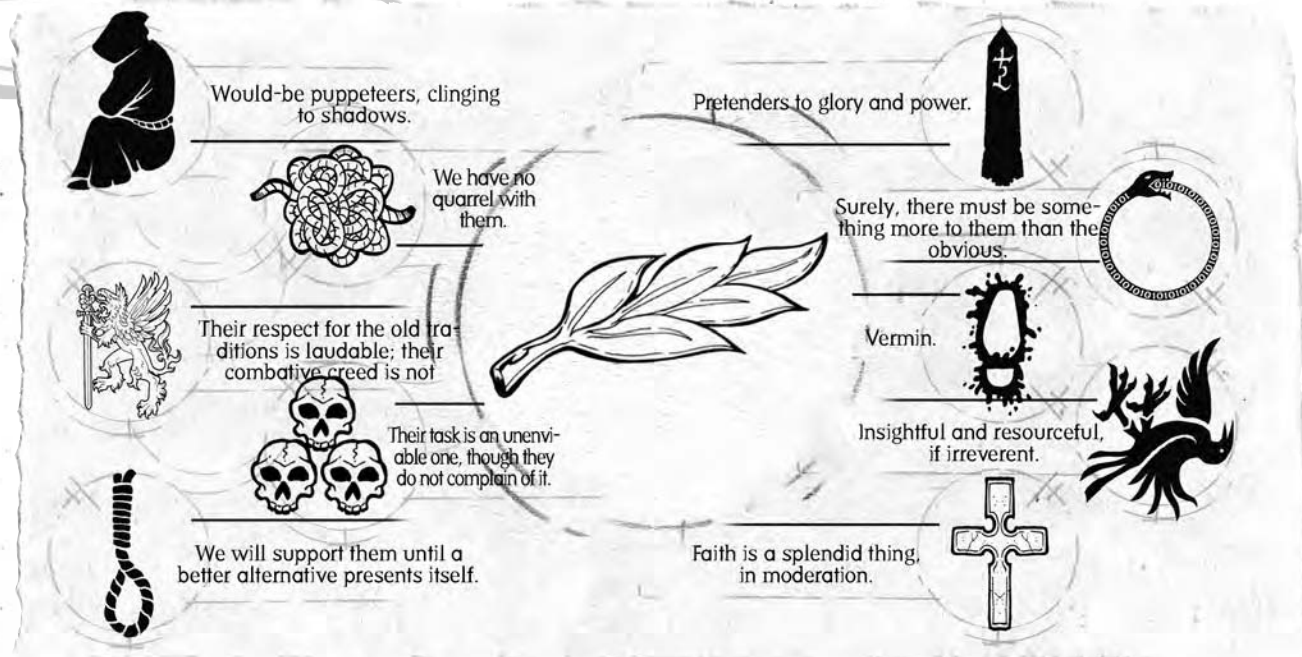
**Armor:** 2 ("Ephemeral Shield," Spirit ••)

*Hrothwulf*

**Quote:** *I do what is needed. Some days, that means making war and, others, it means making dinner.*

**Background:** Anselm Gruenberg was born into a distinguished family of Proximi, sworn in service to the Mysterium near the Black Forest in Germany. His house was a well-connected one, enjoying good relations with Consilium Heralds from far and wide, and, at his birth, a powerful Acanthus foretold the circumstances that would lead Anselm toward the Awakening. His parents assiduously followed the pattern that was laid out for them. At the age of 17, however, their son, feeling confined by a potential he wasn't even certain he possessed, ran away from home. Two weeks later, he Awakened during a terrible, unseasonably early snowstorm and, shortly thereafter, returned home. His value to the house to which his troth was pledged grew, but the pact stood; he would take the name of Léon, and any children born of the union would not be Gruenbergs.

When he was 20, Anselm, now calling himself Hrothwulf (for a long-dead, perhaps legendary, ancestor), came to America, and became the guest of the family into which he was fated to marry. When he was at last joined to Jessica (Ranae), Numa offered the two a place in a new incarnation of the Sanguine Laurel, a position



gladly accepted by both. Now, a decade after first arriving in this country, Hrothwulf is comfortable with his new house, happy with his marriage and considered a valuable part of the Léon family and of the Sanguine Laurel.

**Description:** Hrothwulf is a tall, broad-shouldered man. His features are strong and plain, but he has a certain warmth and kindness in his demeanor. His dark brown hair and beard are both cut short, though he occasionally lets them get a bit scruffy between trims. He usually wears rugged clothing, suitable for a lifelong outdoorsman, but cleans up quite well when need be. His German accent is still thick after 10 years in America, and his voice is deep and sonorous.

Hrothwulf's Nimbus is a silvery radiance, like the light of a full moon, falling upon him and twisting his shadow into primal images of the hunt.

**Storytelling Hints:** Hrothwulf is a simple man with simple values. He is devoted to his new family (especially his wife), loves to spend time out in nature (he weekends in the forests and mountains of New Hampshire and Maine at least 10 times a year) and believes that there is right and there is wrong. He defers to Numa and Blanchefleur in most things, and to Ranae in virtually everything. Hrothwulf rarely offers his counsel unless it is asked, and, on most occasions, seems quite happy to blend into the scenery. He is very eager to be a father, though he worries at how much Blanchefleur is likely to meddle.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Gold pentacle pendant

**Real Name:** Anselm Léon

**Path:** Obrimos

**Order:** Mysterium

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Crafts 3, Investigation 1, Medicine 1, Occult 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Climbing) 3, Brawl 3, Drive 1, Firearms 1, Stealth 1, Survival 4, Weaponry 1

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 2, Empathy 1, Intimidation 1, Socialize 1

**Merits:** Direction Sense, Fighting Style (Boxing) 2, Fleet of Foot 3, High Speech, Language (English, Latin), Resources 3, Sanctum (Shared) 7, Status (Consilium 1, Order 1)

**Willpower:** 7

**Wisdom:** 7

**Virtue:** Prudence

**Vice:** Sloth

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 9

**Gnosis:** 2

**Arcana:** Forces 2, Life 2, Prime 1, Spirit 1

**Notes:** Forces — Nightsight (•), Invisible Object (••); Life — Cleanse the Body (•), Organic Resilience (••); Prime — Supernal Vision (•); Spirit — Coaxing the Spirits (•)

**Mana/per Turn:** 11/2

**Armor:** 2 ("Unseen Shield," Forces ••)

## Story Hook — Potential Suitors

One or more characters of distinguished deeds, considerable power and/or notable pedigree among the Awakened may be approached by Numa, Blanchefleur or both, and extended an invitation to marry into the Léon family. The house is fading, crumbling with the years, and an infusion of new blood may be just what it needs to rise up out of its sad plight. Of course, neither of the two older willworkers will, initially at least, entertain the notion of allowing a member of their family to marry *out*. Such is a possibility, however, provided that concessions are made (providing a firstborn child to the Léons, as well as allowing any later-born child that Awakens to receive instruction from Numa or his successor, for instance).

While most modern-born individuals are apt to cringe at the notion of an arranged marriage, brokered like nothing more than a mercantile contract, there are considerable potential benefits to accepting the family's offer. Atlantean lore and Artifacts can be made available, and access to power, knowledge and connections well outside the borders of the Consilium is at Numa's beck and call. Trusts can be established and new accounts opened, or servants bestowed (potentially facilitating a sudden purchase of high levels of Resources or Sleepwalker Retainers). Of course, accepting a union with the Léon family is not without a price, as Numa will seek to exert his will over his new kin, and Blanchefleur will certainly try to play the part of the meddling matron.

## The Silver Ladder

Since 1906 and the signing of the Secret Concord, the Silver Ladder has come to effectively dominate Awakened affairs in Boston and its surroundings. After a long period of waiting in the wings, the order saw vulnerability in the fragmentation of the "mystery cults" and "hermetic societies" propagated by the Guardians of the Veil and moved in to exploit it. In the intervening years, the once almost exclusively Silver Ladder White Putnams have gradually seen defections to the Mysterium, though the cabal's agenda remains solidly in line with the Ladder (at least for the time being). The Ebon Noose is, was and likely ever shall be the true face of the order in the area, while the Illuminated Pentad is a newcomer to the arena of the Ladder's politics.

## The Ebon Noose

The cabal that masters the Boston Consilium's destiny, the Ebon Noose has a long and illustrious pedigree that



stretches back centuries. Long associated with powerful willworkers and perilous, left-handed magics, the Noose is an object of wonder, awe and not a little bit of fear. This tradition carries on into modern times, personified by such dangerous mages as the Nemean, Hierarch of the Consilium and Anacaona de Xaragua (see **Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 388-389 and pp. 382-383 for details on these willworkers).

The Noose is treacherous and mysterious, one of the two partners in the Secret Concord and, to all appearances, the dominant party in that arrangement. Terrible signs and omens follow in the wake of the cabal's works, and many sinister acts of magic in local history seem to bear the seal of past members of the Noose. Such terrible Artifacts and enchantments, often resurface after decades, even centuries, of being lost to time and obscurity. Those who offend the Noose do so at their own risk, for over the years most of those offenders have vanished and become the urban legends of Boston's Awakened community.

Of course, the Noose and its fellow Silver Ladder cabal, the White Putnams, constitute only two-thirds of the dread Secret Concord. No one outside of those two cabals knows precisely who (or what) the third signatory was. In fact, it is widely speculated that the Nemean is the only living willworker of the cabal to know the Concord's most terrible secret.

### *The Covenant (Sanctum Size ●●; Hallow ●●●●●)*

The sanctum of the Ebon Noose, the structure known as the Covenant has stood, in one form or another, for well over three centuries. Located in Salem, its current incarnation is a small stone-fronted home in the quiet, well-wooded lanes of Salem's upper-middle-class residential neighborhood. The Covenant stands on the site once occupied by a structure that was little more than a barn, the location chosen by the first members of the Noose to set foot on American soil. The house is quiet and rarely sees use by more than one or two of the willworkers of the cabal at a time, though someone stops by at least once a day to harvest the Hallow's Mana.

The Hallow (a 5-point shared Hallow) is located deep within the old well around the back of the house, now overgrown with vines. A rope and bucket is used to draw up a milky white water that smells vaguely of earth and old blood. Each bucketful of water is rich with tass, and may be drawn up at any hour, up to five times a day. The library of the Ebon Noose is located on the second floor of the house, all of it contained in a single room that is, floor to ceiling, packed with shelves. In it can be found exhaustive information on the following subjects: History of the Ebon Noose, New England Legends, Paganism and Spirits.

### *Tiamat (Consilium Sentinel)*

**Quote:** *You have no sense of how to speak to your elders, child, but, rest assured, I am more than happy to teach you some manners.*

**Background:** The willworker who now calls herself Tiamat was once known as Rubida (after the Rubido, the final stage of material transformation in the creation of the Philosopher's Stone). She was, at that time, a member of the Brotherhood of the Ineffable Truth, a onetime student of Marduk. In the early 1990s, however, for reasons known only to herself and the Nemean, and perhaps Potestas, she left the Brotherhood, bringing her research with her and renaming herself Tiamat,

after the primordial water goddess of ancient Sumeria, shaper of monsters and demons.

Now, Tiamat is a sticking point between the Ebon Noose and the Brotherhood, and she does her best to avoid members of her former cabal and their servants, the Exalted Knights of the Gryphon — not because she fears them, but instead to prevent any ugly confrontations that could endanger the delicate balance of the Consilium. She stays out of politics, whiling away her time with research intended to create permanent alterations to life, an endeavor with which she has not yet had an appreciable success. Still, she is Marduk's student, and his persistence is carried on in her. She does not mean to fail. Tiamat maintains a small, but highly secure, private sanctum along the Salem waterfront.

**Description:** Tiamat is a stately woman in her mid-40s, dignified and graceful. She is a bit heavysset, and with a severe cast to her features, plainly the sort of woman who is accustomed to being heeded. Her wavy, copper-red hair is cut to medium length and is shot through with streaks of gray. She wears formal clothing for most occasions, preferring skirt suits.

Her Nimbus makes her appear as though she is underwater, with her hair and clothing shifting lazily in the air as she moves, as if with the currents.

**Storytelling Hints:** Tiamat found the Ebon Noose, a fellowship among whom her most dangerous and unappealing Life Arcanum experiments would go virtually unnoticed, to be a far better vehicle for her ambitions than the Brotherhood. Furthermore, the pre-eminent station of the Noose gives her access to research materials beyond even those available to her at the Academy. She has little patience for foolishness, though a respectful tongue goes a long way to winning her good favor.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Polished stone marked with a pentacle

**Real Name:** Eleanor Fergusen

**Path:** Thyrsus

**Order:** Adamantine Arrow

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics 3, Investigation 3, Medicine (Veterinary) 4, Occult 3, Science (Biology) 5

**Physical Skills:** Firearms 1, Survival 3, Weaponry 1

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken (Training) 3, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 1, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Eidetic Memory, Hallow (Shared) 5, High Speech, Language (Latin), Library (Shared; History of the Ebon Noose, New England Legends, Paganism, Spirits) 1, Resources 3, Sanctum (Personal; Size 2, Security 3), Status (Consilium 2, Order 3)

**Willpower:** 8

**Wisdom:** 5 (Fixation)

**Virtue:** Faith

**Vice:** Pride

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 4

**Arcana:** Forces 2, Life 4, Mind 1, Spirit 4

**Notes:** Forces—Nightsight (•), Unseen Shield (••), Cleanse the Body (•), Control Base Life (••), Tampering Median Features (•••), Trigger the Lizard Brain (••••); Mind—One Mind, Two Thoughts (•); Spirit—Spirit Tongue (•), Ephemeral Shield (••), Spirit Road (•••), Spirit Guardian (••••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 13/4

**Armor:** 4 ("Ephemeral Shield," Spirit ••)

### *Arathnos (Consilium Herald)*

**Quote:** *The Hierarch will see you now. Please leave any weapons or enchanted objects with me.*

**Background:** Matthew Palladino has always been a suck-up and a crony. Even as a boy, he attached himself to those who were tougher and more important. On some deep level, he understands that his Awakening was a fluke, a single instance of individual distinction in a life that is otherwise distinguished solely by his association with the accomplishments of greater men. Of course, this makes him the Nemean's fondest admirer and most devoted subject.

Shortly after his Awakening, he delved into whatever "Atlantean lore" he could find (thinking the pursuit "cool"), took a liking to a term, *Arathnos*, that he found in one such book, and claimed it for his shadow name. He alleges that it means "Honored Herald," but more serious scholars of the ancient civilization can find no other mention of the word and consider the reference to be of dubious veracity. Still, the Nemean, for all of the abuse he piles on the younger mage, does seem to allow him to undertake many of the duties of a personal attendant and secretary. At times, this means that Arathnos gets to act like an important functionary in front of visitors but, far more often, it means that he gets woken up at 3:30 in the morning to fetch the Nemean a prime cut of filet mignon when the Hierarch is up late and feeling hungry. On the handful of occasions that the Nemean has found a need for a Herald, he has permitted Arathnos to serve in that capacity.

**Description:** Arathnos is on the short side and wiry. He wears his hair short and bleaches it nearly white. A small patch of dark brown beard grows from the tip of his chin, and he wears a silver ring in his right eyebrow. He dresses casually but well, and likes to wear leather coats during cooler weather. He exudes the condescending confidence of someone who feels that he can just run and hide behind someone much scarier if things go south. He also has a tendency to speak just a little louder than a situation warrants.

Arathnos' Nimbus manifests as spectral chains draped across him, trailing off into nothingness, perhaps three feet or so from his body.

**Storytelling Hints:** Arathnos, first and foremost, tries to anticipate the desires of the Nemean and act upon them. He does this because of the measure of prestige it earns him and because his comfortable lifestyle is predicated upon the Hierarch's good favor. Arathnos is well aware that others mock him behind his back, but they don't have access to the halls of power — not like he does. His smugness is a thin façade layered over his insecurities, and clever manipulation (rather than ham-fisted mind games, which he usually sees right through) can go quite far with him.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Pocket knife

**Real Name:** Matthew Palladino

**Path:** Acanthus

**Order:** Silver Ladder

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Academics 1, Computer (Data Recovery) 2, Crafts 1, Investigation 2, Occult 1, Politics 2

**Physical Skills:** Drive 1, Firearms 1, Larceny 1, Stealth 1

**Social Skills:** Empathy 1, Persuasion (Fast Talking) 3, Socialize (Awakened Society) 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Fleet of Foot 2, High Speech, Language (Italian), Resources 3, Sanctum (Shared) 2, Status (Consilium 3, Order 1)

**Willpower:** 4

**Wisdom:** 6

**Virtue:** Prudence

**Vice:** Envy

**Initiative:** 4

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 1

**Arcana:** Fate 2, Life 1, Spirit 2, Time 1

**Notes:** Fate—Reading the Outmost Eddies (•), Exceptional Luck (••); Life—Analyze Life (•); Spirit—Second Sight (•), Gossamer Touch (••); Time—Perfect Timing (•)

**Mana/per Turn:** 10/1

**Armor:** 2 ("Fortune's Protection," Fate ••)

### *Ahriman*

**Quote:** *Has it lost its way? Is it looking for help? It has come to the wrong place . . .*

**Background:** The Nemean knew Ahriman before either was a member of the Ebon Noose, as both Awakened at around the same time and place. Of all of the members of the cabal, Ahriman is the only one left who knew the Nemean as Savham. While the Nemean's path has been one of ambition, Ahriman's has led him into darkness and horror. For decades, he has been fascinated by death and the unquiet shades of the dead, as well as the Abyss and its denizens. His obsessions have led him to ask questions, forcefully at times, of a number of willworkers in league with dark powers, even to torture two Scelesti to death for the knowledge they possessed.

Ahriman's mind has steadily fragmented under the weight of the terrible secrets he has learned, but he persists in his studies, no longer sure of exactly why he started in the first place. He is wise in many awful ways, and is an object of dread for most mages of the Consilium, and so he is still of some use to his old friend, the Nemean. For his own part, Ahriman is aware of his madness and does his best to combat it, certain that he never meant to truly lose himself in his self-appointed task. For the time being, he holds together and he seems to have sufficient will to remain relatively lucid for the foreseeable future, but no one is truly certain when one of his tangents of research will drive him over the edge. As a precaution (and to preserve the influence of the Thyrsus and Acanthus in the cabal), Ahriman holds no political power within the Noose, which is exactly the way he prefers it.

**Description:** Ahriman is a tall, athletic man in his 50s, of mixed British and Middle Eastern descent. He shaves his head and is, in fact, truly bald on top. He may have once been reasonably handsome, but long years of forbidden lore have

seemingly ravaged him in body, as well as in mind and spirit. He looks haggard, and a twisting mass of scars mars his left cheek and part of his left earlobe is missing. When speaking to or about almost anyone other than the Nemean, he refers to him or her as "it," and demonstrates an aggressive disdain toward most outside of the Noose. His aristocratic British accent is now all but gone, eroded by years speaking in tongues not meant for humanity. Some days he dresses quite well, while on others he could almost pass for a homeless lunatic.

Ahriman's Nimbus appears as short-lived tears in the tapestry of the world, trailing behind his fingertips, and revealing fleeting glimpses into a realm of darkness and horror.

**Storytelling Hints:** The man once known as Philip Nasser exists in an almost perpetual battle for control of his mind. He is well aware that his studies have steadily chipped away at his fundamental humanity and his sanity alike, but understands also that *someone* has to learn the secrets that no one wants to know. Most people are a distraction to him, serving only to waste valuable time that could be better spent uncovering some shred of hoary lore. His objectification of others helps to keep him from forming any emotional ties to them whatsoever, a useful trick for a man to whom human life now means rather little.

**Dedicated Magical Tool:** Human femur bone

**Real Name:** Philip Nasser

**Path:** Moros

**Order:** Mystrium

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 5

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Research) 4, Crafts 3, Investigation 4, Medicine 3, Occult 5, Science 2

**Physical Skills:** Brawl 1, Larceny 2, Stealth 4, Survival 1, Weaponry 1

**Social Skills:** Intimidation (Interrogation) 4, Persuasion 3, Subterfuge (Misdirection) 5

**Merits:** Hallow (Personal) 3, High Speech, Iron Stamina 2, Language (Arabic, Basque, French, German, Hebrew, Latin, Spanish, Sumerian), Library (Personal), The Abyss, Hauntings, Infamous Murders, the Moros Path 4, Occultation 2, Resources 4, Sanctum (Personal) 1, Status (Consilium 2, Order 1)

**Willpower:** 9

**Wisdom:** 2 (Fixation, Suspicion)

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Lust

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 9

**Gnosis:** 5

**Arcana:** Death 5, Matter 1, Mind 2, Prime 4

**Rotes:** Death—Aura of Gloom (•), Ephemeral Shield (••), Quicken Corpse (•••), Twilight Shift (••••), Devouring the Slain (•••••); Matter—Find the Hidden Hoard (•); Mind—One



Mind, Two Thoughts (•), Mental Shield (••); *Prime*—Analyze Enchanted Item (•), Transform Aura (••), Disguise Resonance (•••), Supernal Dispellation (••••)

**Mana/per Tum:** 14/5

**Armor:** 5 ("Ephemeral Shield," Death ••)

### *Sheol*

**Quote:** *I'm not cruel. I just enjoy my work. Do you have any idea how few people get to do what they love?*

**Background:** Death has always held a special place in Isaac Cohen's heart. When he was six, his brutally abusive father was killed in a convenience store holdup. One year later, his alcoholic mother died in a drunk driving accident. He was shuffled from foster home to foster home after that and, always, into bad circumstances. One way or another, however, death invariably conspired to rescue him. He Awakened at the age of 13, when one of his foster fathers began making sexual advances upon him and suddenly had an inexplicable cardiac arrest.

At the age of 17, after a long period of instruction at Tiamat's hands, Isaac was inducted into the Ebon Noose by the Nemean himself. Isaac took the shadow name Sheol, by way of tribute to Death. He now serves as the Nemean's silent dagger in the night, taking care of problems that don't concern the Consilium (and thus Anacaona de Xaragua) and cannot be entrusted to outsiders. Sheol's role as the older willworker's assassin is a matter of open rumor, and many give Sheol a wide berth. The Nemean himself seems to be the only mage in the area who treats Sheol like a human being as opposed to a living weapon.

**Description:** Sheol is a bit on the tall side and gaunt. He frequently wears his black hair in a topknot, especially when "working." There is a deep scar on the left side of his chin, a memento from one of his jobs. He wears a wide variety of clothing, but favors black racing leathers, with internal pockets for fitted ceramic plates (for armor), when he's on the Nemean's business. Otherwise, Sheol tends toward a comfortable, casual mode of dress. His voice is largely undistinguished, though his tone almost always conveys a sense of coldness. He rarely displays sincere emotion, usually keeping a neutral expression or, occasionally, a slightly bemused smirk on his face.

His Nimbus manifests as a pale gray glowing diagram of the Qlippoths (the Kabbalistic Tree of Death) on his back, shining clearly, through hair, clothing and whatever else.

**Storytelling Hints:** As a rule, Sheol keeps his own counsel, and is much happier letting others do all the talking. If he is pressed for conversation, he often tries to disturb others into leaving him alone. It isn't that he hates people: he just isn't comfortable with the notion of getting close to those he might have to kill. He hangs on the outskirts of any gathering he attends, trying to avoid the spotlight. He observes others, their habits and patterns in the same way a wolf studies a flock of sheep (and makes no effort to conceal it).

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Knife

**Real Name:** Isaac Cohen

**Path:** Moros

**Order:** Adamantine Arrow

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 1, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Crafts 2, Investigation (Body Language) 3, Medicine 3, Occult 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Larceny 2, Stealth 4, Survival 1, Weaponry 4

**Social Skills:** Empathy (Emotions) 3, Expression 1, Intimidation (Stare-Downs) 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Ambidextrous, Dream 2, Fast Reflexes 2, Fighting Style (Kung Fu) 2, Fighting Style (Two Weapons) 3, High Speech, Occultation 3, Quick Draw (Weaponry), Sanctum (Shared) 2, Status (Consilium 1, Order 2)

**Willpower:** 8

**Wisdom:** 5

**Virtue:** Faith

**Vice:** Lust

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 12

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 3

**Arcana:** Death 3, Fate 3, Matter 2, Mind 2, Space 1

**Notes:** *Death*—Soul Marks (•), Corpse Mask (••), Summon Shadows (•••); *Fate*—Quantum Flux (•), The Evil Eye (••), Superlative Luck (•••); *Matter*—Find the Hidden Hoard (•), Alter Accuracy (••); *Mind*—Sense Consciousness (•), Incognito Presence (••); *Space*—Spatial Map (•)

**Mana/per Tum:** 12/3

**Armor:** Reinforced clothing (1/0) and/or 3 ("Ephemeral Shield," Death ••)

### *Chaplain*

**Quote:** *Sin? Now, that's a subject I can talk about for hours.*

**Background:** Though she doesn't talk about it, Maryanne Santos actually had a relatively normal childhood, outstanding only for her amazing intellect. She was loved by both of her parents, and enjoyed a close relationship with her father's older brother Hector, who had served as a chaplain in the army. It was on account of Hector's influence that she developed an interest in the ideas of religion and morality. Right around freshman year of high school, though, such studies took a backseat to Maryanne's growing concern over how her traditional and conservative parents would react to her attraction to other girls. Instead of dealing with the issue, she withdrew from her family, turning away from the Church and embracing paganism.

By the time Maryanne left home, she had never confided the truth of her sexual orientation to her family. Somehow feeling that things were falling apart in her life without being able to put a finger on what was wrong, she moved to Salem. Looking back now, she thinks it might have been guilt over never even giving her parents the chance to know why she had been pulling away from them for years. But it was not this inner struggle that led Maryanne to the Awakening; while crossing the street on a quiet Sunday night, she was hit by a drunk driver. While comatose, Maryanne found her way to a great tower of



silver and reclaimed her life. (To this day, even the Nemean remarks that hers was the most unusual Acanthus Awakening he has ever heard of.) It was by chance that Anacaona found her and discovered enough of Maryanne's new nature to bring her to the Nemean's attention. After her induction into the Silver Ladder, she began to call herself Chaplain, in honor of her uncle, and to suit her role as the Noose's resident theologian.

**Description:** Chaplain has gone to a lot of effort to make her wholesome-looking features appear exotic and dangerous. She wears a good deal of makeup (black and various shades of dark red lipsticks, and thick black eyeliner being her favorites) and dyes her hair and keeps it cut short. She has an extensive wardrobe of black vinyl and leather, as well as more comfortable clothing for just hanging out. When acting on behalf of the Noose, she often wears one of several coats reminiscent of a priest's cassock. Her mode of speech is usually polite and erudite, but she can swear like a longshoreman when offended.

Chaplain's Nimbus manifests as stigmata on the palms of her hands. The intangible blood that wells up in them trails behind her in the air, seemingly defying gravity, as she moves.

**Storytelling Hints:** Chaplain is fascinated by the nuances of ethics, beliefs and morals. She is more than happy to engage almost any decently intelligent speaker on such topics, but she has a tendency to play the Devil's Advocate, mostly because she hasn't yet fully made up her mind as to how she feels about the subjects. The Nemean and Ahriman are particularly interesting objects of study for her, as the former seems to be a man whose only morality is expediency and the latter has embraced darkness without becoming a slave to it — yet. She experiments with notions of "good" and "evil," absolutely unhesitant to draw others into her studies if at all possible.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Crystal knife

**Real Name:** Maryanne Santos

**Path:** Acanthus

**Order:** Silver Ladder

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 5, Wits 2, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Theology) 5, Computer 1, Investigation 2, Medicine 2, Occult 2, Politics 3, Science 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Drive 2, Larceny 1, Stealth 1

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 2, Empathy 3, Expression (Piano) 1, Intimidation 2, Persuasion (Seduction) 3, Socialize 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge (Lying) 3

**Merits:** Contacts (Academia, Local Pagans), Hallow (Personal) 1, High Speech, Language (Latin, Spanish), Meditative Mind, Resources 2, Sanctum (Personal) 1, Sanctum (Shared) 2, Status (Consilium 1, Order 2), Striking Looks 2

**Willpower:** 6

**Wisdom:** 6

**Virtue:** Hope

**Vice:** Pride

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 2

**Arcana:** Fate 2, Mind 3, Prime 1, Time 1

**Rotes:** *Fate* — Reading the Outmost Eddies (•), The Evil Eye (••); *Mind* — One Mind, Two Thoughts (•), Emotional Urging (••), Telepathy (•••); *Prime* — Dispel Magic (•); *Spirit* — Spirit Tongue (•), Ephemeral Shield (••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 11/2

**Aarmor:** 3 ("Misperception," Mind ••)

### *Nebuchadnezzar (Consilium Sentinel)*

**Quote:** I've got my orders, and now you've got yours. Get to it.

**Background:** Anton Kendrick came up poor, but not stupid. He hung out with a lot of dumb shits, and he made sure to use them for what they were good for and then get rid of them before they could drag him down. A lot of his friends burned out rather than fading away, and the smarter ones benefited by attaching their fortunes to Anton's rather than to those of louder and less subtle sorts. Nevertheless, stupid luck plays a role in everyone's life, and Anton ended up on the wrong end of a shooting meant for someone else, some punk who walked away without so much as a scratch. Anton's rage and anger sustained him and guided him through an Awakening on the edge of death.

Ghosts bound to Ahriman's service, set to watch the hospital for anything the mad willworker might find interesting, returned to him with tales of a young man who had seemingly returned from the dead, and Chaplain was sent to find him and bring him into the Ebon Noose. In time, the Nemean himself inducted the new mage into the Silver Ladder. The older willworker was impressed with the latent abilities of his newly Awakened acquisition, with his cunning and mercenary nature. Though the Nemean isn't intending on going anywhere anytime soon, he sees in Anton (who renamed himself Nebuchadnezzar, after the ancient king of Babylon) the potential to be a Hierarch one day.

**Description:** Nebuchadnezzar's features are blunt, and his squinting eyes always scan suspiciously. He is short and stocky, and his demeanor bespeaks an aggressive personality. He is abrupt with those he perceives to be his inferiors and confrontational with those who treat him like an inferior. He holds his tongue only with those he knows for a fact to be far more powerful, one way or another, than himself. His manner of dress comes from a life on the streets, tempered by the resources and power he now possesses. He wears his hair in thin cornrows, but it is often hidden under a baseball cap.

His Nimbus wreathes his hands and head with crimson flame, in which faint images of faces, twisted into expressions of torment, can be seen.

**Storytelling Hints:** Nebuchadnezzar knows that fear and hesitation are synonymous with death. He isn't impatient, but also does not fail to act when it is in his best interests — or, more recently, those of the Ebon

Noose (his loyalty to the Consilium as a whole is shaky at best). He isn't afraid to fight when fighting is warranted, but won't get involved in a futile or pointless confrontation. He leaves that to others and then finds a way to capitalize upon their stupidity. He is a social predator, prospering by the ebb and flow of politics and all of the problems it entails.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Ostentatious gold pendant ("bling")

**Real Name:** Anton Kendrick

**Path:** Mastigos

**Order:** Silver Ladder

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Investigation 1, Medicine 1, Politics (Local) 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Firearms (Pistols) 1, Larceny 2, Stealth 2, Weaponry 1

**Social Skills:** Empathy 1, Intimidation (Bluster) 2, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Contacts (Gangs, Homeless), Danger Sense, High Speech, Resources 3, Sanctum (Shared) 2, Status (Consilium 2, Order 1)

**Willpower:** 6

**Wisdom:** 7

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Greed

**Initiative:** 4

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 1

**Arcana:** Mind 3, Space 2, Time 1

**Notes:** *Mind* — Third Eye (•), First Impressions (••), Misperception (••), Psychic Assault (•••); *Space* — Omnivision (••); *Time* — Momentary Flux (•)

**Mana/per Turn:** 10/1

**Armor:** 3 ("Misperception," Mind ••)

### *Tempest*

**Quote:** *Don't you know who I am? I'm with the Ebon Noose, motherfucker, so back off.*

**Background:** Harlan Gill was never an exceptional kid. He wasn't the best at sports or the smartest or the most popular. What he *did* have going for him, on the other hand, was persistence. It wasn't that he took satisfaction in a job done right; rather, he hated to fail. It was that arrogance that helped him to Awaken in his early 20s. Soon after, he was discovered by Arathnos (who followed a trail of rumor and strange happenstance to find him), and became Tiamat's second apprentice within the Ebon Noose. Although Harlan wasn't the quickest study, he wouldn't quit until he'd mastered each lesson.

Adopting the shadow name of Tempest, he works as a low-level enforcer for the Ebon Noose, relying on the power and prestige of the cabal to back him up when he's in over his head, given what the Nemean is likely to do to

one who harms one of his own. Thus far, nobody has called Tempest on his bluff, so it remains a moot point for the time being.

**Description:** Tempest's features, taken separately, are handsome and fairly wholesome. Taken together, and coupled with his haughty demeanor, he comes off as cruel and rapacious. His hair is a boyish, shaggy brown mop, and he almost always wears one of several pairs of pale-lensed sunglasses, even indoors. He smiles like a cat that's about to pounce on prey, and chuckles at inappropriate times. His bold swagger is that of an individual far more important than he actually is. Around the more powerful members of the Noose, he at least attempts to conceal his arrogance, but he isn't fooling anyone.

His Nimbus causes shadows in the immediate area to shift in any light, as though it were sunlight and hours were passing in seconds.

**Storytelling Hints:** There's really no good explanation for Tempest's behavior, beyond that fact that he's an asshole, pure and simple. He's a bully and compensates for his own lack of outstanding achievement by tearing others down. Naturally, his attitude doesn't win him any friends, even within his own cabal, but he's not quite aware of this fact as yet, so he pushes boundaries within the Noose that likely aren't safe for him to push. However, until someone teaches him a very pointed and painful lesson, he is certain to continue on as normal.

**Dedicated Magical Tool:** Knife

**Real Name:** Harlan Gill

**Path:** Acanthus

**Order:** Adamantine Arrow

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Investigation 1, Medicine 2, Occult 2, Politics 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Climbing) 2, Brawl 3, Drive 3, Larceny 1, Weaponry 2

**Social Skills:** Empathy 1, Intimidation (Bluster) 3, Persuasion 2, Streetwise (Rumors) 2

**Merits:** Barfly, Contacts (Street), High Speech, Language (Spanish), Resources 2, Sanctum (Shared) 2, Status (Order 1)

**Willpower:** 5

**Wisdom:** 6

**Virtue:** Hope

**Vice:** Pride

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 1

**Arcana:** Fate 2, Matter 1, Prime 2, Spirit 1

**Notes:** *Fate* — Interconnections (•), The Evil Eye (••); *Matter* — Detect Substance (•); *Prime* — Supernal Vision (•), Counterspell Prime (••); *Spirit* — Spirit Sight (•)

**Mana/per Turn:** 10/1

**Armor:** 2 ("Fortune's Protection," Fate ••)

**Magic Shield:** 2 (Prime ••)

## Story Hook — Falling Stars

Relations between the Ebon Noose and the White Putnams grow increasingly strained as time goes on. The Secret Concord has held fast two fellowships that were so clearly not meant to abide together as brothers. Now that the Putnams' star is truly waning, the Hierarch wants to finish their subjugation and reduce them to the status of a footnote in local history, rendering them completely incapable of rising up to assume the pre-eminent role with the Concord. He will not destroy them, of course, nor allow them to be destroyed, but he will happily bat them down to the point that their power in the Consilium is all but extinguished.

To this end, the Nemean is willing to offer the position of his Provost to a willworker of exceptional skill and/or deeds, preferably a member of the Silver Ladder, or else an Acanthus or Thyrsus, but he values competence above such distinctions, and will put his personal preference aside if need be. All the characters have to do is erode the Putnams' base of Sleeper support and subtly undermine what political standing they have in the Consilium (the latter being considerably easier than the former). The Hierarch may or may not be good for his word, though, and may instead simply be using the cabal for some private amusement (or in a dangerous game played with Chain Parris).

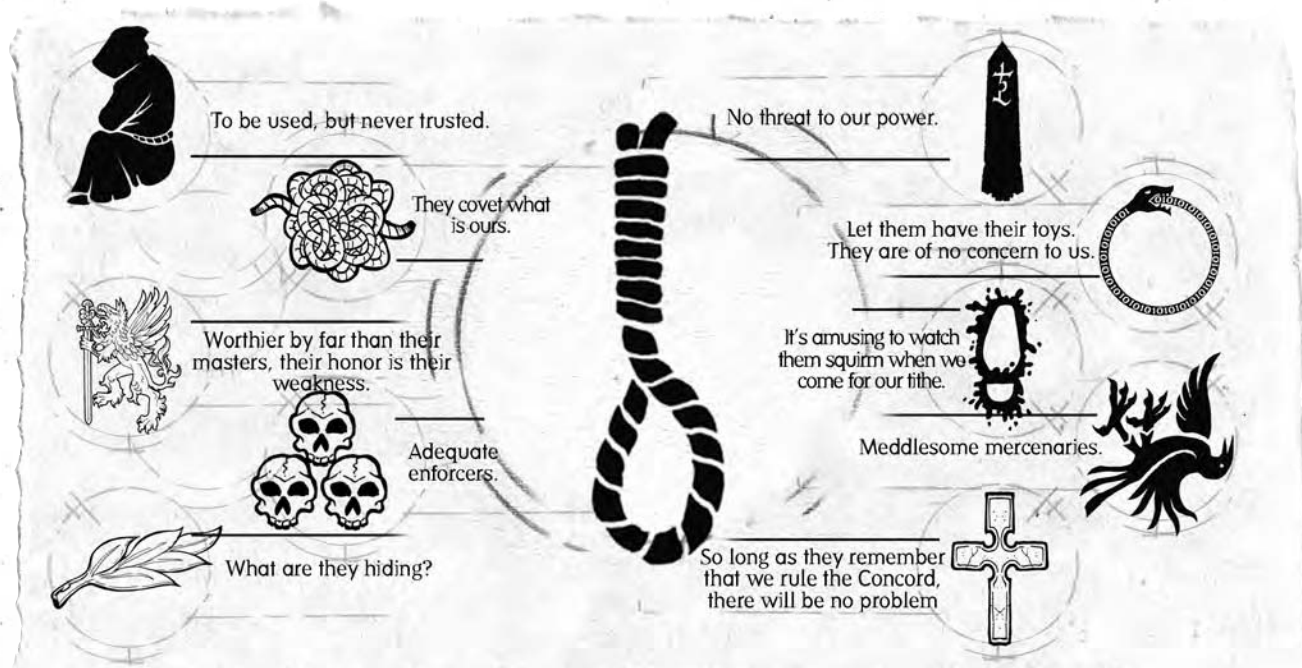
## The Illuminated Pentad

Contrary to what its name might seem to indicate, the Illuminated Pentad is a cabal of only three willworkers. Rather, the Pentad refers to the five precepts on which the cabal is founded. First, that its members shall support one another in all endeavors that expand the power of the cabal without compromising it to outside influences. Second, that the cabal shall strive to re-establish the Boston Consilium, free of the control of Salem's Ebon Noose. Third, that the cabal shall become the dominant faction in this resurrected Consilium. Fourth, that no action, either from within or without the cabal, that erodes its power or esteem shall be tolerated. And fifth, that the secrets of the cabal shall be kept, on pain of death.

The Pentad has many Masonic and hermetic overtones to it, with its members putting a great deal of stock in sacred mathematics and geometry, as well as subtle control over Sleeper institutions. Many wonder if the cabal has not somehow inherited some of the mystic writings and Artifacts once held by the local Guardians of the Veil, since the Pentad seems to have adopted so many of the trappings of Boston's early 20th century incarnation of the order. Despite the Pentad's mission statement, the cabal holds membership in the Consilium and works to win Boston's freedom through civil, legitimate channels.

## *The Lodge of Eight Chambers (Sanctum Size ●●, Security ●●●; Hallow ●●●)*

The sanctum of the Illuminated Pentad, the Lodge of Eight Chambers is located on the top two floors of one of the skyscrapers in Boston's downtown. Its title, like that of the cabal, is something of a misnomer. It refers to the eight chambers that surround the Hallow, representing the Sun, the Moon, Earth, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn (the celestial bodies most familiar to ancient astronomers



and astrologers). All of the rooms are richly appointed. Alchemical symbols and tremendously intricate geometric patterns dominate the sanctum's décor. The whole place has a vaguely claustrophobic feel to it, as though the lighting is too dim, the air too thick and the walls too close.

At the center of the top floor of the building in which the Lodge located is a circular room with a clear skylight. In this room there is a short granite pillar, where a swatch of red cloth covers a large, heavy chalice of alloyed lunargent and orichalcum. Every night, at precisely midnight, the chalice must be filled with powdered obsidian, which is then infused with tass (a 3-point shared Hallow). The Lodge's library spans a number of rooms on both floors and is broken up into a shelf or two here and there. Specific architectural progressions lead from one topic to the next, and none of the books are in English, making it virtually impossible for any save a devoted researcher (or one completely familiar with the library) to benefit by its use. The topics it encompasses are: Alchemy, the Boston Consilium, Sacred Geometry, Secret Societies and the Seers of the Throne.

### *Khumeia*

**Quote:** *All I'm saying is that Boston's Awakened affairs should be governed by Boston's Awakened. That's not unreasonable.*

**Background:** Yvonne Ste. Martin was born into a war. Half of her wealthy, influential Parisian family was a lineage of Proximi, with a handful of mages among them, while the other half constituted the leadership of a Sleeper Exarch cult. Her parents, Proximi both, were killed in a plane crash when she was six months old, leaving the only child an orphan and sole heiress to a vast fortune. Her second cousin Luc, arranged for her to be sent to a branch of the family living north of Boston, far enough away from the conflict that it would not touch her until she was ready to fight back. With only a few vague snippets of prophecy from Luc to go on, the few Ste. Martin Proximi in America did what little they could to try to guide Yvonne toward an Awakening. At the age of 20, to the great relief of her kinsmen, she found her way to the great iron watchtower of Pandemonium. Her great-uncle, a Mastigos of the Silver Ladder, came overseas to teach her what he could before he had to return to the struggle in France.

By a few years later, Yvonne (now calling herself Khumeia, from the Greek: "cast/pour together, alloy," a possible origin for the word, "alchemy"), had inherited her parents' wealth and was ready to become part of local Awakened society. She found the politics of the Consilium not much to her liking, however, and quickly resolved to change the situation, opting to fight a different battle than that which occupied the rest of her European family. Her upbringing had stressed subtlety, patience and cunning, and so she set the foundations for a new cabal by purchasing the top two floors of one of the downtown skyscrapers in which she discovered a Hallow. She then sought out prospective allies who shared her vision of freeing Boston and reuniting it under new leadership. Since that time, she has steadily worked to sever Boston from Salem's control, though always through open and politically acceptable means. So far, she has made little headway, but she also knows that neither the Nemean nor the Secret Concord will last forever.

**Description:** Whatever physical imperfections Khumeia might have had before her majority have all been erased by the world's best plastic surgeons. She is a statuesque, stunningly attractive woman of about 30, with long, black hair, hazel eyes and a flawless alabaster complexion. She favors dark lipstick, but wears little in the way of eye makeup. Her clothing is the best money can buy, consisting mostly of elegant custom-tailored suits. She speaks politely and with great propriety, but makes it quite clear that she knows her opinion to be the correct one, even when she is forced to concede an issue.

Her Nimbus appears as wings of golden light, manifesting from nowhere and spreading across her back, extending to be nearly twice as long as she is tall.

**Storytelling Hints:** Khumeia is interested in the alchemy of the spirit, the process by which the individual transforms and, ultimately, transcends herself, becoming something far greater and more wondrous. She wants to rule a reborn and independent Boston Consilium, but recognizes that such a goal may be decades in coming, should it ever come to pass. She is imperious and self-assured, but does her best not to fall to hubris, well aware of the tales of the Exarchs and their legendary arrogance.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Leather handbag

**Real Name:** Yvonne Ste. Martin

**Path:** Mastigos

**Order:** Silver Ladder

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 3 Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 5, Manipulation 4, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Finance) 4, Computer 2, Investigation 2, Occult (Secret Societies) 4, Politics (Awakened) 4, Science 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl 1, Firearms 1, Weaponry (Fencing) 1

**Social Skills:** Empathy (Motives) 3, Expression 3, Intimidation (Veiled Threats) 3, Persuasion 4, Socialize (Black Tie Affairs) 4, Subterfuge 4

**Merits:** Allies (International Banking 4, IRS 3), Barfly, Contacts (High Society), Destiny 3 (Bane: "That which you love shall become venom unto you, and only by embracing that which you despise shall you be saved."), Enhanced Item 3, Fame 1, Hallow (Shared) 3, High Speech, Language (Ancient Greek, French, Japanese, Latin, Spanish), Library (Shared; Alchemy, Boston Consilium, Sacred Geometry, Secret Societies, Seers of the Throne), Resources 5, Sanctum (Shared) 5, Sleepwalker Retainer 5, Status (Consilium 3, Order 3, Ste. Martin Financial, Inc. 5), Striking Looks 4

**Willpower:** 8

**Wisdom:** 6

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Pride

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 3

**Arcana:** Fate 3, Mind 4, Space 3

**Notes:** *Fate*—Reading the Outmost Eddies (•), Shifting the Odds (••), Superlative Luck (•••); *Mind*—Aura Perception (•), Emotional Urging (••), Sleep of the Just (•••), Telepathic





Control (....): Space — Correspondence (•), Untouchable (••), Portal (•••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 12/3

**Armor:** 3 (enhanced item: a paper-thin shirt of silk with resiliency akin to steel) and/or 4 ("Misperception," Mind ••)

### *Thanatos*

**Quote:** *To master death is to control all life.*

**Background:** Irwin Paul has put his Sleeping days behind him. He was reborn out of his own death, Awakened and, for the first time, truly alive. He learned his craft (and earned his shadow name) from a cabal of Necromancers in Germany, where his father was stationed, but was later cast out by them for some crime of which he does not speak. (He has occasionally intimidated that it was those same Necromancers who initiated him into his Legacy.) He returned to Boston, where he had been born and had spent summers with his mother, who had passed away two years before. Well aware of how difficult it was to get by as a solitary mage, he readily accepted Khumeia's invitation to join the new cabal she was forming.

Now, he uses the dead to gather intelligence and lore that might prove useful in the re-establishment of the independent Boston Consilium. It is slow work, as the mages of the Secret Concord have been nothing if not thorough in covering their bases and their tracks. Still, he has time; more time, he imagines, than most. Until then, he steadily builds his empire of ghosts, waiting for the day that he will be able

to use them to topple the Ebon Noose and the White Putnams, when the cabals of Boston will finally band together to drive out the open conspiracy that rules their collective fate.

**Description:** Thanatos is a man of slightly taller than average height and slim, with somewhat broad shoulders. His dark brown hair is worn at medium length and never worn in any particular way for too long. His eyes are haunted, and his stare is deeply unnerving. His garb, always formal, usually seems vaguely antiquated in some way that no one can quite put a finger on. Perhaps it's simply that even new clothes look somehow old on him. His voice is deep (some say ghoulish), and he speaks slowly, carefully considering each new idea before talking.

His Nimbus manifests as half-seen gaunt, skeletal figures, leaning around him and leering with hollow eyes, even as they offer insubstantial caresses to his flesh.

**Storytelling Hints:** Perhaps the most important thing to keep in mind about Thanatos is that his creepiness is not an act; he really *is* that screwed up. The dead are more real to him than the living in many ways. He covets power over the Awakened, but his true hunger is for control over Boston's restless shades. Needless to say, this makes him a perfect ally in Khumeia's book, as she knows that he is not likely to stand in the way of her bid to become the Hierarch of Boston. He has no sense of the impact of his disturbing nature on others; it simply doesn't occur to him to notice or care.

**Dedicated Magical Tool:** Lead forceps

**Real Name:** Irwin Paul

**Path:** Moros

**Order:** Silver Ladder

**Legacy:** Uncrowned King

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 5

**Mental Skills:** Academics 3, Crafts 2, Investigation 3, Medicine 2, Occult (Ghosts) 4, Politics 2

**Physical Skills:** Larceny 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1, Weaponry (Knives) 2

**Social Skills:** Intimidation (Stare-Downs) 3, Persuasion 1, Socialize 1, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** High Speech, Hallow (Shared) 3, Language (Ancient Greek, French, German, Latin), Library (Shared; Alchemy, Boston Consilium, Sacred Geometry, Secret Societies, Seers of the Throne), Occultation 2, Resources 3, Sanctum (Shared) 5, Status (Consilium 1, Order 1)

**Willpower:** 8

**Wisdom:** 4 (Fixation)

**Virtue:** Prudence

**Vice:** Lust

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 3

**Arcana:** Death 3, Matter 2, Mind 2, Prime 1

**Notes:** *Death* — Speak with the Dead (•), Ghost Summons (••), Control Ghost (•••); *Matter* — Detect Substance (•), Steel Windows (••); *Mind* — One Mind, Two Thoughts (•), Incognito Presence (••); *Prime* — Supernal Vision (•)

**Legacy Attainments:** 1<sup>st</sup> — Nigredo

**Mana/per Turn:** 12/3

**Armor:** 3 ("Entropic Guard," Death ••)

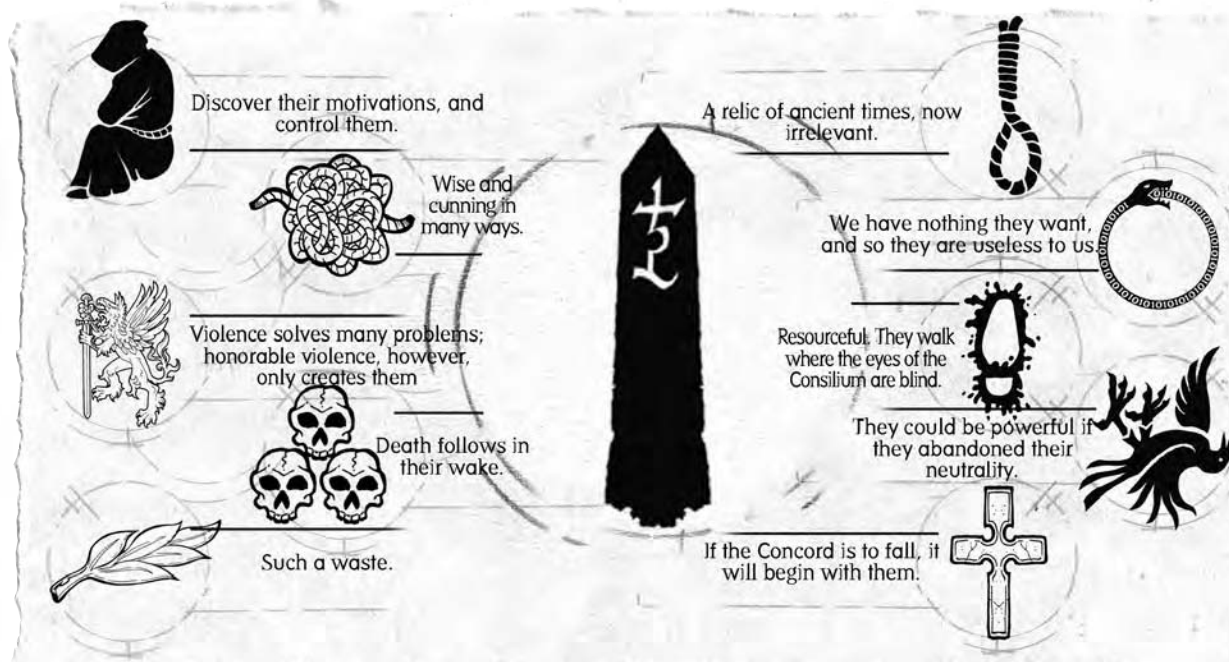
*Faustina*

**Quote:** *That's well and good, but what does the current regime actually do for us?*

**Background:** Brianna Reed was given the name Faustina (after the Roman empress, Faustina the Elder, remembered for her charitable works) when she first met Khumeia, five years her senior. After nearly drowning in a lake, Brianna Awakened, and her experimentation with her newfound abilities brought her to Khumeia's attention. Brianna enjoyed debates with Khumeia (who inducted her into the Silver Ladder) and agreed to join her new cabal on one condition: that they should establish a system for finding, protecting and instructing the area's newly Awakened, so that no one should have to stumble through their first weeks, months or even years without proper education.

Five years later, the program still hasn't really hit its stride, mostly on account of the fact that the Pentad still lacks the clout to make such a far-reaching goal feasible. Faustina, however, remains confident that it's only a matter of time. Until then, she concentrates on her work as an architect, incorporating the mystic mathematical principles she has learned into her designs, in the hopes of eventually learning some (perhaps lost) trick of willworking that will enable her to exercise her magic effortlessly between any two points in the city.

**Description:** Faustina is a good-looking woman, but by no means holds a candle to the resplendent beauty of Khumeia. That suits Faustina just fine, though, as having the spotlight seems to her to be more of a hassle than it could possibly be worth. Her build is a bit taller than average, and slight, and her red-blond hair is worn short. She only rarely uses makeup but dresses well, at Khumeia's insistence, when meeting with others. However, Faustina prefers her sneakers, sweatpants, jeans and T-shirts when on her own time.



Faustina's Nimbus reveals itself as shifting, interlocking geometric patterns that move across her skin like living tattoos.

**Storytelling Hints:** Faustina is quite passionate about the causes she supports. Her desire to reign over the Boston Consilium is all but nil, though she recognizes that positive change cannot be made until the Secret Concord is unseated and new leadership steps in. She lacks the discretion and subtlety of Khumeia, so she often holds her tongue, but the occasional thoughtless comment on someone else's part is known to get her hackles raised.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Iron paperweight with a five-pointed star, sextant (Space magic)

**Real Name:** Brianna Reed

**Path:** Mastigos

**Order:** Silver Ladder

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 2, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Architecture) 3, Computer 3, Crafts 3, Occult 2, Politics 2, Science (Structural Engineering) 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Drive 1, Stealth 1

**Social Skills:** Empathy 2, Expression 1, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 3, Socialize (Bar Hopping) 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Contacts (Construction), Dream 2, High Speech, Language (French, Latin, Spanish), Library (Shared; Alchemy, Boston Consilium, Sacred Geometry, Secret Societies, Seers of the Throne), Resources 2, Sanctum (Shared) 5, Status (Consilium 1, Order 1)

**Willpower:** 6

**Wisdom:** 7

**Virtue:** Charity

**Vice:** Envy

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 2

**Arcana:** Fate 2, Mind 1, Space 3

**Rotes:** Fate — Quantum Flux (•), The Evil Eye (••); Mind — One Mind, Two Thoughts (••); Space — Correspondence (•), Untouchable (••), Portal (•••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 11/2

**Armor:** 3 ("Untouchable," Space ••)

## Story Hook — The Purloined Letter

Through the auspices of the Shadow Chorus (and without asking for it), the Illuminated Pentad comes into the possession of a copy of the Secret Concord, or at least what they are reasonably certain is a copy of that document, as well as a ritual needed to safely read it. They speculate that within the document is some secret needed to lay low the Ebon Noose and the White Putnams. The Pentad contacts the characters, whether they support or decry the current complexion of the Consilium, and asks them for

advice. Khumeia wants an outside opinion, but, for whatever reasons, she considers all of the other cabals of the city to be undesirable for her purposes. ("The Brotherhood is too ambitious, the Gravediggers too apolitical," etc.)

Khumeia wants to win the fight for the Consilium, but she doesn't want to do so through violent or grossly underhanded means, and this smacks of the potential for either or both. She is unsure of how to proceed, aware that the Chorus has some ulterior motive for this "gift." For good or ill, the characters can help to set the future tone of the Illuminated Pentad's policy through their advice and their actions. In the end, the mages of the Pentad can be swayed (if the characters are sincere and/or convincing enough) into almost any course of action, up to and including simply turning the documents, unopened, over to the Hierarch.

## The White Putnams

For long years the partner cabal to the Ebon Noose, the White Putnams have embodied the quieter, subtler side of the Secret Concord. While the Noose exudes a threatening menace, the Putnams soothe hurt feelings and find diplomatic solutions. They are the velvet glove to the iron fist. Still, there has long been a vocal minority within the Putnams who felt the pact with the Noose was ill-advised at best and a blasphemy at worst.

Now, the cabal is slowly coming apart, with the more conservative elements cleaving to their Silver Ladder heritage, while those willing to fall by the wayside (such as Provost Chain Parris) have embraced the way of the Mysterium, putting aside worldly ambition for the sake of scholarship. Still, united by faith, the White Putnams do what they can to reconcile their differences. Certainly, on a purely political level, should the Ebon Noose disappear and the Concord fall, none of the Putnams, not even Chain Parris, would shed a tear.

However, there is a catch, or at least, there *seems* to be. While Chain Parris will not speak directly, he intimates that the consequences of losing one-third of the Secret Concord could be too awful to imagine. Parris' critics within the cabal have not yet gone so far as to accuse him of lying to hold onto his flagging authority, but the day when such a claim is made draws ever nearer. For his own part, the Provost appears sincerely frightened at the prospect of violating some unknown tenet of the Concord, and perhaps offending the third signatory.

*The Putnam Estate (Sanctum Size ●●●●; Hallway ●●●●●)*

The sanctum of the White Putnams since the time of the Secret Concord, the Putnam Estate is a humble Christian collective in the center of Boston's wealthy Back Bay. Many of the city's old-money movers-and-

shakers know where the place is, even if only a very few visit it. No one can quite be certain if it is Catholic or Protestant in denomination, but the Putnams themselves deflect such inquiries with assertions that “all are one in Christ.” The house is walled in with high, unadorned stucco-covered brick, and is itself rather plain in appearance. Humble flower gardens and short, neat hedges, line the walkway leading to the front door. The sanctum’s furnishings are plain and functional.

The Putnam Estate’s Hallow is located within the chapel on the third (and top) floor of the building. Every day at dusk, a heavy stone basin must be filled with wine — tass that becomes saturated with Mana (a 5-point shared Hallow). A small chamber off to one side holds heavy crystal bottles in which the Mana that is transformed into tass is stored. The Putnam’s shared library is also here, located on the second floor, in a room filled with sturdy oak bookshelves. Within are texts covering the following subjects: Boston High Society, Christian Mysticism, The History of the White Putnams and the Silver Ladder.

### Moriah

**Quote:** *One born to blasphemy cannot truly be blamed for his ways, but one who walks in the Christian faith and forges alliances with heathens knowingly spurns the Word of God.*

**Background:** From a young age, Elaine Trapper was taught that God moves among His people and watches over all thoughts and deeds, both good and bad, and judges people according to their sins. She found great comfort in that notion, for even as a child she sensed that much was wrong with this world and was happy to know that God would make things right in the next. She meditated upon such inequities often in prayer. One night, during a terrible windstorm, her reflections guided her to a great pair of shining gates, where she took up a gilded key. Jeremiah, then the aging spokesman of the White Putnams, found her and taught her a new way, one in which Jesus Christ was both Son of God and heir to the mysteries of Atlantis, seeking to return humanity to its original splendor, under the guidance of willworkers devoted to His holy cause.

Recent years have seen the slick and charming Chain Parris assuming the role of speaker for the cabal, a development received poorly by Elaine (whose shadow name is Moriah, or “God teaches”) and those who hold to Jeremiah’s belief that the Concord is immoral. Before he died, the old willworker passed on to Moriah some knowledge regarding the Concord, perhaps even knowledge of a loophole that can eventually be used to escape it — something that it seems he did not share with Parris. According to her, the Putnams should spurn relations with the “heathen” Ebon Noose; while it is not hers to judge, it is certainly not prudent to have truck with those who reject the Word and, of their own admission, engage in witchery, diabolism and necromancy. And, so it is that she stands at the head of the traditionalist faction of the Putnams, skirting Provost Parris’ authority and potentially (according to Parris at least) leading the cabal down

a path that can only culminate in the destruction of *both* of the cabals of the Secret Concord.

**Description:** Moriah has struggled with her weight all of her life; now, in her early middle age, she has finally given up the fight. She is rather pale and somewhat overweight, with red hair cut in a plain, unflattering style. She dresses in simple clothing, much of it vaguely reminiscent of a nun’s habit, and usually in gray or blue. She never wears makeup, and her only piece of jewelry is a silver cross. She speaks softly, but with tremendous conviction, and *never* uses vulgarity.

Her Nimbus manifests as a halo of cold, white light, surrounded by flickering golden fire.

**Storytelling Hints:** Moriah is quite convinced that Chain Parris has capitulated completely to the “pagan Hierarchy,” putting aside his Christian beliefs for, at best, the sake of survival and, at worst, political gain. While Parris still undertakes holy works, his relentless compromise with the Ebon Noose demonstrates, to her at least, that he no longer has the fervor of his faith, and is simply going through the motions. As the member of the Putnams least satisfied with the current complexion of the Consilium, Moriah advocates a severing of ties with the Noose and a time of isolation and introspection for the cabal, with herself as its spiritual leader.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Golden locket with image of the Virgin Mary

**Real Name:** Elaine Trapper

**Path:** Obrimos

**Order:** Silver Ladder

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation, 3 Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Theology) 4, Crafts 3, Investigation 1, Occult (Christian Mysticism) 4, Politics 3, Science 2

**Physical Skills:** Drive 1, Stealth 2, Survival 1

**Social Skills:** Empathy 2, Expression 2, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 3, Socialize (Christian Gatherings) 2, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Hallow (Shared) 5, High Speech, Library (Shared; Boston High Society, Christian Mysticism, The History of the White Putnams, Silver Ladder), Occultation 1, Sanctum (Shared) 4, Status (Consilium 1, Order 2)

**Willpower:** 7

**Wisdom:** 7

**Virtue:** Temperance

**Vice:** Pride

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 4

**Arcana:** Fate 2, Forces 2, Life 2, Mind 3, Prime 4, Spirit 2, Time 1

**Notes:** *Fate* — The Sybil’s Sight (•), Swearing an Oath (••); *Forces* — Read Matrices (•), Control Light (••); *Life* — Analyze Life (•), Transform Base Life (••); *Mind* — One Mind, Two Thoughts (•), First Impressions (••), Universal Language (•••); *Prime* — Supernal Vision (•), Magic Shield (••), Ephemeral Enchantment (•••), Marionette (••••); *Spirit* — Second Sight (•), Peer Across the Gauntlet (••); *Time* — Momentary Flux (•)



**Mana/per Turn:** 13/4

**Armor:** 2 ("Unseen Shield," Forces ••)

**Magic Shield:** 4 (Prime ••)

### *Simon*

**Quote:** *We are as the Lord made us. You do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, don't you?*

**Background:** When he was just a young boy, Joseph Osgood awoke one night to the sound of raised voices and sobs. When he went to see what was the matter, he saw his father meeting with a man Joseph had never seen before, a man of strange bearing, powerful and foreboding. His older sister, Mary, cried in her father's arms and Nathaniel Osgood promised the man whatever he required in order to have retribution for his daughter's sullied honor. The man said that it would be so and then he glanced briefly over at Joseph and smiled. Nathaniel, however, was too distraught to notice. As he left, the man said that he would "return for the child" by way of repayment and neither Nathaniel nor Mary protested, as the pregnant young woman was in no way ready for a baby.

Eight months later, however, the strange man returned and told Nathaniel to turn Joseph over to him. When Nathaniel protested, the man said that he should be more careful in the future as to what he thinks he's agreeing to, and warned him of the dire consequences of going back on his good word. Reluctantly, Joseph's father gave Joseph to the stranger, whose name, as it turned out, was Jeremiah. Over the years, Jeremiah taught Joseph many things, strange permutations of the religion with which he had been raised, ideas that fell far outside of the philosophy and events spoken of in the New Testament.

In time, Joseph Awakened, just as Jeremiah suspected, and adopted the shadow name of Simon, the sorcerer who was turned from his blasphemous ways through Christ's intercession. Simon was at Jeremiah's side when the old man passed on, and offered the prayers at his memorial service, a small affair attended by the Putnams and a handful of Boston's old-money luminaries. Now, Simon sits at Moriah's right hand, respectful of her wisdom and good judgment in her unwillingness to see the cabal compromise any further with the Nemean and his Ebon Noose and acts as her connection to the influential Christian families of Boston.

**Description:** Simon is a weathered man of about 40, though his gray hair and chin whiskers make him look perhaps a bit older. He dresses well, but only dons a suit for the most formal of functions and even then invariably looks at least a little uncomfortable in it. He is tall and slender, but his calm demeanor makes his height seem not so much intimidating. Rather, it gives him a reassuring presence. He has none of Moriah's compunctions against cursing, and his gravelly voice seems better suited to the barroom (in which he is occasionally found on weekend nights, sharing a beer or two with Boston's nobility) than to the tranquil Putnam Estate.

Simon's Nimbus is the spectral image of a massive open gateway of luminous silver, always seen as yawn-

ing in the distance behind him, regardless of the observer's perspective.

**Storytelling Hints:** Simon considers himself to be an heir to Christ's final kingdom, a merger of all that was best in ancient Israel and Atlantis alike, married to the best advancements of the modern world. He pities those who are tied to what he considers to be a "limited" (read: Sleeper) vision of Christian faith, but knows that they are also among the righteous who need wise shepherds to defend them from the wolves and keep them together as one flock. In his eyes, the time for compromise with the Nemean is long past, but Simon will do nothing to jeopardize the Putnams. Not yet, at least.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Iron crucifix

**Real Name:** Joseph Osgood

**Path:** Mastigos

**Order:** Silver Ladder

**Legacy:** Subtle One

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics 4, Computer 2, Crafts 1, Investigation 3, Occult 3, Politics 3, Science 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Larceny 1, Stealth 1, Weaponry 1

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken (Dogs) 1, Empathy (Emotions) 3, Expression 1, Intimidation (Veiled Threats) 3, Persuasion 4, Socialize 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Allies (High Society) 4, Dream 1, High Speech, Language (Latin), Resources 4, Sanctum (Shared) 4, Status (Consilium 1, Order 2)

**Willpower:** 6

**Wisdom:** 7

**Virtue:** Faith

**Vice:** Wrath

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 3

**Arcana:** Death 1, Fate 1, Mind 2, Space 3

**Rotes:** *Death* — Grim Sight (•); *Fate* — Interconnections (•); *Mind* — Aura Perception (•), Emotional Urging (••); *Space* — Spatial Awareness (•), Scrying (••), New Threads (•••)

**Legacy Attainments:** 1<sup>st</sup> — The Subtle Dance

**Mana/per Turn:** 12/3

**Armor:** 3 ("Untouchable," Space ••)

### *Magdalena*

**Quote:** *Anyone can be forgiven.*

**Background:** When Chain Parris found 19-year-old Louise d'Angelo, she was trying to fight off an attacker out behind the strip club where she worked, after changing her mind about engaging in some reasonably lucrative off-hours prostitution. It was not the first time she'd left with a client, but something about this one seemed wrong, unclean. Parris chased the man off and brought the weeping young woman to a local coffee shop, where he bought her a warm drink and a donut, and the two talked. For Parris, it was just another small good work, but for Louise it was a life-changing experience.

The two kept meeting over coffee, once a week, and she finally asked Parris where he worked. He told her that he was part of a religious commune in Boston, and she asked if she could also work there. After brief consideration, he agreed, knowing that to send her away would likely be to send her into back into a life of prostitution and degradation. During her first night at the Putnam Estate, she Awakened, and beheld visions of the Lord guiding the faithful, saints and sinners alike, into Paradise. Parris knew then that he and Louise meeting was providence, and she has stood beside him since then, supporting his alliance with the willworkers of the Ebon Noose, in the hopes that they will one day turn to the true glory of Christ.

**Description:** Magdalena is a pretty woman, with long, curly black hair and traditional Roman features. Her olive complexion is unblemished by cosmetics, but she doesn't really need them. She wears plain dresses, usually in bright colors (white, yellow and pale green are her favorites). Her working-class North Shore accent is vigorously suppressed, but it pokes through every once in a while, and she tries not to raise her voice or use coarse language. She smiles easily and has an open, friendly demeanor.

Her Nimbus causes her image (all save her face, her hair color and her general build) to shift from one moment to the next, wavering between archetypal ancient world conceptions of the maiden and the whore.



**Storytelling:** It is plain that Magdalena is in love with Chain Parris, but she does not speak of her feelings and he politely ignores them. She took her shadow name for the prostitute who turned to the worship of Christ, in acknowledgement of the fact that all souls are capable of redemption — an idea in which she wholeheartedly believes. Her Awakening brought her Catholic upbringing down on her like a ton of bricks, and she is still trying to shed her Sleeper conception of the Christian faith in favor of what Parris and the others hold to be a more enlightened testament.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Pendant with a St. Francis prayer

**Real Name:** Louise d'Angelo

**Path:** Acanthus

**Order:** Mysterium

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Crafts 1, Investigation 1, Medicine 1, Occult 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Drive 2, Firearms (Pistols) 1, Larceny 3, Stealth 1

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Empathy (Motives) 2, Persuasion (Seduction) 3, Socialize 1, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Contacts (Strippers), Fighting Style (Kung Fu) 1, High Speech, Occultation 1, Sanctum (Shared) 4, Status (Consilium 1, Order 1), Striking Looks 2, Strong Back

**Willpower:** 5

**Wisdom:** 8

**Virtue:** Hope

**Vice:** Gluttony

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 11

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 2

**Arcana:** Fate 2, Prime 1, Time 3

**Notes:** *Fate* — The Sybil's Sight (•), The Perfect Moment (••); *Prime* — Supernal Vision (•); *Time* — Momentary Flux (•), Postcognition (••), Shifting Sands (•••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 11/2

**Armor:** 3 ("Temporal Dodge," Time ••)

*Sophia*

**Quote:** I know a man who might be able to get that taken care of. I can mention it to a friend, who'll mention it to a friend, and he'll hear about it

by next Wednesday.

**Background:** The White Putnams don't seem all that strange to the woman who now calls herself Sophia. Her birth name was Emmanuelle Fiske, and she grew up in an isolated Christian commune (more or less a cult) in rural Vermont that preached an apocalyptic doctrine in which the Lord would lay waste to the world upon the eve of the new millennium. When she Awakened, Emmanuelle slowly subverted the commune, aware that its philosophies were wrong and twisted, built upon the notion of a God of anger and hatred. Ultimately, however, the power went to her head, and she began to see herself as semi-divine.

Jeremiah, at the end of his life, tracked her down after hearing rumors of the commune; after two days and nights of conversation, he convinced her to see the error of her ways. Instead of disbanding the commune, however, he encouraged Emmanuelle, whom he dubbed Sophia ("Wisdom"), to send them to do Christ's good work. Today, she watches over the former members of the commune and their children, making certain that this one goes to college for politics and that one gets a job at a restaurant frequently visited by the owner of one of the local papers. She supports Chain Parris in his doctrine of patient tolerance, aware that a war with the Ebon Noose, overt or otherwise, would inevitably destroy the White Putnams.

**Description:** Sophia is a slim, handsome woman of about 30, with pale, freckled complexion and short blond hair. She usually wears slacks and blouses; some think she looks very much like an archetypal schoolteacher. She has a certain subtlety about her, a craftiness that is apparent in her speech. She is friendly, but gives off the feeling that her friendship carries a price.

Sophia's Nimbus is a transparent image of a tall, foreboding tower, crowned with a white light, which seems, no matter one's perspective, to stand behind her.

**Storytelling Hints:** Sophia lives off the thrill of manipulating the power-players of Boston behind the scenes. She stays away from overt displays of authority, however, lest she slip back into the hubris that led her to reign over a cult or betray the beliefs of the Putnams. Still, anyone with even a shred of observational skills will notice the unadulterated joy she experiences when she plays the game. To avoid scrutiny, she portrays herself as a functionary or a facilitator, the middle management of the White Putnams.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Iron holy water vial

**Real Name:** Emmanuelle Fiske

**Path:** Mastigos

**Order:** Mysterium

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 2

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Investigation 3, Occult 3, Politics (State) 4

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Firearms 1, Stealth 2, Survival 1

**Social Skills:** Empathy (Personalities) 3, Expression (Correspondence) 2, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 3, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Allies (State Politics 4), Contacts (Local Politics, State Politics, Unions), High Speech, Resources 3, Sanctum (Shared) 4, Sleepwalker Retainer 3, Status (Consilium 2, Order 2)

**Willpower:** 5

**Wisdom:** 6

**Virtue:** Charity

**Vice:** Pride

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 2

**Arcana:** Fate 1, Mind 4, Space 2

**Roles:** *Fate* — Interconnections (•); *Mind* — Aura Perception (•), First Impressions (••), Multi-Tasking (•••), Read the Depths (••••); *Space* — Finder (•), Scrying (••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 11/2

**Armor:** 4 ("Misperception." Mind ••)

### *Silentium*

**Quote:** *You have been judged and found wanting.*

**Background:** Jeremiah's final student was a young man by the name of Victor Knopfler. After Awakening, he turned to faith for answers, but found none. Jeremiah gave him those answers, but also placed upon him a heavy burden. Victor's talent, his "great gift," as Jeremiah put it, was to dispense justice upon the wicked. While Victor's faith was great, his skill for violence was greater still. He was charged to be the avenging blade of the White Putnams, the bloodstained hand that would put the fear of God into their enemies. He called himself simply Silentium ("Silence").

Now, whenever Chain Parris needs to make an example of someone, or a deal requires a death, he sends Silentium. The lethal willworker has no compunctions against killing, as he believes in his heart that it is God's work he does, just like an angel. Silentium doesn't get involved in the politics of the cabal, instead spending his free time plumbing the mysteries of faith and meditating upon the great mercy of God. He supports Parris in all things, aware that a division within the Secret Concord would only serve to weaken the Putnams to the point that their many rivals and enemies could pick them apart, one by one.

**Description:** Silentium is a handsome man of just over 25. His light brown hair is worn short, and he takes pains to make his wardrobe inconspicuous. He is just another face on the street or in the club or at the mall, which is exactly how he prefers things. He rarely speaks, unless first spoken to, and prefers to allow others to guide a conversation. He moves with incredible grace and stealth as a matter of habit.

Silentium's Nimbus is a great, insubstantial blade of mist and shadows that follows his right hand, no matter what he does or where he moves it, passing intangibly

through objects and beings if they are along the trajectory of its movement.

**Storytelling Hints:** Very nearly no deed is too foul for Silentium if he believes that it will ultimately prove to be for the glory of God and to aid the White Putnams (two things he considers to be largely synonymous). He has used fear and pain as a sculptor might use a hammer and chisel. As he sees things, there are those who will not turn back to the light until they are shown the terrible consequences of walking in darkness, and there are those who will not turn back to the light at all. Politics is a pursuit for others; his business is wrath and judgment.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Lead hammer

**Real Name:** Victor Knopfler

**Path:** Moros

**Order:** Mysterium

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Crafts 2, Investigation (Crime Scenes) 4, Medicine 4, Occult 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Drive 1, Larceny 3, Stealth 4, Weaponry 4

**Social Skills:** Intimidation 4, Streetwise 2

**Merits:** Ambidextrous, Fast Reflexes 2, Fighting Style (Kung Fu) 4, Fighting Style (Two Weapons) 3, Hallow (Shared) 5, High Speech, Language (Latin), Meditative Mind, Occultation 3, Quick Draw (Weaponry), Sanctum (Shared) 4, Status (Consilium 1, Order 1), Striking Looks 2

**Willpower:** 7

**Wisdom:** 4 (Fixation)

**Virtue:** Justice

**Vice:** Wrath

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 13

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 2

**Arcana:** Death 4, Matter 1, Space 3

**Rotes:** *Death* — Shadow Sculpting (•), Entropic Guard (••), Sever the Sleeping Soul (•••), Rotting Flesh (••••); *Matter* — Detect Substance (•); *Space* — Correspondence (•), Scrying (••), Portal (•••)

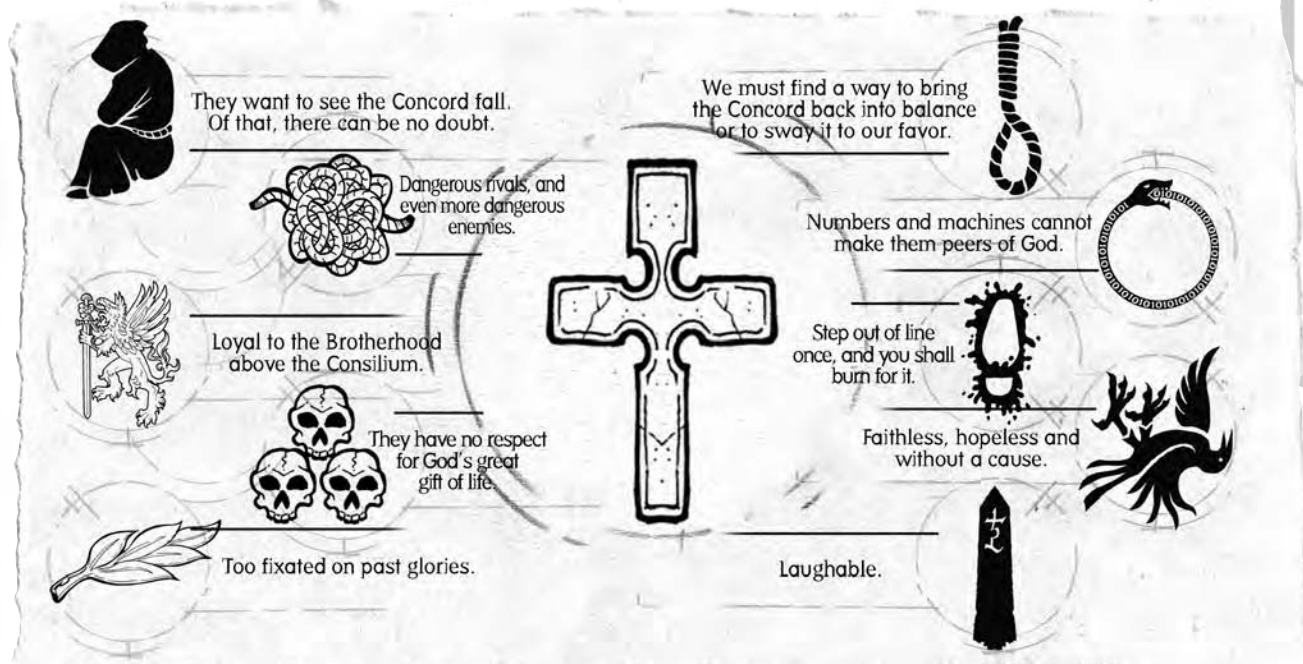
**Mana/per Turn:** 11/2

**Armor:** 4 ("Entropic Guard," Death ••)

## Story Hook — Friends Indeed

The White Putnams are popular "bad guys" in the politics of the local Consilium because of their religious leanings (especially given the stigma under which Christianity, Catholicism specifically, exists under, in and around Boston since the church abuse scandal). Still, the Putnams really aren't bad people (no worse than most, at any rate), and they are always on the lookout for allies. In fact, the Putnams can be great friends to have, provided that the characters are willing to put up with a little proselytizing every now and again (and a bit of scorn from the more hard-line members of the cabal, if any of the characters are outspoken members of a non-Abrahamic faith).

What sort of alliance the characters may be offered, however, depends largely upon which Putnam approaches them. Chain Parris is a diplomat and a facilitator, while Moriah is an adherent of a strict, Awakened vision of





Christianity. Magdalena is simply a kind soul, and Raphaella always has an agenda. What is certain, though, is that the White Putnams have a lot of connections, and they may be willing to share those ties with those who help them to return to a position of prominence in the Consilium. In the end, *all* of the Putnams can agree that they don't look forward to decades of bowing and scraping before the Nemean and his "pagan Noose."

## Raphaella

**Quote:** *They care nothing for our sacred task; they are using us and will discard us when they're finished.*

**Background:** Moriah brought newly Awakened 18-year-old Julia Dillon into the fold right around the same time that Chain Parris took Magdalena under his wing. While Magdalena's visions led her to believe in mercy and compassion, Moriah's teachings filled Julia (re-christened Raphaella, after the archangel of knowledge) with a sense of ambition. Such education also taught her to mistrust the Ebon Noose and to revile them as "contemptible heathens."

In public, Raphaella plays the part of the loyal member of the Consilium, but in private, since she is essentially beneath the notice of the Hierarchy, she seeks knowledge that could be of use in dissolving the Secret Concord or otherwise undermining the Ebon Noose's predominant position in the Consilium. It has been slow going, of course, since she strives to keep her work a secret from the Nemean, but she is patient, and believes that it is only a matter of time before the righteous elements of the White Putnams put the Noose in its place. Of course, if the threat Chain Parris warns of is true, she could, in fact, be leading the Putnams to their doom. However, it is a chance she's willing to take.

**Description:** Raphaella is nondescript, almost mousy. Only her antiquated mode of dress makes her stand out, but most people think that she is just a shy eccentric, which is precisely the role she plays. Save when dealing exclusively with the Putnams, she smiles bashfully and speaks in a quiet voice. When alone with her cabal, she drops the act and is quite confident and assertive. Her manner of dress remains the same, however — a token display of humility.

Her Nimbus expresses itself as harsh white characters of angelic script left in the wake of her footfalls, and glowing noticeably from beneath her feet whenever she is standing still.

**Storytelling Hints:** Moriah encourages Raphaella, and even Chain Parris has never expressly forbidden her to continue her work into finding a way to dissolve the Secret Concord and throw down the Ebon Noose in one devastating move. (He does demand that she consult with him before making any move toward that end, though.) She plays at being shy and quiet, but merely waits for the day in which she will have the chance to

demonstrate the depth of her conviction and the power of her faith, especially to those who have, in her mind, made whores of the Putnams.

**Dedicated Magical Tools:** Golden cross

**Real Name:** Julia Dillon

**Path:** Obrimos

**Order:** Silver Ladder

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics 3, Investigation 2, Occult 3, Politics (Scandals) 3, Science 3

**Physical Skills:** Drive 1, Firearms 1, Stealth (Crowds) 2

**Social Skills:** Empathy 2, Expression 1, Persuasion 2, Socialize 1, Subterfuge (Lying) 3

**Merits:** Eidetic Memory, High Speech, Occultation 1, Resources 4, Status (Consilium 1, Order 1)

**Willpower:** 7

**Wisdom:** 6

**Virtue:** Hope

**Vice:** Pride

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 7

**Gnosis:** 1

**Arcana:** Forces 1, Prime 2, Space 1, Time 2

**Notes:** *Forces* — Amplification (•); *Prime* — Dispel Magic (•), Magic Shield (••); *Space* — Finder (•); *Time* — Momentary Flux (•), Augury (••)

**Mana/per Turn:** 10/1

**Armor:** 2 ("Temporal Dodge," Time ••)

**Magic Shield:** 2 (Prime ••)

## The Secret Concord

What is the Secret Concord? Nobody really knows for sure, except perhaps the Nemean, and he might not know everything.

The truth behind the Secret Concord is for the Storyteller to determine. The following questions are those burning foremost in the minds of those who seek to uncover the Concord's secrets.

- Who is the third signatory? Although a few mages who have gotten close to uncovering some real truths about the Concord (such as a Scelestus named Angrboda) claim the third signatory has something to do with the local legends about the Prince of 100,000 Leaves (see pp. 131-133) worshipped by the Red Word cult, others say the third signatory is a spirit that intervened to *prevent* the Prince from gaining power in this world. Some whisper that the third signatory was an archmage (or a cabal of them!), now dead but whose spell lingers on.

- What are the Secret Concord's effects? It is believed that the Concord is somehow tied to

Fate, for the Concord seems to have steered the two signing cabals into power and longevity. It is believed that any who actively opposes the Concord suffers bad luck.

- Why was the Concord forged? It appears that the White Putnams and the Ebon Noose were dealing with major supernatural unrest in Salem, perhaps related to the Prince (see above) or perhaps tied to the resonance left by the witch trials. The Concord appears to have put that trouble to rest — or at least has suppressed it for so long as the Concord is kept.

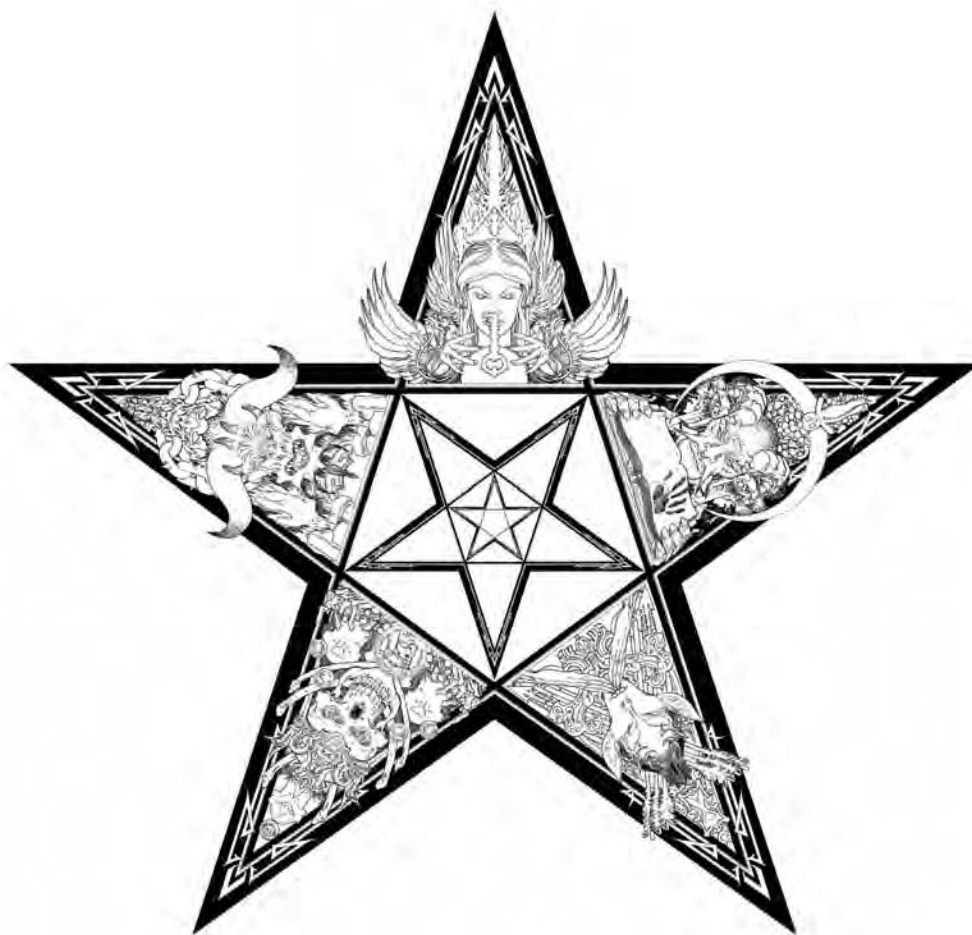
Other possible questions are:

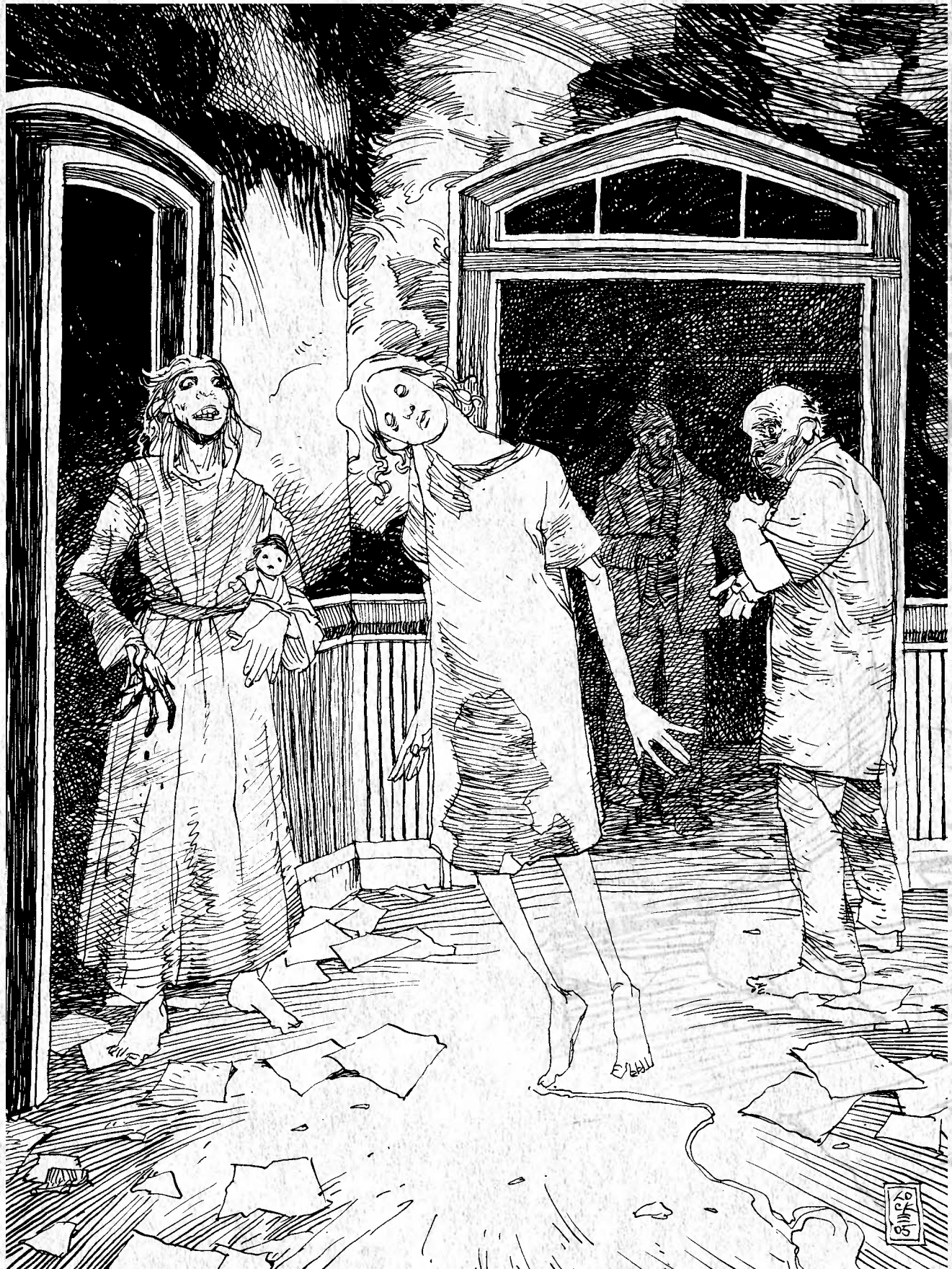
- Is the pact still viable? What if the magical power supporting the Concord expired but

nobody noticed? Maybe there is no penalty for opposing it.

- Do any copies of the actual pact still exist? The death of the Free Council magé who allegedly read a portion of it (see pp. 371-372, in **Mage: The Awakening**) attests to the existence of at least part of the pact in written form. Why did he die? Is this the fate of all who try to read the pact, or did he accidentally invoke a particular sub-clause of the pact?

- Is it possible to form a new Concord, one that overrides the old one? This depends on finding out the identity of the third signatory and then trying to form a new pact. Most mages agree that this course of action is insane.







# RENEGADE MAGES

My Dear Ms. Kether,

I know you have become aware of the freshman in Pennypacker Hall. His midnight "quest", attributed to his experimenting with psychedelic substances, has already become quite the topic of gossip among some student circles. As you know, no such substances were involved. I am pleased to see that you have intervened in his review and diverted a further investigation.

I must ask, however, that you not attempt to initiate this one as your own. My own pylon has had its eye on this one for some time now, ever since he first arrived. His intuitive gifts, not to mention his family connections, make him a candidate best suited for the Asylum's ranks.

Do we have an understanding?

Yours,

The Gray Pope

Don't patronize me. We gave you Staunton. This one is ours.  
Am I clear?

— Kether

The mages of the Consilium are frequently so occupied with their own infighting that they occasionally forget that they are not alone. Just as Boston is a haven for the Atlantean orders, so it also serves as home for a wide variety of dangerous renegade mages. Renegades are amply represented in the Boston area, if somewhat outnumbered in Boston proper, and they have their own notions of just how the magical future of the region should unfold. And, if it needs to be said, their vision of the future differs *markedly* from that of most of Boston's mages.

## *Banishers*

Whether due to Boston's Puritan roots or as a response to the excesses of Boston's mages, Boston is home to a number of Banishers working both singly and in cabals. These mages are outnumbered and often outclassed magically, so they're forced to fight a guerilla war against the Awakened. The cabal and the individuals described here are two types of Banishers who have lived long enough to make a name for themselves (an unusual accomplishment among this breed); most mages would do well to take them seriously.



As you emerge from the trees you get a distant view of a huge, sprawling brick building, surrounded by tall dead grass. Closer inspection and circumambulation reveals a venerable and somewhat menacing ivy-covered structure with long, iron-barred windows and many pointed towers and peaked gables. As I wandered around, the insects in the grass kept up a long continuous chorus like the droning in a madman's skull.

On the way out, I had some difficulty locating the entrance to the path again, as it is partly obscured by the trees. The famous refrain kept running through my mind—

You can check out any time you like,  
But you can never leave...

— Joseph Morales, "A Visit to Danvers State Hospital"

### *St. Michael's Promise*

The Banisher cabal known as St. Michael's Promise is actually composed of two smaller cabals that met while stalking the same victim. A twisted old Scelestus was about to fry the two from South Boston when the three Chinese Banishers used magic to sneak up on him and administer the coup de grace. Despite the many subtle tensions brewing between the two groups, they have worked together on and off for most of the last five years. The cabal's name comes from a Christian belief that St. Michael promised to send nine angels to aid anyone fighting enemies of the faith if they do battle in his name. All five members of St. Michael's Promise claim to be devout Christians, and they often pray and study the Bible together after killing "an enemy of the faith," which, more often than not, is a poor homeless wretch — but sometimes is actually a mage or even a vampire.

Moreover, the group is known to work together to perform exorcisms, and quite successfully, although they only perform that ritual if asked to do so by their mentor, Father Pierce.

Two members of St. Michael's Promise — Tom O'Neil and Pete Brennan — were friends from church and occasional drinking buddies from South Boston who Awakened within a year of each other. Paul Yao, Michelle Zhao and Kelvin Tsung grew up in Chinatown's Combat Zone and had seen more magic by the time they graduated from high school than most people see in their lives, due to the Combat Zone's Demesne-like qualities and its concomitant allure for mages.

The group has a mentor, Father David Pierce, who provides direct, personal pastoral counseling to the cabal and quietly informs the Vatican about what the Banishers are doing. Ideally, Father Pierce would like to get a special dispensation from the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine and the Faith (the modern euphemistic name for the Office of the Inquisition) to allow St. Michael's Promise to travel as needed to perform exorcisms or otherwise fight the Devil, but no such dispensation has yet been received. Father Pierce is beginning to suspect that his agent within the Vatican is not reporting to the higher authorities but to a secret society within its corridors instead.

### *Father Pierce*

**Quote:** *Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.*

**Background:** David Pierce went through most of his life making things fit into neat, tidy, socially appropriate vessels.

The secular world seemed fallen to him, so he became a priest. His attraction to other men offended him, so he has never been sexual or even emotionally intimate with anyone. When he Awakened at the age of 55, it threw all of his neat little plans into total disarray. As far as Father Pierce is concerned, the existence of magic refutes the existence of God, and that has made his other struggles all the harder. He resents magic and the Awakened in general. He has been careful to never use the magic that he's capable of, feeling it's better to be safe than sorry. He shepherds the members of St. Michael's Promise (whom he doesn't particularly like) as penance for his own Awakening, and he hopes to somehow help the Church realize that magic is much more real — and therefore more of a threat — than the Church seems to acknowledge.

**Description:** A blandly kind man in his late 50s.

**Storytelling Hints:** Father Pierce is a self-loathing mage. If he could strip himself of all knowledge of magic and go back to the simple world of the priesthood, he'd be perfectly happy. The existence of magic interferes with his understanding of the world and he resents that fact.

**Real Name:** David Pierce

**Path:** Moros

**Order:** None

**Abilities:**

**Feign Kindness (dice pool 6)** — Father Pierce is a kind, humble older man with a thoroughly non-threatening mien. While he may detest himself, he is good at portraying himself as warm and trustworthy to others. Convincing others that he's innocuous has helped him get far in life and coax others' secrets out of them for many years now.

**Occult Research (dice pool 6)** — Father Pierce has access to certain rare Church texts on the supernatural that he has only recently realized were not meant to be metaphorical. He has a wealth of lore available to him, although it is largely based on the writings of 13th century Christian monks, so the knowledge, while accurate, has been reported through a 700-year-old monastic worldview.

### *Kelt*

**Quote:** *You can do this my way or your way, but I'll tell you now, your way will get you killed.*

**Background:** Reared in a very traditional Irish Catholic family, Tom O'Neil started life with a deep veneration of the Church. He became an altar boy after his Communion, and

things went downhill from there. Every time he saw the Church meddle in politics and then ignore the hungry and the homeless, he realized that the Church was more a political entity than anything else — and it felt like a betrayal to him. By the time he'd reached adulthood, he'd grown disgusted with the Church and everything else that claimed to be pious or miraculous. When he Awakened on the Mastigos Path, his newfound abilities confirmed his darkest suspicions about human nature, and he's been out to rid the world of those who break the laws of nature by any means necessary.

His Nimbus manifests as the sound of whips cracking in the distance, echoing like thunder.

**Description:** Tom O'Neil is an unattractive man with plump, ruddy features, thinning red hair and a permanent frown on his face. He rarely wears anything besides jeans and a polo shirt.

**Storytelling Hints:** Kelt is a suspicious man on the verge of being paranoid, but he's a charismatic and effective leader when he puts in the effort. Every time his paranoia pays off, he experiences it as a vindication of his distrustful nature. Kelt often plays "good cop" to Hound's "bad cop" to get the other three members of the cabal to go along with them. The group's two Irish members don't necessarily trust the three Chinese members, but they're willing to use them to take out those they identify as enemies.

**Dedicated Magical Tool:** Pocket knife

**Real Name:** Tom O'Neil

**Path:** Mastigos

**Order:** Banishers

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics 1, Computer 2, Investigation 3, Occult (Witchcraft) 2, Politics 1, Science 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Jumping) 2, Brawl 2, Drive (Trucks) 4, Stealth 3

**Social Skills:** Empathy 2, Expression 1, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 4, Socialize 1, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 3

**Merits:** Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Inspiring

**Willpower:** 8

**Wisdom:** 5

**Virtue:** Justice

**Vice:** Pride

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 3

**Arcana:** Forces 2, Mind 3, Space 1

**Rotes:** None

**Mana/per turn:** 12/3

**Armor:** 3 ("Misperception," Mind ••)



## Hound

**Quote:** *Fuck you, you fuckin' fuck!*

**Background:** Both of Pete Brennan's parents were alcoholics. His father was prone to fits of violence when he was drunk, and, though he apologized profusely when he sobered up, that didn't make the bruises heal any faster. Brennan hates alcohol, alcoholics, his parents and, for that matter, most other people. Outside of his connection to Kelt, strengthened by five years of hunting monsters and other mages, Brennan's only attachment is to his two German shepherds.

Hound's Nimbus is the sound of barking dogs, seeming to originate from right behind the listener.

**Description:** Hound is a tall, hulking man with strawberry-blond hair. He invariably wears plaid shirts open over stained T-shirts with faded jeans.

**Storytelling Hints:** Without really meaning to be, Hound is just a mean person. He has a hard time hiding his misanthropy, and he is completely without tact. The only people with whom he even makes an effort are the other members of the cabal. Anyone else is fair game for bullying and derision on even the thinnest of pretenses.

**Dedicated Magical Tool:** Wooden stake

**Real Name:** Pete Brennan

**Path:** Thyrsus

**Order:** Banishers

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 5

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Crafts (Automobiles) 2, Occult 2, Investigation 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Running) 4, Brawl 4, Drive 3, Firearms 2, Larceny 2, Stealth 1, Weaponry 1,

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken (Dogs) 4, Empathy 1, Intimidation 4, Streetwise 2,

**Merits:** Brawling Dodge, Fighting Style (Boxing) 4, Iron Stamina 3

**Willpower:** 7

**Wisdom:** 4

**Virtue:** Faith

**Vice:** Wrath

**Initiative:** 5

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 13

**Health:** 10

**Gnosis:** 2

**Arcana:** Death 1, Fate 1, Life 2, Spirit 2

**Rotes:** None

**Mana/per turn:** 11/2

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Clip	Size	Special	Dice Pool
Brawl	(B)	—	—	—	—	9
Light pistol	2 (L)	20/40/80	17+1	1	—	7

**Armor:** 2 ("Organic Resilience," Life ••)

## Tien Wu

**Quote:** *No, I won't have trouble exorcising the demon — now get out of my way before I decide to drive it into you.*

**Background:** Paul Yao grew up watching "chop socky" films at a cheap theater in Chinatown where he grew up. He had a lot of time to kill because his parents were much more interested in his older brother the math genius.

When his older brother was possessed, Paul Awakened, and, in a frenzy of magic, he successfully exorcised the spirit, making him a well-known figure in Chinatown. Soon he was performing exorcisms for families all across New England, and he hooked up with the other two Asian members of St. Michael's Promise.

**Description:** Paul is a lean, muscular man of Chinese ancestry. He dresses very conservatively, typically in khaki pants and a buttoned-down shirt.

His Nimbus appears as glowing Chinese "ghost script" (figures used in Taoist exorcism talismans) hovering briefly in the air around him.

**Storytelling Hints:** Paul has nothing against the Awakened; he joined the Banishers because it was the only way he knew to work against evil spirits and vampires. That said, any mage who tries to get him to leave St. Michael's Promise will have to be very persuasive. The Irish members of the cabal have led him to believe that mages will say anything to lead the innocent astray.

**Dedicated Magical Tool:** Retractable steel car antenna

**Real Name:** Paul Yao

**Path:** Obrimos

**Order:** Banishers

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Computer 2, Crafts 1, Investigation 3, Medicine (First Aid) 1, Occult (Spirits) 4

**Physical Skills:** Athletics (Climbing) 3, Brawl 1, Drive 1, Larceny 1, Stealth 2

**Social Skills:** Empathy 3, Expression 1, Intimidation (Spirits) 2, Persuasion 1, Socialize 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 1

**Merits:** Fighting Style (Kung Fu) 4

**Willpower:** 7

**Wisdom:** 6

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Wrath

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 14

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 3

**Arcana:** Forces 3, Prime 3, Spirit 3

**Rotes:** *Spirit* — Exorcism (•••)

**Mana/per turn:** 12/3

**Armor:** 3 ("Unseen Shield," Forces ••)

**Magic Shield:** 3 (Prime ••)

## Young Dragon

**Quote:** *I don't think violence is necessary here, but I could be wrong.*

**Background:** Michelle Zhao grew up in Boston's Chinatown, an American thoroughly steeped in Chinese

tradition. On one hand, her grandfather immersed her in the legends and lore of China from an early age, and her family remained highly traditional even after immigrating to the United States. This included immersive study of martial arts from the age of five on.

On the other hand, she attended American high schools and universities, which pulled her away from the traditions of her family.

While she is a better martial artist than Tien Wu, she doesn't like to draw attention to the fact; her superiority in fighting makes him neurotic when he's forced to confront it.

**Description:** Young Dragon is a beautiful Chinese woman in her late 20s. She has a lithe body, but she hides it under loose clothing.

Her Nimbus manifests as the metallic sound of sword strikes accompanying her movements — even a light footstep produces a loud “shing!”

**Storytelling Hints:** Of all the mages of St. Michael's Promise, Michelle is the least comfortable with her status as a Banisher. If given a good reason to leave St. Michael's Promise (or pushed too far by the others, especially Kelt and Hound whom she already dislikes), she could change her affiliation.

**Dedicated Magical Tool:** Steel fan

**Real Name:** Michelle Zhao

**Path:** Obrimos

**Order:** Banishers

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 5

**Mental Skills:** Academics 3, Computer 3, Investigation 2, Medicine 1, Occult (Chinese lore) 3, Science 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Drive 1, Weaponry (Swords) 4

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Empathy 4, Expression 2, Persuasion 1, Socialize 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 1

**Merits:** Danger Sense, Holistic Awareness, Language (Mandarin), Meditative Mind, Fast Reflexes 2, Fighting Style (Kung Fu) 5

**Willpower:** 8

**Wisdom:** 6

**Virtue:** Hope

**Vice:** Envy

**Initiative:** 12

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 13

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 3

**Arcana:** Fate 2, Forces 3, Prime 2, Spirit 1

**Notes:** Fate — Fortune's Protection (••); Forces — Telekinetic Strike (•••)

**Mana/per turn:** 12/3

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Size	Special	Dice Pool
Brawl (B)	—	—		6
Sword 3 (L)	2	—		11

**Armor:** 3 (“Unseen Shield,” Forces ••)

## Story Hook —

### Old Dragon, Young Dragon

The grandfather of Michelle Zhao, one of the members of St. Michael's Promise, is a mage.

While he practiced magic often in his native China, he has done so only infrequently since coming to the United States, and he isn't affiliated with any cabals or the Consilium. He only recently realized that his granddaughter had Awakened, and, although he didn't want to confront her, he soon realized that she was affiliated with the Banishers. He may seek out members of Boston's Awakened community and ask them to help her, or he may appeal directly to her in order to get her to drop out of the cabal.

Once she knows that her grandfather is a mage, she could respond in any number of ways. The rest of her cabal could go after the old man, prompting Michelle to come to the characters to ask for their intervention on her grandfather's behalf. Played right, the characters have an opportunity to redeem a Banisher. If the situation is mishandled, someone could wind up dead.

*Monkey*

**Quote:** Whatever.

**Background:** Kelvin's father was Chinese; his mother was Italian. Both of his parents were concerned with their own careers; although Kelvin was amply provided for, the best that can be said of his parents is that their neglect was relatively benign. Kelvin started doing drugs, opium mostly, before he was even out of high school, and he started dealing shortly after that. When a drug deal he was involved with went horribly awry, he both Awakened (the only reason he lived through it), and gave up drugs and dealing. He has since explored transcendental meditation, EST and a number of more unusual spiritual and intellectual movements. He is affiliated with the Banishers because of his friendship with Paul Yao. He sees his own Awakened status as an extreme altered state of consciousness.

**Description:** Kelvin bears a vague resemblance to a monkey, both in his slight, hirsute build and in his facial features. He highlights his appearance with elements from traditional Chinese garb, especially high-necked silk shirts.

His Nimbus appears as luminous trails that follow his every movement, lingering momentarily in the air and making him appear to move so fast that he outpaces light itself.

**Storytelling Hints:** Kelvin takes nothing seriously — not magic, not the Banishers, not even his own life. For the last five years he has gone along for the ride because he finds it interesting, and it takes his mind off the fact that nothing else in his life is going as he wants it to.

**Dedicated Magical Tool:** Polished twig

**Real Name:** Kelvin Tsung

**Path:** Acanthus



**Order:** Banishers

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 1, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics 1, Computer (Hacking) 4, Investigation 4, Occult 1, Science 2

**Physical Skills:** Drive 1, Larceny 4, Stealth 3

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Empathy 1, Expression (Animal sounds) 2, Persuasion 1, Subterfuge (Misdirection) 3

**Merits:** Danger Sense, Eidetic Memory, Language (Chinese), Resources 3

**Willpower:** 7

**Wisdom:** 7

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Envy

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 12

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 3

**Arcana:** Fate 3, Mind 2, Prime 1, Time 2

**Rotes:** None

**Mana/per turn:** 12/3

**Armor:** 3 ("Fortune's Protection," Fate ••)

## Solo Banishers

The mages of St. Michael's Promise are unusual in their willingness to work together. Most of the Banishers in Boston (and anywhere else, for that matter) usually don't trust one another enough to work together. Boston has a number of solitary Banishers, though many seem content to work against a number of supernatural threats and don't focus solely on hunting down the Awakened.

The foremost, and most feared, of Boston's solo Banishers is the mage known as Weapon.

### Weapon

**Quote:** *Just remember, you brought this on yourself, freak.*

**Background:** An officer in the marines long before he ever Awakened, the Banisher calling himself Weapon long suspected the existence of the supernatural before Awakening opened his eyes to the grim reality of the situation. People are being murdered and manipulated by warlocks, vampires and worse abominations every single day, and nobody does anything about it. Once he Awakened, he knew that *he* could do something about it.

Weapon Awakened in his late 30s, and the erratic behavior he exhibited thereafter was enough to get him booted from the marines on a mental health discharge. He now works as a heating and ventilation repairman (which gives him an excuse to go many places where he wouldn't otherwise belong), but he keeps his combat skills keenly honed. A couple of times a week, Weapon takes a long drive around Boston looking around with Mage Sight. When he finds something suspicious, he takes note of it. He never acts immediately. When he *does* act, it's only after he's done his homework on his target and only when he knows he has the drop on his victim. Though he is a powerful mage, performing violent magic literally makes Weapon sick to his stomach, so if he can avoid using it, he does. His expertise



with firearms often allows him to dispense with magic altogether. More often, he finds that his effectiveness increases if he augments his standard tactics with covert spells.

Once he's ascertained that his target is supernatural and dangerous to humanity, Weapon has no compunction about being judge, jury and executioner. Wayward mages were once his primary targets, but vampires have recently earned his hatred as well.

Weapon is very likely Boston's best-established Banisher. The subtlety and stealth with which he pursues his prey gives him an edge even with mages more powerful than he. Weapon acts only when there are no witnesses and habitually wards himself against scrying.

Weapon's dilemma is his age. Now 60, Weapon is terrified of dying. His greatest fear is that he's going to the same Hell he sends his victims to, and he wants to avoid that for as long as possible — or completely if he can arrange it. He's been thinking about trying to use his magic to extend his life, but he doesn't know where to begin.

**Description:** Weapon's body still resembles that of a fit man in his 30s due to his nigh-insane exercise regimen; his face, on the other hand, reveals every one of his 60 years and then some. His hair is a thick, silver unkempt mane.

His Nimbus makes his body transform into an image of grotesque muscular development — giant biceps, pectorals, neck — bulging with veins and taut as steel.

**Storytelling Hints:** Weapon is neither stupid nor impetuous. He's been doing this for long enough to have learned a few lessons the hard way, and he's nothing if not methodical. He doesn't rush into situations ill-prepared; not only does he look before he leaps, but he gets measurements and does reconnaissance around the landing point to boot. He's not the most powerful mage in Boston (his rotes have been gleaned from stolen grimoires), but his careful approach to stalking his prey should make him a danger to any but the most competent cabal.

**Dedicated Magical Tool:** Survival knife

**Real Name:** Leo Burns  
**Path:** Obrimos  
**Order:** Banishers  
**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 4  
**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5  
**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 3  
**Mental Skills:** Computer 1, Crafts (Repair) 2, Investigation 2, Medicine (Emergency Care) 2, Occult (Monsters) 3  
**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Drive 4, Firearms (Sniping) 5, Stealth 2, Survival 1, Weaponry 3  
**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 1, Empathy 1, Expression 1, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 1, Socialize 1, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 3  
**Merits:** Fast Reflexes 2, Danger Sense, Destiny 2, Iron Stamina 3, Library (Vampires, Superstitions), Quick Healer, Resources 2, Sanctum 2  
**Willpower:** 7  
**Wisdom:** 3  
**Virtue:** Fortitude  
**Vice:** Wrath  
**Initiative:** 7  
**Defense:** 4  
**Speed:** 13  
**Health:** 10  
**Gnosis:** 5  
**Arcana:** Fate 2, Forces 4, Life 3, Prime 4, Space 1, Time 1  
**Roles:** *Fate* — Interconnections (•), Exceptional Luck (••); *Forces* — Nightsight (•), Burst of Speed (•••); *Life* — Self Healing (••); *Space* — Omnivision (•)  
**Mana/per turn:** 14/5  
**Armor:** 4 ("Unseen Shield," Forces ••)  
**Magic Shield:** 4 (Prime ••)

## Scelesti

Many of New England's mages are good people who use their magic for just causes. And then there are the Scelesti.

The mages who carefully followed the "Wicked" Legacy (see **Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 362-363) see to it that they fall through the cracks or hide in plain sight. They are Awakened monsters, using their control of the Arcana for heinous purposes. While every basket has a few bad eggs, the deliberate malice of New England's Scelesti cause Boston's Awakened to wonder if they got the *worst* eggs.

Scelesti masters don't so much seek out apprentices as they *seduc*e them into the study of Accursed magic, and their seduction tactics seem to be working all too well.

## Lurking in the Hinterlands

There is little reason for Scelesti to set themselves up as urban mages. On the contrary, there are many reasons for the Accursed to place themselves in the less populous places between the cities.

The dark woods of New England, from Connecticut up into Maine, are ideal hiding grounds for Scelesti who have been rendered unsightly by some aspect of their service to the Abyss. They may have mutilated themselves horribly in the name of their lord, or the thing they worship may have "rewarded" them with an appearance that would never pass in civilized company.

Some of the Accursed, even those who have rendered themselves unmistakably freakish, may find small towns more hospitable than cities. Small towns often lack the collection of mages that tend to cluster in urban centers. Small towns allow for greater privacy and easier secret-keeping than do more populous cities. Screams in a city bring police; screams in the wilderness bring no one. The Scelesti like it that way.

So long as a Scelestus can maintain an appearance of virtue (regardless of his actual behavior), it's not difficult to masquerade as a pillar of the community among the yokels. Ironically, small towns can also be more humane places for a disfigured mage. If the Scelestus has a plausible explanation for his repulsive appearance, most people are only too eager to extend pity to the deformed as a gesture of magnanimity. "Oh, yeah, that guy with the freaky eyes is Richie Durham's boy. He went on down to Boston for a while to have some doctors look him over, but they never could find a cure for him, poor guy. I keep meaning to find out more about his condition. Maybe there's a charity I could give a couple bucks to." Deformed or mutilated Scelesti have frequently been known to masquerade as war veterans as a ploy to explain their appearance while simultaneously setting themselves up for pity and, with luck, charity from their fellow townsfolk.

A handful of solitary Scelesti masters have established themselves in the hinterlands of Massachusetts. They make occasional forays into Boston when looking for mages suitable for apprenticeship. When recruiting, the Scelesti never lay all their cards on the table at once. They get their foot in the door and only reveal the true weight of the Scelesti curse when the apprentice has come too far to turn back.

## Blood of the Lamb

**Quote:** *Did that hurt? Yeah, I bet it did. I can see it in your eyes. How about this?*

**Background:** Joe was always a bad kid. He was always drawn to bad people and bad places. In his adolescence, he fell in with what his family called "a rough crowd," and it was then that he learned the rudiments of crime. His intensely religious parents came down on him hard after he was arrested for armed robbery. When he was in the detention home, he learned more than he ever imagined about criminal behavior. When Joe got out, his parents pushed him toward the priesthood as a means of escaping his "criminal nature." It didn't work. Joe became obsessed with the cannibalistic symbolism of the Communion while in the seminary and talked about it until it got him kicked out of the novitiate. He saw his Awakening not as an opportunity to turn over a new leaf but as an opportunity to be bad in whole new ways: he sought out the most wayward mentor he could find, and he became one of the Scelesti as soon as his understanding of magic allowed him to do so. Joe gets a rush from inflicting pain on others, especially in sexual situations. The women he picks up in bars typically wind up being first his sex partners, then his victims. He's been a murderer for years now, and he's adept at using magic to cover up his crimes.

Part of what makes Joe so dangerous is his knowledge of those who might interfere with him. Whenever someone is getting close to catching Joe, he begins dreaming about them, about where they live, about how much they know — thus far he's always had enough forewarning to kill his hunters before they get too close.



**Description:** The Blood of the Lamb looks like any average Joe: average build, dark blond hair, hazel eyes, dressed in jeans and a baby-blue polo shirt. Wherever he goes, he dresses to blend in.

His Nimbus appears as barbed wire wrapped around his every limb, cutting deep and causing him to bleed.

**Storytelling Hints:** Joe is a sociopath, liar, stalker, serial rapist, serial killer and a skilled enough manipulator that he can make people like him, even if they know what he's done. He's capable of manipulating others without even trying. His emotional state is whatever he needs it to be to get what he's after. He can feign wide-eyed love, abject shame, heartfelt repentance or anything else that suits his situation. He's adept at talking his way out of situations. Often, he's not even aware of just how manipulative he really is.

**Dedicated Magical Tool:** Pocket mirror (a woman's compact)

**Real Name:** Joseph Beal

**Path:** Thyrsus

**Order:** Apostate

**Legacy:** Scelesti

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 5, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Religion) 4, Computer 1, Investigation 1, Medicine (Anatomy) 2, Occult (Satanism) 2,

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 4, Brawl (Dirty Tricks) 4, Drive 2, Larceny (Lockpicking) 4, Stealth (Moving in Darkness) 5, Survival 1, Weaponry 1

**Social Skills:** Animal Ken 3, Expression (Drama) 3, Persuasion 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge (Lying) 4

**Merits:** Dream 4, Iron Stomach, Occultation 3, Quick Healer, Resources 2, Sanctum 2, Toxin Resistance

**Willpower:** 8

**Wisdom:** 2

**Virtue:** Faith

**Vice:** Gluttony

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 12

**Health:** 9

**Gnosis:** 4

**Arcana:** Life 5, Mind 3, Prime 2, Spirit 1

**Roles:** *Life* — Control Median Life (••), Enfeeblement (•••), Trigger the Lizard Brain (••••); *Mind* — Sense Consciousness (•), Alter Aura (••), Emotional Urging (••), First Impressions (••), Imposter (•••); *Prime* — Supernal Vision (•), Counterspell Prime (••)

**Legacy Attainments:** "Transform Base Life" (Life ••) at will; no Mana cost or risk of Paradox

**Mana/per turn:** 13/4

**Armor:** 5 ("Organic Resilience," Life ••)

## *The Seers of the Throne*

Left to their own devices, the Seers of the Throne would love to nothing more than to destroy Boston's Consilium utterly or, failing that, pull out of Boston altogether. Much to their chagrin, they can do neither.

The first course is entirely impossible; the Ebon Noose learned hard lessons from the destruction of the Stone Assembly and keeps close tabs on known Seers and their territory. Consequently, the Seers have become much more insular and independent since the Noose's rise to power. While the Seers feel quite strongly that they, as the foremost servants of the Exarchs, *should* easily be able to best a Consilium of common mages, the fact is, they, like most local mages, fear the Secret Concord.

On the other hand, Harvard is the Seers' favorite (and most powerful) tool for controlling the American leadership class, and they have no intention of giving it up. Outside of Harvard's Psychomimetic Operations and a couple of cabals in very low-key corporate offices, Seers maintain a presence in Boston largely as monitors (i.e., spies) and skirmishers.

Many of the Seers of the Throne working in Boston feel vulnerable to the mages of Boston's Consilium. The Seers are outnumbered, and they know it. Some take great pains to keep tabs on the Consilium; others keep a low profile or happily ignore the Consilium while exploiting Boston and its magical and mundane resources as much as possible. All in all, the Seers of the Throne have three major cabals in the Boston area and a number of smaller cabals.

Boston's Seers could not withstand a concerted strike against them by Boston's Consilium mages, but the Seers also believe that the reverse is true if all the Seers pylons were to coordinate against the Consilium — an unlikely occurrence thanks to their mutual paranoia of one another. Consequently, the Seers of the Throne see to it that their operations in Boston are carried out with unusual subtlety and discretion.

Even the mages of Psychomimetic Operations enjoy a degree of protection from the hallowed ivory tower barriers of Harvard. Dr. Kether and her pylon observe a fairly broad degree of control over their efforts on the Exarch's behalf. Other pylons envy them. They, in turn, fear and loathe the other two pylons (respectively). These are the subtle mages of the Asylum and the extremely *unsubtle* mages of Scorpio.

## *The Asylum*

The Asylum is both a place and the name of the pylon that runs that place, a place of despair and the mages who spread that

despair. It is Boston's reigning pylon and, technically, outranks the other two pylons, meaning — theoretically — that members of the Asylum are more likely to have more direct knowledge of the Exarchs. This is certainly the impression of the other two pylons. While the shadowy mages of the Asylum may deploy other mages or even other cabals as the Asylum sees fit, the Asylum's rarely, if ever, personally involve themselves in conflict. The Asylum's members expect to be the ones who rid the city of the Ebon Noose and the White Putnams — but this pylon do it through the hands and magics of others.

The Asylum conducts a quiet war on Consilium mages. Tactical applications of Fate and Time magic ensure that the Asylum has an uncanny — and terrifying — knack for being where Boston's mages least want them to be: during a Paradox backlash, approaching right as a mage passes out from loss of blood or any time a solitary, overly curious, mage is poking her nose where it doesn't belong.

The Asylum typically overwhelms its targets with numbers. Three or four powerful Asylum mages will converge on a tired, wounded or otherwise compromised mage and launch a massive assault using Mind magic. A solitary mage might defend against one or even two such attacks, but the Asylum knows quite well just how much force to apply to drop a mage.

The Asylum is obsessed with isolating the portion of the brain responsible for Awakening. Those mages it abducts are often subjected to a barrage of tests, both magical and mundane, as the members of the Asylum use their victims as research subjects. The mind, the body and the soul are all fair game to these mages, and, whether they acknowledge the fact or not, most Consilium mages are terrified of the Asylum. In particular, Anacaona de Xaragua of the Ebon Noose has a particular dislike for the Asylum because it represents a threat to the Consilium that she has not yet been able to neutralize.

The mages of the Asylum are experienced and capable. Their leader is a nigh-legendary Seer called the Gray Pope, a shadow name that elicits both fear and respect from other mages.

*The Asylum (Sanctum Size ●●●●●, Security ●●●●●, Hallow ●●●)*

In downtown Boston, within mere blocks of the commonwealth's capitol, is a grand old building constructed at the end of the 19th century. The structure's conservative architecture belies the intense nature of the magic that takes place inside.

## Story Hook — Into the Belly of the Beast

After a pitched battle against the Seers of the Throne, the characters are forced to retreat, sans one or more members. The characters learn later (through Contacts, Allies or perhaps a Mentor or even Familiar) that the missing member(s) have been taken by the Asylum for "deprogramming."

The Asylum is an unknown to Boston's mages. They've heard rumors of the place and what Seers of the Throne do to Boston's mages there, but Boston Awakened have no idea where the Asylum is, how to get in or what to expect once they're

inside. They can only hope that the reports they've heard are exaggerated, but all of the stories they've heard share one thing in common: the deprogrammers of the Asylum work very quickly, so time is of the essence. In this kind of adventure, the Storyteller may want to determine a timeline for just how long deprogramming takes. If the characters get there in time, their colleague(s) will be fine. If the characters are late, things might suddenly get *much* more complicated.

### *The Gray Pope*

**Quote:** Although your idealistic nature might tell you otherwise, you're not doing yourself any favors by supporting the losing side. Whatever your life is like now, we can offer you something better.

**Background:** Born into one of Boston's pre-eminent Brahmin families, Charles Penn was a child of extreme privilege. His every whim was provided for, and quite lavishly at that. When he Awakened at his preparatory school, he realized he had an edge over his rivals unlike anything they'd ever known. Penn attended Harvard, where he almost immediately came to the attention of the Seers of the Throne. They courted him, flattered him and, ultimately, secured his loyalty by providing the best magical training his money and their contacts could buy.

**Description:** The Gray Pope is a well-dressed, physically fit man who is graying around the temples. His suits are flawlessly tailored; his shoes are shined and he could just as easily be the CEO of a Fortune 500 company as a powerful mage leading a shadowy crusade on behalf of the Exarchs.

His Nimbus manifests as eight shadowy, robed men looming in a half-circle around and behind him, watching impassively, their features impossible to make out.

**Storytelling Hints:** The Gray Pope operates behind the scenes. His mastery of the Space Arcanum makes direct involvement unnecessary. Early in a chronicle, he may be the puppeteer behind Boston's Seers of the Throne pylons. Later on, Penn and the powerful pylon he leads at the Asylum may become the characters' arch-enemies, and deadly ones at that.

The Gray Pope is a grandmaster in the games of the Awakened. He has supped with the magical elite of Europe and Asia and has skills to humble any lesser mage. He is secretive, subtle and cunning. Only a truly extraordinary foe (or a cabal of them) will have even a slight chance against him, and he's clever enough to make the very most of his every strategic advantage (magical and mundane), to make his will (and the will of the Exarchs), manifest in the world.

**Dedicated Magical Tool:** Iron wand

**Real Name:** Charles Randolph Penn III

**Path:** Mastigos

**Order:** Seers of the Throne

**Legacy:** Subtle One

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 5, Wits 3, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 4, Manipulation 5, Composure 5





**Mental Skills:** Academics (Research) 5, Computer (Data Retrieval) 3, Investigation 3, Occult (Magic) 4, Politics (Bribery) 3, Science 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Drive (High Performance Cars) 4, Larceny 1, Stealth (Crowds) 5

**Social Skills:** Empathy 3, Expression (Speeches) 3, Intimidation 2, Persuasion (Sales Pitches) 5, Socialize (High Society) 5, Subterfuge 5

**Merits:** Allies 3, Contacts (FBI, City Government, Academia, Hit Men), Destiny 4 (Bane: "The boy king."), Dream 3, Eidetic Memory, Encyclopedic Knowledge, Hallow (Shared) 3, High Speech, Library (Cryptids, UFOs, Atlantis, Magical Warfare and Strategy, Geomancy), Occultation 3, Resources 5, Sanctum (Shared) 10, Sleepwalker Retainer, Status (Seers of the Throne) 4

**Willpower:** 9

**Wisdom:** 6

**Virtue:** Pride

**Vice:** Prudence

**Initiative:** 8

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 10

**Health:** 9

**Gnosis:** 7

**Arcana:** Death 2, Fate 2, Life 2, Mind 5, Prime 3, Space 5

**Roles:** *Death* — Forensic Gaze (•), Grim Sight (•), Soul Marks (•), Animate Shadows (••), Corpse Mask (••), Entropic Guard (••), Suppress Aura (••); *Fate* — Interconnections (•), The Sybil's Sight (•), Exceptional Luck (••), The Evil Eye (••), Fortune's Protection (••); *Life* — Self Healing (••); *Mind* — Sense Consciousness (•), Aura Perception (•), Third Eye (•), Alter Aura (•), First Impressions (••), Incog-



nito Presence (••), Memory Hole (••), Mental Shield (••), Misperception (••), Augment the Mind (••), Imposter (••), Multi-Tasking (••), Sleep of the Just (••), Telepathy (••), Universal Language (••), Breach the Vault of Memory (••), Hallucination (••), Read the Depths (••), Psychic Sword (••), Psychic Domination (••), Network (••), Psychic Reprogramming (••); *Prime* — Discern Phantasm (•), Supernal Vision (•), Magic Shield (•), Controlled Dispellation (••); *Space* — Correspondence (•), Omnivision (•), Spatial Map (•), Scrying (•), Untouchable (•), Ward (•), Ban (••), Ranged Blow (••), Portal (••), Suspension (••), Labyrinth (••)

**Legacy Attainments:** 1<sup>st</sup> — The Subtle Dance, 2<sup>nd</sup> — False Pretense, 3<sup>rd</sup> — Occlude the Mind

**Mana/per turn:** 20/7

**Armor:** 5 ("Misperception," Mind ••)

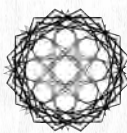
**Magic Shield:** 3 (Prime ••)

*Scorpio*

The newest Seer pylon at work in Boston is Scorpio: Strategic Corps Invasion Operatives, the hawks in the local Seer ranks and, in theory, their shock troops. Scorpio is commonly compared to the Adamantine Arrow because of the martial nature of their magic — although the pylon seems intent on using magic with a disregard for Paradox that even diehard Arrow mages find inexplicable.

Scorpio patterns itself after a paramilitary unit, and its members are extraordinarily disciplined. The group typically targets lone mages and weak cabals; it often secures its victories through the advantage of surprise. The cabal conducts training on an ongoing basis to keep their skills finely honed.

Conflicts with Scorpio have only begun breaking out recently, leading local mages to wonder if the Seers are growing emboldened and perhaps intend to carve a larger niche for themselves somewhere in Boston.



They're too comfortable and quickly losing their edge.



Sometimes excess is the best approach.





The ranking mage in the pylon is John Law, an Obrimos mage with a well-known chip on his shoulder with regard to the Consilium.

*Sting Base One (Sanctum  
Size ●●●, Security ●●●●;  
Hallow ●●)*

The mages of Scorpio share a well-appointed sanctum in Boston's South End, a former church building sold in the late '80s by the Catholic Church to pay for lawsuits. Not only is the structure solidly built, but the place has been equipped with extraordinarily technical security systems that make the building particularly difficult to break into.

The interior of the building has been entirely redone. Although it retains the stained-glass windows of the original structure, everything else about the place suggests a high-end law enforcement or military compound. Among other things, Scorpio keeps a small arsenal in the basement containing such implements as blocks of C4 explosive, automated assault rifles, grenade launchers and portable rocket launchers.

A minor (2-point) Hallow flows up inside, although the resonance has been fouled by the violent emotions of the members of Scorpio.

*John Law*

**Quote:** Drop or burn, spellboy!



**Background:** Something of a bully in high school, John

Lazaretti had no qualms about strong-arming others to get his way. When he went into the air force, he used the same old playbook, although he quickly learned to suck up to officers to get what he wanted. When he awakened, Lazaretti's initial response was anger, as if he'd been tricked for most of his life.

After leaving the air force, he went back to Boston's North End, where he was recruited into the Seers of the Throne. His superiors have yet to determine if John Law has real potential or if he's just cannon fodder. His reputation for going vulgar with his magic is nudging some of his cabalmates toward the latter opinion.

**Description:** With olive skin, black hair and a classically Roman nose, there's no mistaking John Law for anything but Italian. He dresses well, but leaves the top three buttons of his shirt open to show off the dense hair on his chest.

His Nimbus manifests as heat emanating from his body, like an oven.

**Storytelling Hints:** John Law is vain and aggressive. He approaches any situation with the intent of coming away the winner.

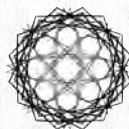
**Dedicated Magical Tool:** Army dog tags

**Real Name:** John Lazaretti

**Path:** Obrimos

**Order:** Seers of the Throne

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 5, Resolve 3



They're getting so wrapped up in their little research projects that they're forgetting why they're here.



Creepy spooks who could further the cause a lot more if they'd show some balls and do some magic for a change.



**Physical Attributes:** Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5  
**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Academics 1, Computer 1, Investigation 1, Medicine 1, Occult (Witchcraft) 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 4, Brawl 3, Drive 2, Firearms 3, Larceny 1, Stealth 1, Weaponry (Improvised Weapons) 4

**Social Skills:** Expression 1, Intimidation 3, Socialize 1, Streetwise (Rumors) 2, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Danger Sense, Disarm, Allies (Asylum mages 3), Contacts (Law Enforcement, Street People), Resources 2, Sanctum (Shared) 7

**Willpower:** 5

**Wisdom:** 5

**Virtue:** Justice

**Vice:** Pride

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 13

**Health:** 10

**Gnosis:** 4

**Arcana:** Death 2, Forces 4, Prime 2, Space 3

**Rotes:** *Death* — Corpse Mask (••), Decay (••), Entropic Guard (••); *Forces* — Nightsight (•), Unseen Shield (••), Control Electricity (•••), Control Fire (•••), Levitation (•••), Personal Invisibility (•••), Sound Mastery (•••), Telekinesis (•••), Telekinetic Strike (•••); *Prime* — Counterspell Prime (••); *Space* — Spatial Awareness (•), Spatial Map (•), Scrying (••), Untouchable (••), Ranged Blow (••), Portal (••)

**Mana/per turn:** 13/4

**Armor:** 4 ("Unseen Shield," Forces ••)

## Plot Hook — Scorpio Rising

For decades, the Awakened of Boston's Consilium have more than held their own against the relatively mild attacks of the Seers of the Throne. That era has come to an end.

Members of Scorpio, the Seers of the Throne's more violent faction, have come to power. The Harvard symposium has granted carte blanche to Scorpio, a squadron of elite mages, to deal with the Consilium as they see fit. John Law, Scorpio's leader, is not content playing second fiddle to the Consilium mages, and he's more than willing to take a few losses if it means claiming Boston and its resources for the Exarchs. Tired of the long-running cold war between the Seers and Boston's other Awakened, John Law and the mages of Scorpio flatly reject the subtle means used to wipe out the Stone Assembly nearly a century ago in favor of the more violent approach, even where it means suffering Paradoxes. Mages who may have been

lulled into a sense of complacency now find themselves confronted on a regular basis by the raw power of the Exarchs' more zealous pawns. Storytellers might be inclined to use this story if

the characters have overly specialized in subtlety, or if they've shown a propensity to go vulgar with their casting on a regular basis.

## Tremere

Like most mages, the mages of the Tremere Legacy find something alluring about Boston and its environs. Among other things, the relative plenitude of mages represents a potential for finding new apprentices, not to mention a feast of souls for the eldest of the liches.

Unlike certain other renegades, the liches do not have a single bastion of power to work from. They did once, but the mages of Boston denied them that luxury just over a decade ago. Now the soul-thieves find themselves both fearful and lacking focus. Without a focus to rally around, they're willing to keep a low profile — at least until they can re-establish themselves — but the mages of Boston have no intention of making that easy on them.

## The Old Kingdom

In common parlance (on those rare occasions when they speak to each other), those following the Tremere Legacy in the Boston area make passing reference to "the old (or fallen) kingdom" and "the new kingdom." While grand, this terminology is ironic (at best) and suggests that the Tremere may be suffering from delusions of past grandeur. The old kingdom refers to the Tremere's old base of power in Danvers, north of Boston, which has been defunct for over a decade. It is sometimes called the fallen kingdom because, while still a Stygian Demesne, it has been abandoned and is largely out of play at the moment. When the liches talk about "the new kingdom" they're talking about the Tremere's operations in Boston, which is wholly misleading since the new kingdom is more a dream than any territory they've actually claimed. Most of the Tremere's "new kingdom" is the result of one mage's efforts, and she's none too interested in sharing her "kingdom" with any other mage, Tremere or otherwise.

The Tremere are scattered and have been since 1992, when they lost their base of power. Most of those remaining from the shattering of the old kingdom can be found along the Massachusetts coast north of Boston, some spilling over into the southernmost reaches of New Hampshire. The liches remaining in the area prefer their solitude and haven't shown much capacity for organized action in the last few years; although if the four of them worked together, they could definitely be a force to be reckoned with. Most of the Tremere liches who used to be active within the Danvers Asylum have left the area to find less competitive hunting grounds, while others have succumbed to soul hunger and died. In the Boston area at least, the somewhat single-minded competition for souls prevents them from cooperating to any great degree, and, that in itself, combined with rigorous policing by the Consilium — and the aggressively territorial nature of the one Tremere who *has* established herself in Boston — has been enough to keep them from making much headway.

## Danvers

The Boston-area Tremere experienced something of a golden age from the latter portion of the 19th century up to the last

decade of the 20th. This was due in part to their own cooperation and to mistakes made by Boston's guiding mages. Toward the end of the Stone Assembly's long reign, Boston's nigh-legendary founding cabal grew decadent, complacent and somewhat lax with regard to policing areas around Boston, particularly to the north (which they felt was defended by the relatively thick population of witches that extended south from Salem).

An old Tremere lich, using his training as a psychiatrist, settled into the Danvers Lunatic Asylum, and there he took apprentices. Some of those he taught were disgruntled members of the Ebon Noose; others were Moros mages from afar whom he knew to be prime candidates for the Tremere Legacy. In time, his apprentices took their own apprentices, and, with all the madmen held in the asylum, there was never a shortage of souls on which to feast, and no one seemed to be able to tell the difference between a lunatic *with* a soul and one without. At the peak of the "old kingdom" from the middle to the end of the 20th century, there were an unprecedented 12 liches operating out of the Danvers Asylum.

With time to develop and strong motivation to cooperate, the Tremere forged for themselves a solid foothold in Danvers. Initially, their efforts were subtle and unseen by the mages of either Boston or Salem, but, by the turn of the century, the liches had such a presence in "the castle" that nothing but a large-scale campaign would dislodge them.

### *The Danvers Lunatic Asylum*

As if the horror of the witch trials weren't enough to haunt Danvers, a new source of dread arrived to plague the land beginning in 1878. On top of Hathorne Hill in Danvers (the modern name of Salem Village) — once been the home of Johnathan Hathorne (the most fanatical and malicious of the witch trial judges) — commonwealth officials built the Danvers Lunatic Hospital for the Criminally Insane. Construction began in 1874 and the facility, a Domestic Gothic masterpiece of red Danvers brick, was completed in 1878. It was to be a place of serenity for those whose minds had cracked, but instead it became a malignant place where the ghost of Johnathan Hathorne had free access to the helpless minds of the mad. His restless spirit took grim pleasure in tormenting the madmen (and madwomen) imprisoned in the asylum. As patients succumbed to Hathorne's despairing whispers, they took their own lives, becoming ghosts themselves trapped in the place of their demise, enslaved by the older and more powerful Hathorne.

Dr. Arturo Calabresi, a powerful Necromancer lich, found the ghostly activity at Danvers attractive. He soon discovered that feeding on the souls of the mad was the simplest thing in the world. If they ranted to a visiting relative that the doctor was devouring them, their comments were easily ignored or explained away as the random babblings of lunacy. And if the mad went catatonic or died strangely young, well, that was the way of things, tragic as it was.

The unrelenting propriety (or squeamishness) of the Victorian age all but ensured that no one asked uncomfortable questions if the inmates of the asylum seemed to perish young on a regular basis. That, after all, was known to be but one of the many tragic fates of the mad.

Calabresi enslaved the ghost of Hathorne and established himself as the cruel master of the Asylum. Calabresi invited fellow Moros mages, including those in Europe and others who

had already arrived in America, to join him in immortality by studying the Tremere Legacy in his horrible kingdom; a number of them took him up on his offer. Together they established a cabal, which they called Dark Crossings, based out of the asylum.

The initial handful who came to America were not just willing but eager to work together to create a Demesne where the magic of Death was ascendant. With Mind, Spirit and Death magic bolstering their efforts, the Tremere all but took over the Danvers Lunatic Asylum and held it as their own wretched fiefdom.

Due to the unsophisticated state of psychiatry at the time, the Danvers Lunatic Asylum took in a strange range of patients from schizophrenics, alcoholics and the retarded to rebellious children, senior citizens with dementia and otherwise-well-adjusted homosexuals whose embarrassed families wanted them "cured." For patients, the Danvers Lunatic Asylum was a legally sanctioned oubliette; for the Tremere who had claimed it as their own, it was a banquet of souls.

By the middle of the 20th century, overcrowding was rampant at the Asylum. The recovery rate was low and the death rate was high, but new patients never stopped arriving. Designed to hold 600 patients, its patient population swelled as high as 2,600. It was a snake pit where the insane or unmanageable were sent to disappear. To keep the death rate up, the Tremere sold feeding rights to powerful vampires in exchange for money and political favors.

The Dark Crossings cabal was easily the equal of any cabal in the region (including the Ebon Noose). As many as 12 Tremere operated from the Danvers Lunatic Asylum at its peak in the early '60s, and they fed as they needed to from the asylum's patients.

Sleepers who crossed the keepers of the Asylum found themselves violently haunted and their secrets made public through the work of spying ghosts. Mages who crossed the Tremere wound up targeted for predation by the Tremere soul thieves.

The liches regularly warded their Demesne against scrying and other magic from the outside. This served them well later on when the mages of Boston became aware of the problems in the Asylum — and found they could do little without venturing to Danvers personally.

Almost from the day of its completion, the residents of Danvers have called the Danvers Asylum "the castle." No other title is nearly so apropos. The extensive complex of wards and halls sweeps back symmetrically from the main building like the wings of a giant bat. Residents of the town of Danvers, while not particularly sensitive to the spirit world, can still feel the miasma of death about the place and shun the area as cursed.

The Tremere hegemony over the asylum lasted until the commonwealth closed down their playground in 1992 after the press began reporting the abuses and horrors that the patients suffered. This wasn't a random closing by any means, but the result of a concerted effort by the White Putnams, who feared that the gross excesses of the Tremere would lead to a massive exposure of the Awakened if discovered.

The Asylum's funding was shut down, its patients were released or assigned to other facilities and the building itself was left abandoned. The Tremere were furious. They had won most of the battles and still lost the war. With their extensively warded and highly haunted stronghold taken from them in one



fell swoop, the grip of the liches was broken. Forced to venture out of the asylum, they were no longer protected by the wards they had put in place. Suddenly exposed, the Tremere were much easier targets, and the cooperation among the liches crumbled in the face of attacks by Boston's mages.

Like any predator with an endless food supply, the Tremere had glutted themselves and grown too large to maintain their numbers once a normal state of affairs was brought into being. Dr. Calabresi went westward; some of Calabresi's apprentices left with him, but others stayed in the area and learned to feed with greater discretion. The Dark Crossings cabal splintered, though its remaining members still occasionally work together. Any mage on the Moros path who seeks immortality can certainly find it around Danvers if he knows whom to ask. A number of the death mages, mostly the younger apprentices who didn't know what to expect elsewhere, simply went underground.

The Tremere would love nothing so much as to re-open and reclaim the Danvers asylum, but they know that that's not feasible now, and possibly never. The grounds are slated for demolition. (Whether this occurs in the real world or not, the asylum could continue to exist, abandoned, in the World of Darkness.) The Tremere sometimes make pilgrimages to the site, and will continue to do so even if the place is bulldozed. While many of the ghosts have been exorcised and most of its protective wards have been destroyed or simply abandoned for too long, the place is still a Demesne, particularly the basement beneath the two farthest wings (where the violent patients were kept). Not coincidentally, this is also where the four remaining soul stones lie, hidden underground; their owners either fled before collecting them or were killed by Boston mages. (The soul stones might not be destroyed by possible construction on the grounds. Indeed, they might be sealed away and hidden under new concrete.)

## Braving the Asylum

Given the political and magical realities of the city, the mages of Boston have yet to fully deal with the potential threat presented by the Danvers Asylum.

The Ebon Noose knows the Danvers Asylum needs to be tended to, but doing so will require *at least* one full cabal of mages, and it will be dangerous. The Danvers Asylum, or large portions of it (notably the basements and tunnels linking them), remains a haunt and a Stygian Demesne. More importantly, it remains a nexus for the local Tremere. To rectify that situation, a cabal (or two) of mages will need to enter the

Danvers Asylum and perform extensive countermagical rituals against the accretion of dark old magic, exorcisms against ghost anchors and, ideally, blessings to undo the Tremere's dark taint. This will not be easy.

The Danvers Asylum is truly and thoroughly infested with ghosts. They've been tormented by mages before and now despise the Awakened. The ghosts will be a danger to any cabal not anticipating their presence. For information on the powers of

ghosts in the World of Darkness, see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 208–216. For ideas on how to run a ghost story in the Danvers Asylum, check out **World of Darkness: Ghost Stories**.

## *The New Kingdom*

The so-called new kingdom of the Tremere consists primarily of the holdings of one mage, called Mama Desta by those who know her. This "kingdom" is a large swath of the poorest neighborhoods in Boston, in the predominantly black neighborhood of Roxbury. Her magely neighbors at the Dead Wrens' Emerald Scroll (see Mage: The Awakening, p. 389) and the Company's Shangri-La (p. 68) don't know she's a mage, although some of them are beginning to suspect that the local legends about her might be true. Even were they to investigate, it might take them a while before they realized her true affiliation as a Tremere lich.

Mama Desta does not come across as a lich. On the contrary, she's a slow-moving, somewhat rotund black woman with a quick smile and sturdy presence. Like any Tremere, however, she requires souls as sustenance, and these she can get without effort.

Most of those Mama Desta interacts with are children. For the children of Roxbury, most of whom come from single-parent or highly unstable homes, Mama Desta is the sole rock and comfort in what is otherwise a chaotic and hostile world. She also pays well for their services to her, a fact that makes her very popular in this impoverished neighborhood.

Mama Desta is probably the richest inhabitant of Roxbury, and she has used her power over ghosts to grow quite rich (though her ramshackle home certainly doesn't show it). Mama Desta is rich because she knows where the money was buried, who the players are and who has the blackmail information. Ghosts tell her everything they know, and, on the rare occasion when she can't get the information she needs from the dead, she's grown quite adept at extracting it from the living. Among other ploys, she's been known to put terminal illnesses into remission in exchange for large quantities of money or full confessions. No one ever questions where those diseases came from in the first place or why they seem so perfectly servile beneath her warm fingers.

The army that serves Mama Desta is mostly poor, mostly black and mostly under the age of 13. These children are her eyes, her mouth and her hands around Roxbury. They run her errands, deliver mysterious parcels from one place to another, represent her at neighborhood groups and in any number of other ways act as her agents around the city (but especially in Roxbury).

Parents can decline the arrangement between their child and Mama Desta, but rarely do. In exchange for the child's service, Mama Desta pays \$10 to \$30 every day. In the worst sections of Roxbury this adds up to enough money to pay a family's rent for a month. Children who bring others into Mama Desta's service get an additional \$50 bonus. Some of these children seem a little slow after a while, a little unfocused. This is because Mama Desta has consumed their souls. Their parents often attribute this to drug use or depression, and that's how Mama Desta likes it.

Mama Desta claims control over the children through the "mama bond." Forging the mama bond requires the child to

suckle at Mama Desta's breast while she performs a Space 3 "New Threads" spell, creating an Intimate sympathetic connection with the child. Once the child has been bonded, Mama Desta can easily use Mind and Space magic to scry through the child's eyes and ears and converse telepathically with the child.

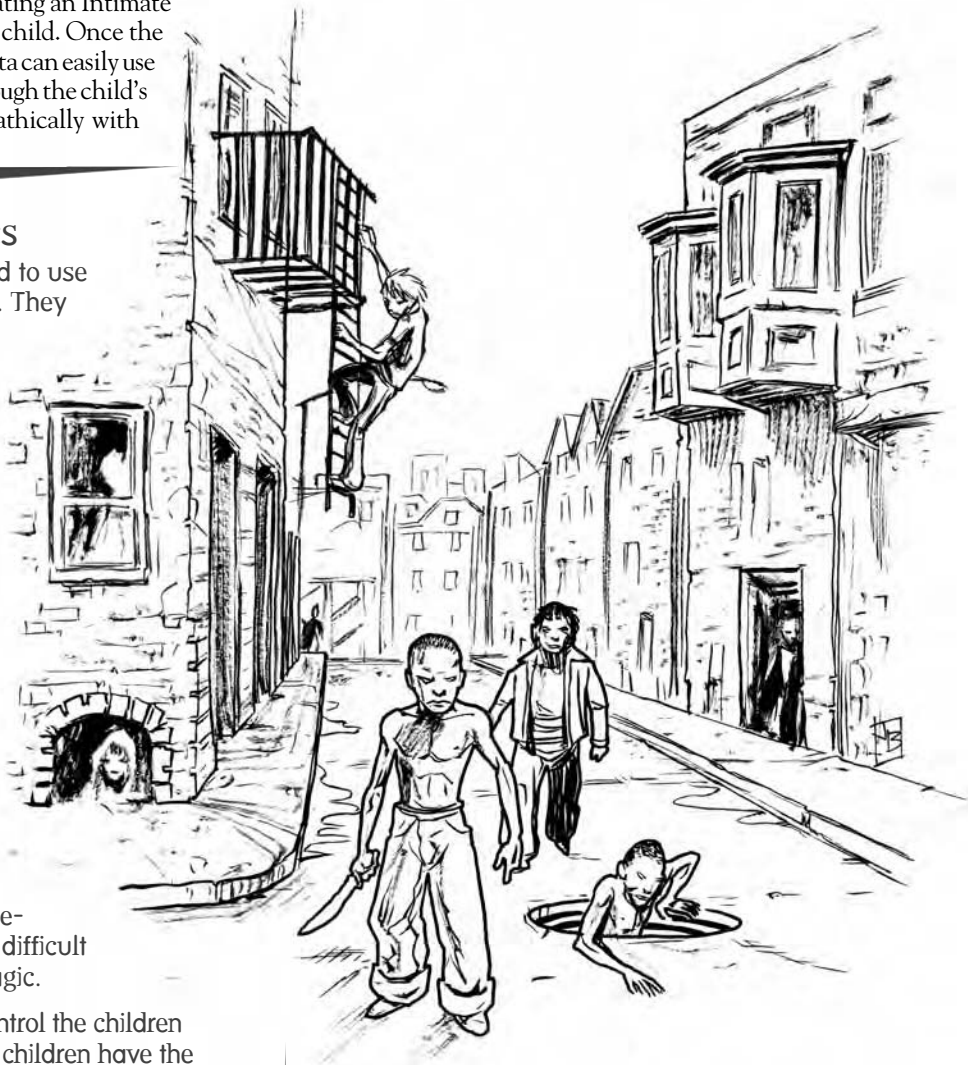
### Childish Tactics

Mama Desta has learned to use her children to great effect. They act like a mobile reconnaissance web for her. So long as one child is

located every two blocks or so, Mama can easily out her scrying eye anywhere in the neighborhood. The children are small and easily overlooked. Through their link, the children also provide Mama with the benefit of multiple perspectives on a single target. One might be watching the target from a storefront, another from a rooftop and a third might be walking down the street with an ice cream cone.

Giving them the slip, consequently, is extraordinarily difficult without the use of magic.

Mama can also easily control the children through telepathy. While children have the pronounced drawback of being small and relatively fragile, they also benefit from the advantage of appearing harmless. Most adults, mages included, are unlikely to see a pack of children as a threat until falling to the ground with their Achilles tendons cut. The mental link shared by the children allows for flawlessly integrated pack tactics. Mama Desta's children also benefit, at least initially, from adults' unwillingness to harm children. The children are masters of appearing innocuous until they draw their weapons.



all she could manage. Her only skills were in caretaking, and these she put to use up at the Danvers Asylum. She was quickly assigned a Tremere teacher, and the lich soon conned the young woman out of her soul. Her children dead and her soul lost to a mage, Mama Desta had nothing to devote her life to but magic, and she learned well. For two decades, Destin  studied with the Tremere of Danvers Asylum, but, when the place was closed in the '90s, she cut her ties with the Dark Crossings cabal entirely and became a free agent in Boston. She knew how to use the dead to get secrets that could make even rich white men do her bidding, and she has been honing her small empire ever since.

**Description:** Mama Desta is a rotund black woman with a perpetual smile on her face. While that smile is often kind, it can become menacing in the space of an instant.

Her Nimbus manifests as the groaning and moaning of zombies.

**Storytelling Hints:** Mama Desta is the spider at the center of a web. She rarely leaves her posh Roxbury abode, preferring to have her many children do everything for her. While she knows exactly what she has become, Mama Desta doesn't necessarily think of herself as evil. Many residents of Roxbury

### Mama Desta

**Quote:** *If you're nice to Mama, she can make things much better for both you and your brother's ghost.*

**Background:** Destin  Pr zeau arrived from Haiti in the early '70s, recently Awakened on the Moros Path and consumed by grief by the death of her two children from disease. It was a bad time for her, and it was a bad time for Boston. The section of



would describe her as anything *but* evil, although they don't necessarily know the whole truth behind the woman.

**Dedicated Magical Tool:** Dog's rib

**Real Name:** Destin   Pr  zeau

**Path:** Moros

**Order:** Apostate

**Legacy:** Tremere

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 5, Manipulation 5, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Investigation (Riddles) 3, Medicine 1, Occult (Ghosts) 5

**Physical Skills:** Brawl 1, Drive 3, Firearms 2, Larceny 1

**Social Skills:** Empathy (Lies) 4, Intimidation (Veiled Threats) 4, Persuasion 3, Socialize 2, Streetwise 5, Subterfuge 3,

**Merits:** Allies (Roxbury Residents 4), Contacts (Drug Trade, Law Enforcement, Banking), Resources 4, Sanctum 4

**Willpower:** 7

**Wisdom:** 2

**Virtue:** Charity

**Vice:** Gluttony

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 8

**Health:** 8

**Gnosis:** 6

**Arcana:** Death 5, Matter 2, Mind 4, Prime 3, Space 3

**Notes:** *Death* — Soulmarks ( ), Speak With the Dead ( ), Ghost Summons ( ), Soul Jar ( ), Touch of the Grave ( ), Control Ghost ( ), Devouring the Slain ( ), Ghost Gate ( ), Sever the Sleeping Soul ( ), Devouring the Living ( ), Quicken Ghost ( ), Summon the Dead ( ); *Mind* — One Mind, Two Thoughts ( ), Incognito Presence ( ), Mental Shield ( ), Multi-Tasking ( ), Telepathy ( ), Telepathic Control ( ); *Space* — Correspondence ( ), Scrying ( ), Ward ( ), Multispatial Perception ( )

**Legacy Attainments:** 1<sup>st</sup> — Hideous Stipend, 2<sup>nd</sup> — Wicked Claim

**Mana/per turn:** 15/6

**Affector:** 5 ("Entropic Guard," Death  )

**Magic Shield:** 3 (Prime  )

### *Other Boston Tremere*

Mama Desta is a very territorial beast, and she is not keen on the idea of competition. On the contrary, she's as likely to hunt down visiting Tremere as are the city's Consilium mages. More than a few such visiting mages have come to Boston seeking to take advantage of its large Awakened population, only to fall prey to one of their own. Not only does she have her army of children watching over places likely to attract Tremere (cemeteries, for example), but she has ghosts reporting to her with the same frequency.

### Story Hook —

#### Mama Desta's Children

The Tremere-afflicted woman known as Mama Desta has a tight grip on the children of Roxbury. She sits in their heads, sees through their eyes and does her work with their small hands. However, their servitude to her is entirely voluntary in exchange for the money she pays them and the dreams she charms them with. If the characters try to disrupt this arrangement, they may find that not only are they meddling with the Tremere woman's plans, but with the lives and livelihood of those who serve her *and* their families. These families know nothing of the conflicts of the Awakened, the prevalence of the supernatural or Mama Desta's appetite for souls; all they know is that the characters are cutting them off from a relatively legitimate source of income. The characters may find the residents of Roxbury lining up against them *en masse* and possibly even threatening the Emerald Scroll, if there's any perceived link between the characters and that establishment. This is a good opportunity to remind players that just because a threat isn't Awakened, that doesn't make it any less of a threat.

### *Sleepers*

Most Sleepers present few problems for mages. As long as mages keep their magic secret, they have little to worry about. Some Sleepers, however, are curious and pry into matters best left alone.

### *Maggie Yang*

**Quote:** *That's a fantastic story. Tell me: what relationship, if any, does it have to the truth?*

**Background:** Maggie Yang never thought Boston would test her abilities. After Tiananmen Square, her passion for reporting steadily dulled. Over the next five years, she shambled through some of the most dangerous places in the world and responded with work that barely tested her considerable abilities. Finally, she decided to give up her craft and relax into a series of fluff freelance articles and part-time teaching at Harvard. This, she felt, was her consolation prize for living through the horrors of



1989, when she witnessed the wholesale massacre of Chinese pro-democracy activists. Now, Yang's fallen back into investigative journalism, but studies subjects so bizarre that, at this point, she's afraid none of it will ever see print.

That year in China earned her the respect normally due reporters twice her age, so she was able to demand any assignment she wanted. She surprised her editors with her choice: a series of lunch interviews with fairly banal Boston Brahmins and old-money types for the society pages.

Even though it was light work, she habitually tackled it with the vigor that most reporters would reserve for more serious subjects. This was how she managed to interview Chain Parris (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. XX), whom she knew as the organizer of an obscure, upper-crust prayer group. She and Parris immediately disliked each other, and lunch turned into a series of sniping exchanges that only made it into print after severe editing. One of Parris' broadsides about Yang being "nothing more than a tool of the old liars who run Harvard, anyway" piqued her curiosity.

Yang checked court records and discovered that over the past five years, Parris visited eight men and women accused of stealing or vandalizing Harvard property. Parris visited them all as a priest—and all of them were judged unfit for trial by reason of insanity. Five of them had no prior history of mental illness, and records of where each of them had been treated had simply vanished.

Over the past year, Yang has followed leads and leads springing from leads, to the point where she believes that Parris, his associates in Salem and even some of her colleagues at Harvard are part of a secret power struggle among superstitious cultists who, given the number of madmen tangentially involved, are probably involved in psychoactive drugs. Parris' "prayer group," neo-pagans, a splinter sect of Freemasons and Harvard's Greek letter societies are all involved in some obscure, life-destroying contest—but to what end? She intends to find out, but knows that the story is so strange that she needs allies, witnesses to come forward—anyone who can back her up or protect her from possible reprisals. She's had several close calls already, but the old intuition she developed dealing with Chinese security services

has resurfaced, allowing her to spot, with excellent accuracy, a tail or a spy.

**Description:** Maggie Yang is a slender woman with straight black hair and frameless glasses. She dresses practically, and her digital camera is never far from her side. With interviewees, Yang prefers incisive questions that provoke her subjects. This served her well when she interviewed diplomats and soldiers, but tends to offend the more genteel people she talks to during her current work.

**Age:** 37

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 3, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Academics (History) 4, Computer 2, Investigation (Journalism) 5, Medicine 1, Occult 2

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1, Drive 2, Stealth 2, Survival 1

**Social Skills:** Intimidation 2, Persuasion 3, Socialize 3, Subterfuge (Leading Questions) 4

**Merits:** Barfly, Contacts (High Society, Media, University), Danger Sense, Resources 1

**Willpower:** 8

**Morality:** 7

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Pride

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 7

## Story Hook — Meddling Maggie

Yang is not a plucky, naïve, idealistic reporter. She spent her 20s dodging secret police and writing in the middle of combat zones, so casual displays of power will surprise her but not dissuade her. She serves as an excellent foil of control for a cabal, because her presence reminds them that, Disbelief or not, they can't toss spells around without getting *some* Sleepers involved. She can also gather and share information with people willing to befriend her. She'll often use mundane methods to hunt down the facts that mages either overlook because of their own powers or just aren't trained to try out.

Unfortunately, befriendng Maggie Yang means that the characters may unwittingly help her reveal too much about the secret world. Seers of the Throne and Guardians of the Veil are the ones who are most likely to force her silence, but every mage has secrets he doesn't want plastered on the front page.

Finally, don't ignore her day job. Yang can connect characters to prominent members of Boston society (she's had lunch with many of them) and allow the characters into normally inaccessible parts of Harvard.





# OFF THE MAP

**Know, oh my brothers, that you do not reside in the place the false-minded call "Boston." Oh, no, for you know the truth: this is Rukhavira, the City of Broken Eyes. Why can't others see this? They have not read scripture. We will read it for them, and in so breathing the words, peel away the false history and reveal the true.**

**— Damian Ruskin, Boston stockbroker and officer in the Red Word cult**

Boston is layered with history. Buried in the weight of the past, secrets from Boston's pre-colonial and colonial history promise profits and threats to investigators.

The Massachusetts woods creep over forgotten ruins and strange colonies. Boston proper is a layered city, where the sediment of past cultures pack into a bedrock that isn't easily dislodged by the passing fads of the 21st century. Europeans came here with agendas that were variously devout, venal, hopeful and strange. One might say that Boston was founded on the twin pillars of faith and opportunity. These forces re-invent themselves endlessly in new cults, neuroses and values, but the forces can never truly extinguish the actions of the original settlers, the indigenous people who came before them and the convolutions of the land itself. Glacial retreat, settlement and the Big Dig all have arcane significance, adding new layers to the whole.

And, when forgotten, these ancient layers will give birth to nightmares to remind mages how deep the mine of history goes. In this scheme, mages are archaeologists, unearthing old wonder and horror, giving it a new facade and working their wills upon its untapped power.

## *The Bleached Schooner*

Boston's senior mages know the legend: if you stand before the lighthouse on Little Brewster Island and recite an original poem (as a teenage Ben Franklin did) in honor of long-drowned lighthouse keeper George Worthlake, the Bleached Schooner will enter your dreams on the following midnight. Mages who dream of it can go into the deep reaches of Astral Space. This folk ritual allows for collective dream journeys, with many

What do moderns know of life and the forces behind it? You call the Salem witchcraft a delusion, but I'll wager my four-times-great-grandmother could have told you things. They hanged her on Gallows Hill, with Cotton Mather looking sanctimoniously on. Mather, damn him, was afraid somebody might succeed in kicking free of this accursed cage of monotony — I wish someone had laid a spell on him or sucked his blood in the night!

— H. P. Lovecraft, "Pickman's Model"

magicians taking the same Schooner even though their bodies sleep far apart from one another, as long as each participant recites a collectively written poem in unison. Each participant must succeed at an extended Meditation roll (see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 51), with target number of eight successes to call the ship. (This bypasses the normal threshold for crossing to Astral Space, although each mage must still spend one Mana.) The ship silently appears in a vision of Boston Harbor. Characters may embark in any way their dream-logic allows.

This is not the only way to encounter the Bleached Schooner. American magicians sometimes spot it during their own astral excursions, where it either arrives in the nick of time to take them away from danger or drifts by, at a distance, as an omen of hardship or outright doom. In any case, the vessel is distinctive. Its timbers are unvarnished and rough, all white sun-baked driftwood, and its sails are tattered gossamer. It flies a gray, washed-out Union Jack and its figurehead wears a blindfold.

The ship has a crew of 14: one for each Virtue and Vice. The crew treat characters according to their temper, but never attack passengers. These entities take the forms of the drowned, those lost at sea or executed pirates from New England history, but always seem familiar to passengers, like barely remembered childhood friends. The captain might be invisible, concealed below decks or nonexistent. The crew often refers to his orders, but nobody has ever seen him. Below decks, the hold is empty and silent. Mysterious conjecture holds that the crew represent the potential paths of a mage's soul and that the captain is the elusive final enlightenment itself. Other magicians believe in a more prosaic answer: Boston's history as a port of call and a wellspring of revolution has imprinted itself on the collective unconscious, and the ship is the combined hopes and fears of travelers over the centuries.

Magicians cannot command the ship to sail to a specific destination; the crew ignores these requests. Instead, passengers must describe their hopes for the journey and the ultimate end they wish to achieve. Then, the ship sets sail into the Temenos (see **Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 283-284), bypassing its passengers' Oneiroi completely. Sometimes, these astral otherworlds will help magicians fulfill their stated desires. Sometimes, they even help magicians fulfill their true desires.

### *To Subtle Shores*

The Bleached Schooner travels the Temenos, the collective plane of Astral Space, akin to psychological theories of the collective unconscious.

The ship sails a circuit, slowing at the edge of a number of ports before returning to a dream of Boston Harbor. The crew

allows passengers to disembark, if they wish. It returns to pick them up in a day. The ship normally approaches three ports on a circuit; each one is a day or two apart, so dreaming travelers are advised to care for their bodies with magic or the ministrations of trusted allies. If the mage leaves the Astral Dream, she cannot return to the ship without reciting a new poem. The Schooner sails close enough to allow passengers to look upon the edges of a port.

A bosun typically tells a passenger the name of the place and a descriptive title, but nothing more. A typical description might be, "This is Yenosia, the wasteland of dead aspirations." Magicians have visited many different parts of the Temenos this way, but for the most part, the Bleached Schooner travels to three particular ports: Liberty Road, Yenosia and Antinomina.

The ship accepts repeat passengers and reveals more of its nature to them. Sometimes it picks up travelers from other parts of the world. The crew will not help or hinder violence between passengers, but anyone who tries to destroy the ship or mutiny against the authority of the crew is met with force and sent back to the material realm (with the loss of all his Willpower points).

Magicians may assist the crew with magic, but they cannot determine the ship's exact destination without a successful mutiny against the crew. No mage has ever succeeded in doing this. With that in mind, the Storyteller is free to determine the difficulty of this feat, after deciding on the possible purpose of the ship and the nature of the captain, if he truly exists.

### *Stowaways*

A passenger cannot sail through the potentials of the human soul without attracting attention from its natives. Beings from the Inner Realms sometimes try to hide in the Bleached Schooner to follow its passengers back to their individual souls. These beings have various ambitions, from peaceful entities who wish to temper a mage's wrath to inner demons who drive the Awakened to sully their own Wisdom. These are the equivalent of Goetic demons (see "Inner Demons," in **Mages: The Awakening**, pp. 323-325), but can represent Virtues as well as Vices.

Stowaways aboard the Bleached Schooner are less the spirits of individual souls than the representations of Virtues and Vices in the Temenos. These spirits cannot affect magicians who already nurture the same Virtues or Vices; that "space" in the mage's soul is already occupied by her personal passions. Stowaways use the "Possession" Numen (see **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 212.) to ride characters back to the material realm, where each acts on a signature Virtue or Vice when the opportunity arises. The spirit gains the Willpower points instead of the mage.



## Story Hook — Weird Journeys

Storytellers can use the Bleached Schooner to indulge the troupe's taste for strange, surreal stories. These expeditions should have a dreamlike, archetypal quality. The Schooner's crewmembers have whatever traits are needed, so there is no obligation to let characters force the ship to deviate from the three ports presented here. When you feel comfortable creating your own ports in the Temenos, you can make the journey less predictable.

You can also use the ship to underscore important themes. If your chronicle emphasizes the awful price of power, send the Bleached Schooner to a port where every selfish spell a mage casts marks his form in some horrific fashion. When the cabal returns to earth, you can run a mundane story that resembles the events of their journey. A collar from an Autarch of Antinomia might foreshadow an Artifact that belongs to a Free Council antagonist.

### *The Three Ports*

Antinomia, Liberty Road and Yenosia are the Bleached Schooner's default ports of call. Each region is large enough to warrant extended astral journeys, but if travelers linger the ship will move on.

### *Antinomia: Honor Among Thieves*

Throughout history, Boston hosted pirates and smugglers. In 1872, Rachel Wall was hanged in Boston Common for playing the role of a damsel in distress and luring ships to plunder at the hands of her husband, George. Captain William Kidd spent his plunder in Boston. Smugglers contributed to the American Revolution and, over time, have changed their trade from sugar and tea to drugs and people.

This resonance gives the Bleached Schooner a clear course to Antinomia, an astral island populated by lawless spirits. The port offers every imaginable form of anarchy to visitors, from utopian communes to warring gangs. Each enclave has adapted to its neighbors to the point where Antinomia has a highly ritualized and formal society. However, every resident is proud of its freedom and would never admit that this is true.

Visitors step off the Bleached Schooner into a ramshackle city, filled with buildings from many different eras. If not for the anachronisms, Antinomia would look like a cinematic pirate hideout built on a grand scale. Odd hybrids of historical vessels rest in the port. Every building and ship sports a unique flag; the tribes and crews of the city use them to mark their territory.

Antinomia's chief trade is piracy, but the ships are part of the port itself and incapable of sailing the Temenos. Instead, residents raid distant parts of the settlement. The defenders always suppose the attackers serve the tyrants who are

supposed to live on the other side of the island, while the pirates believe that they are striking a blow against dictators who would invade if they weren't regularly humbled.

The inhabitants look human, with the odd familiarity of characters from a dream. They are Goetic spirits that represent ideologies that claim to value freedom. Spirits representing modern political parties dwell on the coast. When travelers venture farther into the city, they meet the spirits of more global ideologies. Beyond this, around the center of the city, spirits advocate mystical practices intended to free the soul itself. Zen gardens lie across from the rough camps of flagellants.

In the very heart of the city, the ochre Palace of the Autarchs is ringed with shadowed but open gates. It is said that the Autarchs founded the city, or that the island formed and grew around the Palace. Its walls and gates are carved with fragments of the High Speech. Characters who have dreamed of Atlantis find the architecture familiar.

### **The Self-Rulers and the Balance of Power**

The Palace contains hundreds of rooms, but the plan of the place naturally flows to a central, circular chamber. A black throne rests upon a dais there. It is riven in two. A band of metal circles it, from which seven chains fan out to secure the collars of the Autarchs.

The Autarchs are naked and sexless; their skin is a grimy gray color, deepening to black at their hands and feet. A constant trickle of blue ichor drips from under their collars as they stand in a circular trough, ankle-deep in the substance.

These sad beings are the Virtues of Antinomia. No other spirits here possess the positive qualities of the human soul. By mutual assent, the residents long ago chained them here so that no practice or system could make a superior claim to satisfy the higher drives. Mages have freed them before, but the Vice spirits always manage to bind them here again.

The Antinomians harvest the ichor of the Virtues. Virtue-ichor is the city's currency. The abstract spirits at the heart of the city divide it fairly, but, closer to the coast, competing crews raid each other for the diluted dregs. Virtue-ichor can be powdered, diluted into dreams of wine or congealed and heated into molten astral metals. Antinomians value the ichor because using it convinces them of the rightness of their various causes. Antinomians can tell the difference between vintages of Virtue-ichor by smell and taste. Mages can use the Mind 1 "Third Eye" spell or the Prime 1 "Supernal Vision" spell to tell the difference between a heady dose of Hope and watered-down Fortitude.

The first time a mage imbibes (or uses an item mixed with a drop of ichor) from an Autarch with the same Virtue as herself, she restores one Willpower point, as if she had satisfied her Virtue. The second time, she may regain a single point of Willpower, but it feels to her as if she has gained *all* of it back. After that, the ichor provides no benefit except to fill the mage with enough delusional inspiration to believe that her Willpower has been fully restored. Storytellers should track the Willpower that characters truly have and tell the players what they *think* that their characters' (false) totals are. Fortunately, Mind 1 "Third Eye" uncovers



this deception. Unfortunately, compatible ichor is addictive; when a mage uses more doses than her Resolve, she must succeed at a Resolve + Composure roll or feel compelled to use it again the next day. This addiction lasts until the character succeeds on three consecutive rolls, but the player can only make the roll once per day.

Mages have tried to funnel more ichor to spirits representing their favorite ideologies, in the hope that this will affect dreams and thoughts on the material plane. The results have been inconclusive. Antinomians enjoy the prospect of allies who will support their faction and welcome them with ichor-laced gifts. Mages have lost themselves to the port this way. They disregard their Earthbound bodies to raid enemy factions and feed their Virtue-ichor addictions. Upon their deaths, the addicts' Vices become Goetic spirits of the city.

### Story Hook – To Steal a Casket of Hope

Opportunities for strange adventure, along with the chance to better understand how the human soul deals with dreams of justice and freedom, abound throughout Antinomia.

Mages can join an Antinomian crew's raid or rescue an addicted ally from the lure of Virtue-ichor. Cabals with a particularly strong ideological bent sometimes take novices to the port for indoctrination. These cabals usually know enough to avoid the temptation of the ichor, but it's easy for raucous Antinomian gangs to separate a young mage from his minders.

Other mages believe that Antinomia is a despicable place and ought to be destroyed. What would such a major change do to Astral Space as a whole?

More powerful characters may have to confront attempts to assassinate one of the Autarchs. (This isn't easy, as each is at least a Rank 5 spirit.) Guardians of the Veil posit that radical changes like this can open parts of the Temenos to the Abyss in much the same way that an acamoth's predations compromise the souls of individuals.

Award Arcane Experience to characters who discover the follies of a belief system they cherished or the merits of one they opposed. You can also award Arcane Experience for saving someone from ichor addiction or by experiencing Virtue-ichor, getting hooked and shaking it off.

### *Liberty Road: Every America*

If America had a spirit, Liberty Road would be that spirit's nervous system, connecting symbol to symbol and binding the whole together. As the center of the American Revolution, Boston has a special kinship with Liberty Road. The Bleached Schooner visits regularly

Travelers come ashore find a cobblestone trail that winds uphill and vanishes into a verdant forest. Ahead, Liberty Road winds back and forth like an old river, with branches extending into the woods as far as the eye can see.

The forest, though lush, is not untamed; the lack of underbrush is just one of the signs of indigenous stewardship. If a visitor travels off the road to the left, he will eventually encounter hundreds of indigenous cultures. If he goes right, the wilderness thickens and turns completely wild, devoid of all signs of humanity. Eventually, it dissolves into the Dreamtime.

The forest represents the year 1492. Each hour's journey takes a mage 10 years later in American history. Branches on the right lead to idealized representations of historical events. Washington stands proudly at the bow of a boat crossing the Delaware, and Paul Revere rides a steady, fast horse to rouse the people against brutal, thieving Redcoats. The left branches lead to pessimistic mirrors of the same event. Washington skulks in his boat with the unsteady gaze of a traitor to the Crown. The slaveholding, tax-evading architects of the rebellion send the poor to kill and die for them. These two perspectives are not completely divided, for once a mage leaves the road, she can walk "across" an event, from the most brutal version to the most heroic, and find many variations in between.

### Story Hook – The America That Never Was

Liberty Road is a way to justify all kind of historical, time-travel and alternate-universe stories. The place naturally lends itself to a cinematic style, since it is actually influenced by media and popular opinion.

You can run a straightforward "whig and tricorn" adventure, fighting to forge (or crush) America, or you can run an occult Revolution, where British military druids duel with the Masonic sorcerers of the Sons of Liberty. You can run 1960s cold war intrigue, with or without Soviet psychics, then walk up the road to tangle with Watergate. Best of all, you can put it all aside in the end, and get back to your mainstream **Mage** game without too much trouble.

Storytellers may have to punch up the risks and rewards to motivate players to take the place's reenactment of history seriously. You can emphasize the "As Above, So Below" theory (i.e., that events here will subtly affect human consciousness in the material realm) to convince characters that they'll be doing something worthwhile. Also, offer boons commensurate with the risk. Award Arcane Experience to characters who discover a previously unknown occult element in America's history or use information from the port to discover occult lore in the real world.

## The Deist Comedy

These visions of history are not just moderate treatments. Some of them are outright bizarre. During some visits, mages discover that John Wilkes Booth is a time traveler from the future and that Joseph McCarthy has a painfully bright, burning halo. Walking farther off the road, mages discover histories in which the mages' own Arts and orders have a hidden, vital role shaping the nation. An Uncrowned King finds a Kennedy assassination replete with alchemical symbols. A Free Council mage discover that Benjamin Franklin's secret super-science helped the American Revolution succeed. Mage can follow these variations back to their personal Oneiroi, but the gates are hidden from easy scrutiny.

These heroic, brutal and strange visions of history spark endless debates among occult theorists. The most common theory is that, within the broad poles of optimism and pessimism, the place responds to visitors' desires. Some of the weirder histories do not always show mages truths that they believe to be self-evident, so this model is incomplete. Other claim that a select few areas show history as it *really* happened, and that all of the other variations emanate from it. Lastly, a popular Free Council model claims that alternate timelines weave in and out of the place. There's certainly evidence for all of these theories, but nothing conclusive.

Travelers can interact with and even change events, which in turn might alter the way Sleepers in the material realm view history (and hence, how they work to build the future). It appears that concerted effort can actually destroy some of the histories. Some deep truths are harder than they appear, however. Suppressed (but factual) portrayals of events rarely vanish, but their paths can become overgrown. In any event, when visitors intervene (and when Sleepers think about a period in a new way), new branches appear on the road. Mages may follow them to new realms that contain fully developed alternate histories.

## Yenosia: Dashed Dreams

The port of Yenosia consists of broken stone docks buried in the mud of the port. Stinging flies pass through in clouds, obscuring the huge statue in the harbor. Vaguely resembling the Statue of Liberty, it holds aloft a broken sword instead of a torch.

The place infects characters with a subtle but mounting sense of hopelessness. For that reason, it's difficult to replenish Willpower. When gaining Willpower from a Virtue or Vice, visitors must first succeed in a Resolve + Composure roll at a -2 penalty.

Yenosia is barren land, dusty where it isn't muddy. Small, primitive villages lie beside sickly, brackish rivers. The villages are all abandoned. Some carry years of dust; others have hearth fires burning and look as if the residents left only seconds ago. The houses are a mix of archaic construction and places that are familiar to the characters: homes they abandoned when they Awakened and buildings where they remember feeling despair. In the distance, however, the lightless silhouette of a city beckons. Characters who make for it, however, must defeat its guardians: the Walkers.

Yenosia's Walkers are always familiar to visitors, because they look like mages the characters know. Most Walkers look like the visitors themselves, but they may resemble old

mentors, fellow apprentices and Awakened allies. These doppelgangers have a weathered look to them and move in a stiff, mechanical fashion.

Walkers are dangerous beings. Their Influence manifests as an overpowering sense of self-doubt that can linger (through the use of a Numen) even after the victim returns to the material realm. Walkers berate the characters for their personal failings as the spirits try to drive the visitors back to shore. If questioned, the spirits say that the characters aren't worthy to visit the city; they are too weak and egotistical to find enlightenment there. The city has no name.

## Walkers

**Quote:** *Failed scions of Atlantis plague us again. Begone — you do not deserve the secrets of this place.*

Walkers plague mages who explore Yenosia. Walkers use violence and intimidation to ward travelers away from the Dead City. The fact that they only resemble mages is one element (along with the Dead City) that suggests that the port's nature specifically relates to the Awakened instead of the general dreamscape of humanity.

**Description:** Walkers resemble mages the characters know, but move with a mechanical gait and have dead, staring eyes. Their clothes and faces look careworn and tired. They never smile.

**Rank:** 2

**Attributes:** Power 6, Finesse 3, Resistance 4

**Willpower:** 4

**Max Essence:** 15 max

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 6

**Speed:** 19

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 9

**Influences:** Doubt ..

Walkers can exaggerate doubt in a target. This typically imposes a -2 dice penalty onto a specific Skill for the remainder of the scene (including uses of that Skill when casting rites). The Walker rolls Power + Finesse — the target's Composure, and spends one Essence.

**Numina:** Blast, Harrow, Lingering Doubt, Telepathy (as the Mind 3 "Telepathy" spell; see **Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 212-213)

\* After the Walker uses its Doubt Influence, on the next turn the Storyteller rolls its Power + Finesse, subtracting the target's Composure. If the roll succeeds, the target retains the Skill penalty indefinitely. Once per day thereafter, the player rolls the character's Resolve + Composure; once successful, the Lingering Doubt is banished.

**Ban:** If a target of the Walker's Doubt Influence passes the test (that is, the Walker's Influence fails to work against him), the Walker must withdraw.

## The Dead City

If characters can drive the Walkers away, the characters can enter the great city. Walkers will pursue them, but cannot follow the visitors in. Like the villages, the Dead City is completely deserted. Its architecture feels familiar, but does not exactly resemble any modern or ancient style. Cyclopean towers and pyramids attest to a high culture, leading mages to believe that the Dead City is some fragment of Atlantis. This fact alone has tempted many mages to risk their souls exploring the place.



Scrolls, stele and frescos inscribed with the High Speech are especially tempting, as are buildings and objects that seem to symbolize magical techniques. Mages sometimes claim to find powerful spells here. This is actually a creeping form of madness that infects visitors: they become desperate to find something of worth in miserable Yenosia.

In fact, all of the inscriptions are nonsense and the symbols are imagined. Every time a character attempts to study a notable feature of the city, the Storyteller secretly rolls that character's Intelligence + Composure. If the roll fails, the character believes that he has discovered a new spell or even a rote of that spell. Outside of Yenosia, other characters can obviously see that it's nonsense, but the discoverer will believe until confronted with her false belief.

Yet the Dead City is not useless. Though it is not generally known among the Awakened, mages can come here to confront their failures. At the cost of one Mana, a mage can summon up a past failure: a defeat in combat, botched research or a friendship broken by her personal flaws. The city twists, and phantoms appear to take the role of all the necessary people and props. In game terms, the Storyteller should re-run the past scene using the same game systems as before. The only difference is that the mage adheres to the normal rules for astral travel (by, for example, losing Willpower when she is "injured" by the phantoms).

### Story Hook – Doubt and Fulfillment

Yenosia isn't a cheerful place, and is more suited for introspective stories in which characters must confront their failings or fall prey to false confidence. It is a quiet place in Astral Space where there's room for dialogue over action.

Or is it? Yenosia is more mysterious than the other ports. It seems to be meant for mages in particular and holds what might be a reflection of Atlantis. It is a reflection filled with folly, but it exists. Free Council mages might see it as a sign that looking back to Atlantis is foolish, but Silver Ladder counterparts are more likely to believe that Yenosia cloaks its secrets from the weak-willed. Furthermore, as no mage has fully explored the port, other secrets may wait for intrepid mages willing to transcend their own failures.

Award Arcane Experience when mages defeat Walkers in a way that demonstrates the characters' willingness to learn from mistakes or when they triumph over a past failure in the Dead City.

### *Copp's Hill Burial Ground*

Copp's Hill Burial Ground is a small cemetery, but in its time across from Bunker Hill, the cemetery has had almost 350 years to collect a prodigious number of corpses, ghosts and strange ambiance. So many bodies have been buried here that the

overcrowded cemetery has long since lost track of who most of its dead are. Many of them were unearthed and reburied elsewhere to make room. Other dead had no markers of their own, like the thousands of African American workers buried there. It's rumored that, desperate for room, the gravediggers crushed the corpses of the poor to a broken pulp that would allow mass internments to take up less space.

Other indignities plagued the graves. In 1775, the British set up their artillery in their midst, defacing markers that belonged to the Sons of Liberty and breaking other headstones in the violence of the war. In the 1800s, popular rumor accused the cemetery's custodians of purchasing tombs from the indigent relatives of the deceased, hiding the corpses deep underground and then reselling the tombs. The cemetery's sextons allegedly ground away the old names over and over again, leaving anonymous layers of the desecrated dead.

Many of the remaining markers have simply worn and broken with the weight of centuries, but many famous tombs remain. The best-known is that of the Mather family; spiritualist and Salem Witch Trial judge Cotton Mather is buried here with his father and son.

The Mather tomb is only one aspect of the cemetery's occult significance. Overlooking the Charles River, the burial ground rests on one of the three hills of Boston proper, making it a natural center of geomantic power. On adjacent Bunker Hill, the obelisk captures the gaze of onlookers (see "The Austere Stone of Gilead," pp. 122-126), and the historic Freedom Trail leads to its Charlestown gates. Between the tomb of the witch hunter, the cemetery's natural significance and the resonance left by the American Revolution, Copp's Hill Burial Ground has become a formidable place of supernatural power, but all of these influences have poured into a center of death and desecration.

By day, Copp's Hill is merely dilapidated. By night, it has secrets and power to share.

### *Dead Secrets*

By far, the most common reason to visit Copp's Hill at night is to commune with the dead. Some mages do this as a regular, ritualistic practice, but others are more pragmatic — for the dead know what the living forget.

Many of the gravestones are too worn to read, and some of them have been defaced or even re-used, so the curious might need to do some historical research to find out whether or not their target is even buried in Copp's Hill. On the other hand, not all queries require a specific person. There are countless laborers and tradesman buried in the cemetery who can provide an eyewitness account of what's happened to Boston through the ages.

Ghosts rarely give anything away free, and most of them value services that cause them to be remembered in some way (by which they gain Essence). As a rule, the older the ghost is, the more obscure his legacy, so doing as he asks may require more investigation than finding him in the first place. Some mages just prefer to use occult force, but ghosts tend to be very, very good at avenging such slights.

### *Under Black Fog*

Copp's Hill is a place of power and death, hosting an underground 4-dot Hallow. But that power has a price,

because countless ghosts have arisen out of their insulted graves to haunt Twilight.

One side effect of this is that at night, eyes attuned to Twilight see the names erased from desecrated gravestones sit beside their contemporary counterparts. The faint outlines of new markers appear to honor paupers' graves or more obscure figures. In the distance, the Bunker Hill Monument glows with a faint red light.

If a mage (or other being) crosses into the Shadow Realm, the graveyard's dimensions warp to several times their actual size. In the Shadow Realm, it takes a full hour of walking to reach the other side. Visitors are diverted by rows of black, twisted trees and hemmed in by mausoleums that don't exist in the physical world.

Petty death-spirits roam the graveyard. They have a symbiotic relationship with the Twilight ghosts on the other side of the Gauntlet. When the ghosts terrify trespassers, the spirits benefit from the resonance of mortal fear. While the ghosts wish to be remembered, the spirits need compatible Essence to survive. Unfortunately, as Copp's Hill has aged, it's been regarded more as a sterile historical site than a necropolis. Conceptual-spirits greedy for Essence with the tang of scholarship have made forays into the graveyard, but the death-spirits have thus far preserved their territory. Some desperate inhabitants have devoured the invaders, creating misshapen conglomerates of remembrance and mortality. These beings shuffle along in anachronistic costume, uttering their threats in the form of historical allusions.

Mages who avoid the predators above might find a way into the Shadow Realm cemetery's tunnels. Some of them look as if they've been mined for wells. Others seem to have been created to contain the crush of bodies or are the remnants of long-withered springs. Those mages searching among the roots of the black trees or for tombs with doors ajar can usually find an entrance.

Ephemeral visitors discover that the tunnels can stretch as far as the visitors can walk or crawl. Some of the tunnels are small, earthen holes that threaten to collapse if a mages moves too suddenly. Other tunnels are tall enough to walk through and, by appearance, shored up with the crushed bones of the dead; or they are the subterranean chambers of mausoleums, grander than they ever would be in the "real" world. A few tunnels even lead to the abandoned basements of the North Side's oldest buildings.

While ghosts may wander the Twilight field above, the Shadow Realm tunnels constitute a virtual necropolis unto itself. More powerful spirits lair here in the company of mindless spirit-worms and beetles.

Why do mages dare these hazards? Beneath the ground, the cemetery's Hallow bubbles forth power in the form of black, bitter water. In the material realm, the Hallow is an underground spring that moves from place to place, but, in the Shadow Realm, it appears in a tunnel or chamber. Mage Sight can track the location, but, unless the mage enters the Shadow Realm to collect its Mana, she has to dig or rely on Space magic. One method attracts mundane attention (and that of the Twilight ghosts), and the other disturbs the underground spirits.

Even though it would otherwise perfectly suit Moros mages, they have never been able to secure the spring or burial ground for themselves, because the ghosts will not tolerate any extended nightly presence except outside the cemetery's very



edges. Schooled by local legends or direct, frightening experience, security guards eventually learn to keep to this route on their patrols.

Otherwise, the ghosts themselves can benefit mages. Leaving aside the possibility of using Death magic to enslave the ghosts, the ghosts' memories can provide vital clues for a cabal studying Boston's secret history. Over the years, many mages have claimed to have met Cotton Mather's specter, who variously fought them until destroyed, blessed them with a supernatural boon, led them from danger or told them some sort of secret about Boston's arcane past.

### *Necroamalgams*

Wise adherents of the Moros Watchtower warn of *necroamalgams* that spawn in the crush of unhallowed bodies in a communal grave. These monsters may have half a dozen heads and arms that sprout from a twisted collection of bones and withered organs. Denied identity in death, the *necroamalgams* seek revenge on the living. They cow mages with bellowing cries or (especially in the case of amalgams of children) an eerie, singsong chorus.

Rumor has it that a mage can destroy a *necroamalgam* by confronting it with the names of its component ghosts — although she must first discover those names. The portion or body part associated with each name supposedly turns to dust upon hearing its name, weakening the remaining whole. If all of its names (anywhere from three to 10, depending on its size) are spoken, the creature is totally destroyed.

Although the *necroamalgams* are a small minority in Copp's Hill Burial Ground, they are common enough to represent a serious hazard to the unprepared. These beings actually exist around the world in mass, unhallowed graves. It's rumored that dark Moros (such as the Tremere) nurture *necroamalgams* by engineering the creation of such graves.

Statistics for a five-ghost *necroamalgam* follow. Rules for larger or smaller versions appear in parenthesis.

**Attributes:** Power 7 (2 + 1 per component ghost), Finesse 2, Resistance 3

**Willpower:** 3

**Max Essence:** 10 (2 per component ghost)

**Morality:** 3

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Envy

**Defense:** 7 (equal to Power; *necroamalgams* always have a higher Power than Finesse)

**Initiative:** 5

**Speed:** 19 (Power + Finesse + 10)

**Size:** 10 (5 +1 per component ghost)

**Corpus:** 13 (Resistance + Size)

**Special:** Two physical actions/turn. (*Necroamalgams* can take one additional instant physical action per turn for every three of its component ghosts, rounded up.)

### Story Hooks — Necromantic Affairs

Naturally, the Moros would love to have uncontested access to the cemetery. Using its potent Hallow and undead resources, these

magicians could turn Copp's Hill into their own personal fiefdom.

The possibility keeps Boston's mages on guard, but the power of the Hallow complicates things further. If a cabal started a campaign to cleanse the place, rivals would suspect that the campaign was little more than a plot to seize the Hallow. Thus, Copp's Hill can be something of a flashpoint in a chronicle.

A story can involve Tremere soul-reapers making a move to claim the cemetery, and the cabal has to unite local mages to repulse them — then deal with squabbling over the Hallow. Even though Awakened eyes can see how strange Copp's Burial Ground really is, Sleepers just see an old cemetery in a very public, tourist-friendly location. For this reason, all sides will want to avoid overt magical conflict. Mages may wish to settle matters with the Duel Arcane instead.

While Moros mages appear to be the ideal landlords (Death magic allows them to fend off the ghosts), Boston's cabals are mindful that such an advantage might upset the city's balance of power. The Ebon Noose would prefer to let the Hallow be raided irregularly or claimed by a cabal that lacks the necromantic skill to exploit the cemetery to the fullest.

### *Beyond the Gauntlet*

Mages sometimes undertake daring journeys across the Gauntlet to visit spirit courts and track down enigmas. These mages do so for any number of reasons, but one of the most common is to seek a boon from a spirit-lord. Most of Boston's spirits have also adapted to centuries of change, adding new masks, portfolios and favored rites to their primeval natures. One spirit that knew the Algonquian nations of the past might later supplement this influence with the symbols of the Puritans, then the first American patriots and then farther along, incorporate the memetic traffic of the cold war and the information age as a part of the spirit's personality and occult significance.

Essence is the meat and drink of spirits, but its resonance determines its palatability and influences the spirits themselves. Humans unconsciously influence local resonance, and resident spirits must adapt to their new diet. Mages are divided as to whether this kind of evolution is reflexive or the result of a deliberate choice. Some spirits can't adapt to the changing times, and find themselves consigned to the Wood of Empty Houses (see pp. 126-130), where forgotten beings brood.

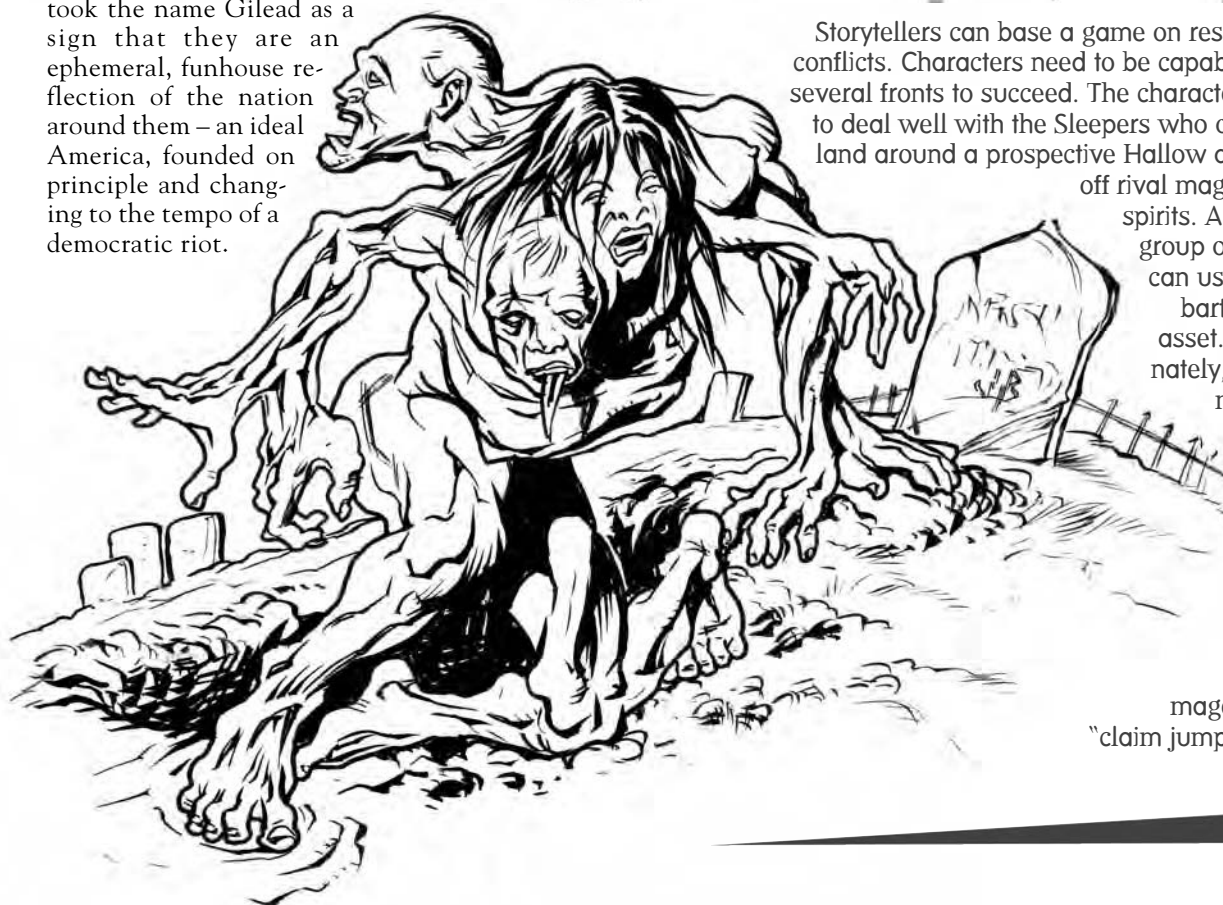
### *The Austere Stone of Gilead*

The Old Giant was a monument to the vanished Ice Age, when glaciers covered all of Massachusetts. Out in

the countryside, Balance Rock is another classic example of its type: a huge boulder that rests on a narrow pivot point. Balanced rocks were deposited throughout the Commonwealth by glacial retreat. Some rocks can even be rocked back and forth with a slight push. Many balanced rocks mark ley lines and even full Hallows, leading the Wise to believe that the placement of the rocks was not just a matter of nature and fate. Native legends sometimes claim that giants placed the rocks in their current locations — or even that the boulders are curled up, sleeping giants themselves. Balance Rock still stands on its plot of farmland, but the Old Giant of Boston now lives only in the Shadow Realm. The Old Giant was forgotten even before the Bunker Hill obelisk was built in its place.

Now the obelisk and the balanced rock have merged. In the Shadow Realm, the obelisk balances upon an old, rough rock by a single point. The obelisk sways in the breeze but, otherwise, resists attempts to knock it down. Even if the obelisk were more fragile, few would question its symbolic power, because this is where Boston's pre-eminent spirit court gathers. The Austere Stone of Gilead is its name. It is ruled by canny, powerful conceptual-spirits that have adapted to modern resonance by embracing the panoply of influences that have shaped the city.

The spirits are stranger than one might expect because they are not just the goblins, elementals and will-o'-the-wisps of dusty legend. The spirits took the name Gilead as a sign that they are an ephemeral, funhouse reflection of the nation around them — an ideal America, founded on principle and changing to the tempo of a democratic riot.



## Ice Age Geomancy

Balanced rocks are only one example of the oddities left by glacial retreat. The Ice Age left behind all kinds of weird caves, boulders, hills and springs. The Ice Age was slow by human standards, but lightning fast by the standards of geology. Dramatic changes to the land have magical effect, bringing deeply hidden power to the surface of the world. Mages also know that spiritual activity has physical consequences. One popular hypothesis among local Mysterium mages is that the balanced rocks are the remaining physical effects of a highly cultured race of spirits that built cities in New England's Shadow Realm. The material realm stones became stacked through sympathy, but the cities vanished.

Mages often survey the land for oddities because they correlate with Hallows. In colonial Massachusetts, this led to an extended "gold rush," as mages fought to acquire as many magical places as possible. Established cabals claim some of the best sites, but that doesn't close the door completely. Farmers and other private landowners don't always advertise about the strange features of their properties, so there is still much to be discovered.

Storytellers can base a game on resource conflicts. Characters need to be capable on several fronts to succeed. The characters need to deal well with the Sleepers who own the land around a prospective Hallow and fend off rival mages and spirits. A clever group of mages can use it as a bartering asset. Alternately, other mages might find the Hallow first, making player mages the "claim jumpers."

## *A Hidden Nation*

The Austere Stone of Gilead, drawing upon centuries of mortal government and combining influences to suit its own alien nature, divides itself into three administrative branches.

The Grey Sachems are a house of spirit nobility. Each sachem represents a group of spirits from one part of Massachusetts. These groups collectively decide to choose one of their own to represent them to the Stone. Separately, each region is autonomous, but the sachems' collective decisions are enforced upon all the spirits under their domain in matters of war and trade. The root of their ethos is informed by the Native Americans they've lived beside for thousands of years, but has mutated according to the Austere Stone's whims and post-colonial historical change.

The Black Magistrates handle disputes between individual spirits with fanatical enthusiasm. When an individual sachem cannot resolve a dispute or an argument arises between spirits from different regions, the magistrates hear the case and solve the problem. Then, they try and punish other spirits and pursue sources of conflict with other, cruel verdicts until any spirit left loses its taste for discontent. The spirits play the part of avenging judges according to the Puritan examples of history and contemporary stereotype.

Lastly, the House of Commons manages everyday legislation and ambassadorial duties. Most of their pronouncements are irrelevant, since spirits will follow their innate natures above any law, but the Commons argues as much to reflect the *idea* of government as to get any actual work done. Members seemingly come and go at random, with the only rule being that a minister cannot be a magistrate or sachem. Their most important duty is to select the Lord Protector: the master of the court. Ministers also assign ad hoc "ambassadorships" (i.e., spies) to the spirits that interact with outsiders, such as mages and other supernatural beings, as befits their portfolio. For example, the Minister of Nightgaunts Who Do Not Seek Refuge in the Land assigns spirits to truck with urban vampires (but not rural ones, who are the responsibility of the Minister of Nightgaunts Who Hunt as Beasts). A dozen ministers hold collective responsibility for interacting with mages, and constantly quarrel over the limits of their responsibilities.

Since the court cannot even claim all of Boston, some mages find the grandiose titles tiresome and presumptuous. These mages are advised to keep their opinions to themselves. The Austere Stone's spirits take it seriously, because the court's symbolism helps them adapt to the resonance of the city.

### The Court, the Sun and the Moon

Most of the Austere Stone's vassals are conceptual-spirits. Conceptual choirs hold the most influential posts, although exceptions like Terrobofen Sachem (see below) do exist. The court hierarchy treats nature spirits as local hetmen and serfs.

This is an unusual balance of power that has come about because the court has driven away most of the powerful members of the planetary

choirs: spirits that often strike the balance between aggressive conceptu- and nature-spirits. The scions of Helios and Luna do inhabit New England (after all, the sun shines and the moon comes out at night), but cloister themselves in the countryside.

While this is an ideal environment for mages, the Uratha — werewolves who keep the balance between the mundane world and the animistic Shadow — find that their usual allies are not as numerous or potent. Eventually, werewolves might well gather to correct the problem; mages with ties to the Austere Stone can get caught in the middle. See **Werewolf: The Forsaken** for more information about the Uratha's perspective on the Shadow Realm.

## *Spirit Intrigue*

Mages can develop powerful alliances and rivalries with different members of the spirit court. A mage doesn't even need to go to the Bunker Hill court itself, since the spirits have a loose hegemony over much of the city. This isn't to say that the spirit "officers" of the court really do make a difference to resident spirits on a day-to-day basis, but the spirit officers certainly like to *think* they do, and some sachems and magistrates take their jobs very seriously.

Mages who deal with spirits regularly are the ones most likely to get drawn into the court's politics. The ministers endlessly plot to expand their influence. This is mostly useless, except when a minister's portfolio is relevant to the mage or it can become powerful enough to influence a magistrate or sachem. A typical sachem mostly cares about its own neighborhood, so a happy minister can provide an important introduction for a traveling spirit-worker. Of course, an angry minister can turn the other branches against the mage too, usually by passing legislation that restricts the mage's interaction with the spirit world or by sending a magistrate or a sachem's war party to punish the mage. But, at heart, spirits crave Essence attuned to their natures, and mages able to provide it will find most officials are willing to take bribes.

## *Ijasocke, Lord Protector*

**Quote:** *Your plans will draw forth blood and guns. Tell me more.*

**Background:** Lord Ijasocke came to power after leading the court against invading werewolves and lunar spirits 80 years ago. Before this, it was a war-spirit that was hard-pressed to adapt after the Revolution. The war-spirit diminished in power until it was employed by the Guardians of the Veil to thwart their enemies, but its duplicitous nature allowed it to prosper from both sides of the struggle for the Emerald Scroll. The former war-spirit still bears residual ill will toward mages, but this is limited by the fact that it is in Ijasocke's nature to play the part of the trickster-warrior. It appreciates the duplicity and violence that Awakened plotters spread, and is quite receptive to requests that involve the court in espionage or mayhem.

**Description:** The current Lord Protector takes the form of a slender, androgynous figure with long, stone-gray hair and tanned skin. It wears a cloak of wolf's fur, a top hat, the red coat of an archaic British officer and Native American breeches. The spirit is usually eight feet tall. Yellow flowers of all kinds grow from under its left sleeve over the course of an audience. Black ichor drips from the pointed fingernails of its right hand.

**Storytelling Hints:** Above everything else, Ijasocke supports actions that further its own mastery of war and treachery. The spirit is struggling to keep up with the times, and wishes to re-invent itself as the one of the war-tricksters of the modern age: the arms dealers and war profiteers. The Lord Protector wants to influence like-minded humans, in turn re-inventing itself for the 21st Century.

**Rank:** 4

**Attributes:** Power 7, Finesse 10, Resistance 9

**Willpower:** 9

**Max Essence:** 25

**Initiative:** 19

**Defense:** 10

**Speed:** 22

**Size:** 6

**Corpus:** 15

**Influence:** Treachery ...

Ijasocke can influence attempted betrayals. As long as a character attempts to betray another, the Lord Protector can influence what the character says and does in the process.

**Numina:** Chorus, Discorporation, Harrow, Materialize, Material Vision, Reach, Wilds Sense

**Ban:** Ijasocke can never act to end violence until a combatant's life (human or spirit) is ended, and Ijasocke cannot knowingly act upon a genuine pacifist. If the spirit is tricked into violating its Ban, Ijasocke suffers damage dice equal to the highest Willpower among the participants of the conflict, and must grant that individual a boon.

### *Fortitude Ash Goodtalon, High Magistrate*

**Quote:** Electrocution, I think. It is a popular punishment for this crime in the stricter parts of the world.

**Background:** Combine the magistrates of the Salem Witch Trials and the bureaucrats of Kafka's *The Trial* and you have Fortitude Ash Goodtalon, the vengeful, twisted, brilliant High Magistrate of the Austere Stone of Gilead. Goodtalon is a spirit of deterrence, and like all spirits, its nature is to take that principle to its extreme. Under this spirit's direction, the court's House of Commons adopts human laws that have been designed to inspire fear in potential criminals. Thus, the Black Magistrates apply amputation, "three strikes" sentencing and other severe judicial innovations. Goodtalon innately knows which punishments are viewed with revulsion in various cultures and can tailor threats and sentences to individuals with great skill.

**Description:** Goodtalon has the body shape of Tweedledum and the fashion sense of Cotton Mather. Its hands have mouths festooned with dangling, rasping fangs. It uses these to carve judgments on the ephemera bodies or material flesh of defendants. Its huge eyes glow with television static.

**Storytelling Hints:** Goodtalon's nature means that a sufficient display of fear will satisfy it. After all, fear proves

that deterrence works and that a further display of power is unnecessary. The spirit has an encyclopedic knowledge of laws, legal philosophies and judges from around the world, and is flattered when anyone consults it for this purpose. It can discuss the ideas of Machiavelli, Han Fei Tzu and Robert Bork with wit and grace. Goodtalon can talk about more liberal thinkers too, but talking about liberal thinkers tends to bore the spirit and make it look for somebody to punish.

**Rank:** 2

**Attributes:** Power 3, Finesse 6, Resistance 5

**Willpower:** 5

**Max Essence:** 15

**Initiative:** 11

**Defense:** 6

**Speed:** 19

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 10

**Influence:** Deterrence ...

Goodtalon can make the threat of punishment more or less effective. This typically influences Intimidation rolls, but on a social scale it can cause subjects to greatly fear relatively minor punishments.

**Numina:** Chorus, Blast, Harrow, Reach

**Ban:** Goodtalon cannot knowingly harm the truly fearless or the honestly penitent. If tricked into doing so, the spirit suffers dice of damage equal to the victim's Willpower, immediately knows the cause and must grant the victim a boon.

### *Terrobolen Sachem, Master of Arms*

**Quote:** This arch is good and strong. Your mortal shells are not.

**Background:** Terrobolen is an elemental spirit, as old as the land itself. The spirit didn't want the title of sachem, but newer, more fashionable spirits respected Terrobolen's power and, frankly, didn't want to bother with court business themselves. Terrobolen is the Master of Arms, a position that obligates it to defend the gathered assembly. The spirit uses a giant copper and stone war club that serves as its badge of office and a potent weapon. A spirit of worked stone and endurance in the face of hardship, Terrobolen has some sympathy for underdogs who are too stubborn to give up.

When not called to duty, Terrobolen Sachem lairs below the Bunker Hill obelisk as the guardian of the court, making the spirit one that Boston's mages are most likely to come across.

**Description:** Coming from the heart of Boston, the spirit's appearance has slowly changed to represent the bowels of the city. The sachem looks like a rough 14-foot-tall concrete statue, with rebar and piping projecting from its mass. The Big Dig divided Terrobolen down the middle; the halves of its body are usually two or three inches apart, but it can let them hop away to deal with business in two different places.

**Storytelling Hints:** Terrobolen doesn't intervene when its subjects meet the bad end of a deal, but rampant abuse of the local spirit population will eventually win the offender its slow, almost unstoppable vengeance.

**Rank:** 3

**Attributes:** Power 7, Finesse 4, Resistance 8

**Willpower:** 8

**Max Essence:** 20

**Initiative:** 12

**Defense:** 7



**Speed:** 21

**Size:** 7

**Corpus:** 15

**Influence:** Construction ...

Terrobolen can strengthen or weaken anything made of human-worked earth and stone, including concrete. The spirit cannot create such works from scratch, but it can destroy them. This Influence includes tunnels, landscaping and similar earthworks.

**Numina:** Blast, Fetter, Gauntlet Breach, Materialize

**Ban:** Terrobolen Sachem can never manufacture an object itself. The spirit can help another individual craft an object by using Terrobolen's Influence, but cannot even touch tools (weapons don't count); it is not a spirit of creation but of the objects themselves. It can describe the process of construction, but cannot parse the component actions into a coherent whole.

*Twistmouth, Minister to the Wandering Heirs of Lightning*

**Quote:** *Clever souls, shining souls. Facts without riddles? Never!*

**Background:** Twistmouth puts on the air of an easygoing country spirit: an ignorant bumpkin that asks mages for the definitions of large words and pauses to think a little too long to look intelligent. The Minister to the Wandering Heirs of Lightning deals with most business that involves Atlantean orders. This spirit relishes the job, for, unlike most of the Austere Stone's constituents, Twistmouth is not a native spirit. One hundred and fifty years ago, Twistmouth was forcibly bound to an Irish mage before she crossed the Atlantic. The spirit resented its position, eventually subverted its pact and led the witch to the Wood of Empty Houses (see pp. 126-130). Its spirits devoured the witch's memories and sent her forth thinking she was a Loyalist from the Revolutionary War. In payment, the spirits told Twistmouth some of the secret history of the Awakened. The spirit knows about the legend of Atlantis and even some of the earliest migrations of the Wise, and could probably help mages uncover enchanted items from their lost heritage, but Twistmouth will never do so voluntarily.

Twistmouth is now a spirit of hoarded knowledge that delights in the ignorance of others, especially mages. The spirit never wants to kill mages, but it tries to "help" them in a way that will hinder their magical progress and confuse their insights about the truths of the world. The ambassadors it sends to mages aren't in on the joke, because Twistmouth enjoys hiding knowledge from the ambassadors as well. Twistmouth can't lie either (it is not really a spirit of deception), so clever mages can identify its omissions and dubious descriptions — when, for example, it recommends a certain spirit or location.

**Description:** The spirit usually appears with a beet-red face, ratty blond hair and a warped mouth hovering over a pair of empty, patched overalls. Twistmouth likes offerings of cheap gin and tobacco. The spirit consumes them in quick gulps and puffs, and staggers about intoxicated while it conducts business.

**Storytelling Hints:** Thanks to Twistmouth's nature, the spirit prefers to deal with Guardians of the Veil, because this cabal's members know how to conceal the truth from the unworthy. By contrast, the Mysterium are a pack of spoilsports who ask too many questions. And the Free Council? Twistmouth will not even speak to the vulgar creatures! Fortunately, this spirit considers outright lying to be a form of cheating, and consequently refuses to deal with known Seers of the Throne.

**Rank:** 2

**Attributes:** Power 6, Finesse 5, Resistance 4

**Willpower:** 4

**Max Essence:** 15

**Initiative:** 9

**Defense:** 6

**Speed:** 21

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 9

**Influences:** Secrets ..

Twistmouth can influence the sharing or revelation of anything that is intentionally kept a secret. For the power's purposes, a secret is kept by at least two people (or one person and one copy of a secret text or communications medium) but by no more than 10 people (or copies). Twistmouth can twist the secret but, thanks to its Ban, cannot turn it into a lie. The spirit can, for instance, turn a secret rote into coded gibberish (which can be deciphered by clever characters) but can't make the rote flawed or false.

**Numina:** Chorus, Fetter, Materialize, Possession

**Ban:** Twistmouth can never tell a direct lie, though the spirit may omit and rephrase statements to its heart's content. It is well aware of this frustrating limitation (which, to it, is like knowing of but not knowing how to speak a foreign language).

*The Wood of Empty Houses*

The most dangerous and most enlightening parts of hidden Massachusetts may be the places that everyone has forgotten. Boston sits in one of the oldest parts of America, but its history is only a fraction of the story of a land and its people. As culture sweeps away tradition and new powers replace the old, forgotten peoples and events build up. They become a shadow story for the whole region.

In a magical world, the shadow story is more than a lack of recollection. It has a spirit of its own — and around Boston, that spirit has had centuries to grow and resent the fact that it has never been truly told. This collective, secret power manifests as the Wood of Empty Houses, a Twilight lattice of forgotten people and tales that crosses the entire Commonwealth and beyond.

The Wood is barely known, except for its guardian, Black-Eyed John. Local folktales say that John is the spirit of a Redcoat killed at the Battle of Bunker Hill. They say he was a witch who sold his soul to the Devil to rise from a pyre, but Satan demanded a thousand brave souls before he'd give John his fair looks back. This is why John fought the Sons of Liberty, and why he still thirsts for the souls of patriots. When he is fair and whole again,

he'll take bride to a secret mansion in the woods. Together, they'll hide from the Devil in that grand, secret house. A few superstitious farmers won't plant or even walk anywhere that John's ghost was supposed to have ridden, but the legend is fading, and each year fewer and fewer live to tell the tale.

## Massachusetts Gothic

One horror theme that peppers the area's literature is that the sins of the past always return for an accounting. The Wood of Empty Houses explores this theme, because it was born in the violence and pestilence of colonization. The theme permeates this book and is especially appropriate for **Mage**, a game in which characters draw power from ancient secrets and can scry into the past.

Classic Gothic literature exaggerates for effect and renders complex history down into emotional touchstones. The Puritans in Nathaniel Hawthorne's fiction (such as *The House of the Seven Gables* and *The Scarlet Letter*) were more brutal and zealous than they usually were in real life. On the other hand, we live in an information-saturated modern (or as some would call it, post-modern) age, in which we can find a dozen conflicting positions about nearly any period of history with the click of a mouse.

The Wood of Empty Houses grew under colonization, created death and disruption among the Native Americans. But this isn't supposed to paint them as victims or the colonists as universally greedy, bigoted and murderous. Complex local historical events, like Metacom's War and English politics, greatly influenced the course of events, and, of course, disease has no ideology.

But underneath these complex issues, the theme remains. For good or ill, the Wood of Empty Houses captures spirits that have been displaced by history through accidental tragedy and political machinations. Intentional or not, the Wood was born from injustice.

## *Terra Nullius*

Nobody knows how long the Wood and its houses have existed, or if (as some suspect) there are similar phenomena elsewhere, but by the time Europeans started to settle North America there was no shortage of abandoned places. The Plymouth colonists settled in an abandoned Native American village and gathered supplies from

other deserted settlements to survive. Records show that the entire region was filled with these empty towns and fields. European settlers built their own towns on top of them. Other colonists did the same thing, taking advantage of Native American labor to survive and prosper.

In fact, multiple plagues killed a huge proportion of the Americas' indigenous population from early contact onward (even before the arrival of the *Mayflower*). Like John Winthrop, some colonists considered these plagues to be the result of divine providence "clearing the way" for Christians. Settlement was justified using the legal principle of *terra nullius*. The law originally applied to uninhabited land, but the British soon decided that "barbarous" settlements did not legally exist. In fact, indigenous people were responsible for extensive agricultural and ecological engineering projects; much of the "wilderness" described by colonists consisted of recent growth over the abandoned villages.

Settlers started with villages that had belonged to the plagues' dead. From there, friction between the colonists and the Native American nations blossomed into wars and massacres. Surviving natives were relocated into "praying towns" where missionaries were determined to erase the last vestiges of the natives' culture.

Plague, the burgeoning colonial culture and conversion resulted in the willful "forgetting" of the previous culture, replacing it with the story of a continent where colonists tamed an empty wilderness. The Wood of Empty Houses was born.

The wheel of colonial history spun ever faster, and its castoffs were added to the ranks of the forgotten. Despite the Pilgrims' desire for a religious nation away from England, they merged with the rest of the colonial population. In the wake of the American Revolution, Loyalists abandoned their former homes and British customs were submerging within the new nation's traditions. In the decades and centuries to follow, other communities faded from view. Most of the forgotten communities were mundane; a few were fringe groups and occult societies (both Sleeping and Awakened) that time's passage (and, in some cases, the deliberate intervention of the Seers of the Throne) completely erased from history.

Every generation has its forgotten people and events, but, in Massachusetts, abandoned villages acted like mystical lighting rods to attract and contain the forgotten. The buildings still stood in the ephemeral, ghostly state of Twilight, persevered by the same power that turned them into sources of occult power. Black-Eyed John found the first few, and watched them multiply into the Wood of Empty Houses.

## Story Hook —

### A Lodge of Hidden Lore

The most common reason to visit an Empty House is to uncover forgotten knowledge. This is one of the classic journeys to the otherworlds. Myths about Atlantis say that the ancients hid ancient, potent secrets: formulas

for immortality, weapons made of solid lightning and grimoires filled with the secret names of gods. Even after humanity has completely lost these secrets, there is a chance that the secrets still live in the form of a forgotten spirit.

Of course, mages can't get this information free. First of all, they have to find the right spirit. Since these beings have themselves been forgotten for centuries or longer, Awakened seekers must wend their way through the Wood, asking the spirits they chance upon for directions. The spirits usually want mages to re-establish part of the spirits' lore in the outside world, but it takes cleverness to persuade them not to

just use their soul replacement Numen (see "Soul Replacement," p. 129) on the interlopers. The requirements may include such things as establishing a monument to the spirit (and getting Sleepers to respect it) or teaching an extinct craft (in which case, the mages will have to visit repeatedly so that they can learn it). Storytellers can frame entire chronicles around interlocking quests, but the Storytellers should make sure to make the reward proportionate to the effort.

One thing to note is that the spirits of the Wood generally despise the Austere Stone of Gilead. The court decided to adapt rather than pass into obscurity, forgetting its oldest lore to keep a feeble grip on the world. There are a few deposed spirits in the Wood that would love to overthrow the Lord Protector, and can tempt mages with occult lore that's been long lost to the ages in return for their aid against the Stone.

## Forgotten Spirits

The Wood of Empty Houses is not a realm for the dead. The souls of people who've been buried under mainstream history move on to their final fates or return to complete unfinished business as individual circumstances dictate. Instead, the Wood is a place in Twilight where the spirits of ideas and imaginings that have all but vanished linger. This distinction is sometimes difficult to determine, because the inmates of the houses often take the form of the dead people who inspired them to take shape. One house-dweller may represent a forgotten code of honor; another, the simple rituals of households 300

years gone. These ideas are not completely alien — merely lost. The world still has spirits of battle, but the Wood has spirits of battles that the world has forgotten.

The Wood acts like a fetter for the spirits, keeping them on this side of the Gauntlet from the Shadow Realm. As long as they stay near to their fetters — the Empty Houses in which they reside — they gain one point of

Essence per day (enough to survive). Once per day the spirit may try to draw Essence from the physical world surrounding its Empty House by rolling its Power + Finesse, as affected by the local

Gauntlet Strength. The number of successes indicates the number of points of Essence gained.

The spirits of the Wood cannot use their Influences outside of the Wood. The Fallen World has forgotten the spirits so completely that their particular domains will not flower in the Shadow Realm; theirs is now a barren seed. This enrages them, and sets them to forcing hapless visitors to remember them — or carry a part of them back to the world.

The Wood gets its name because no house is ever found on open, populated land. An old thicket surrounds each; some lie, undisturbed, in the midst of wilderness parks or abandoned farmland. Each house has a unique exterior. Many are old longhouses, whose grayish casts are the only sign that they weren't built days or weeks ago, as part of some archeological project. Other houses are ramshackle colonial mansions, reminiscent of the "widow houses" in popular folklore that the distraught build as a tribute to



their dead lovers. Recently, a few of the houses have taken the shape of old brick tenements that look out of place in their darkened copse.

Hidden in scattered stands of twisted trees, these sites dot the entire commonwealth of Massachusetts. However, the sparse lore of the Wood always refers to it as one contiguous place. Characters using the Space 1 "Spatial Awareness" spell (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 233) can sense a spiderweb of distortions that suggests that each ruin is much larger than it appears, and trespassers have sometimes taken leave of their senses only to awaken outside an Empty House several miles away. Awakened accounts of Black-Eyed John describe him speaking about a single Forgotten House and never multiple sites.

The theory, then, is that the sites of the Wood are, in some sense, only one place: a single Hidden Wood with a Forgotten House that has been cast off from the geography of the material and Shadow realms and is only bound to the Fallen World by doorways in dozens of Empty Houses. Chain Parris believes that the most obscure, disconnected spirits live in the deep reaches of the one, true Forgotten House, "dragging" it farther away from the world with the "weight" of their Essence. Mages have never admitted to encountering these beings or the singular House, but it is thought that Black-Eyed John dwells there.

Almost all of the inmates of an Empty House resent human visitors for their forgetfulness, their tendency to gloss over unpleasant history and, above all, the fact that humanity either forgot or repudiated them. Some of the invisible spirits attempt to kill mages who stray into the spirits' grasp, but many of them have a much more insidious power. They can steal part of a visitor's soul and replace it with a part of their own essence. In this fashion, the spirits hope to re-colonize the world that abandoned them. Victims have a part of their memories replaced by the spirit's obscure domain. In some cases, this makes the victim unable to function in the modern world, by, for example, replacing his knowledge of contemporary languages with archaic Algonquian or convincing him that he's a British Loyalist hunted by "rebels." At night, some spirits prowl the nearby Wood themselves, looking for victims. Outside of the Empty Houses, the spirits look like representatives of the cultures that created them, but they have no faces. Instead, they stare at visitors through a star-filled hole surrounded by the edges of a bleeding wound.

Determined mages have breached the Wood of Empty Houses on several occasions. Some mages lose part of their souls for their trouble, but other searchers return with long-lost occult secrets.

### *Soul Replacement*

While Storytellers should design the Wood's spirits to meet the needs of their games, it should be noted that many of the spirits have a Numen equivalent to the Death 3 spell "Sever the Sleeping Soul" (see **Mage: The Awakening**, pp. 141-142). Some spirits have the Death 5 variant that will also work on Awakened souls. Spirits from an Empty House then use the "Possession" Numen

(see **World of Darkness Rulebook**, p. 212) to inhabit the soulless body. This is the only way a spirit consigned to the Wood can travel away from it.

An Awakened soul severed by such a spirit can attempt to return to its body with an extended Resolve + Gnosis roll, rolling once per hour and with a target number equal to the spirit's Willpower. Otherwise, the soul remains inside the Empty House, imprisoned in the spirit's place. Mages can attempt to rescue the soul.

The forgotten entities of the Wood cannot possess someone who has an intact soul. The soul's greater claim to true existence forces the spirit out back to its Empty House. While possessing the soulless victim, the spirit usually tries to re-establish its place in the world. The spirit cannot use its Influence but has skills equal to Influence in related areas. For example, a spirit that represents a forgotten form of ritual combat will have Brawl and Weaponry skills.

### *Black-Eyed John*

*Swift as a storm and quiet as a mouse,  
Black-Eyed John rides from his empty house  
Off to the barren graves and gallows,  
Black-Eyed John keeps the black lands fallow  
Let the ruins lie or meet the red saber's wrath,  
Never plant a seed on the white horse's path.*

— The Rhyme of Black-Eyed John

**Quote:** *You walk the Black-Eyed Ride. Run with your warm flesh or ride on with the dead.*

**Background:** Black-Eyed John's age is a mystery; his mission, private. Mages whisper that he tends the Wood of Empty Houses and keeps a sanctum deep within, in the true Forgotten House that connects all of the ruins of the Wood. Some mages have tried to drive him off over the years, but they have never succeeded. John rarely kills attackers. Hunters just never find him.

In fact, John is a ghost that has retained his Awakened powers. He is nearly 300 years old and has the dubious distinction of being one of the last people in Europe to be burned for witchcraft. His accusers were right. John (Johan at the time) was a gentle Austrian Thyrsus mage with a talent for herbal medicine and weather-witchery. When villagers angered a water spirit, they suffered a barren season. John failed to placate the spirit, and, as a result, his neighbors sent him to the stake. John could have escaped at any time, but had dedicated his spiritual development to nonviolence. He was hated enough to punish, but not feared enough to leave alone.

As he burned, he reflected on a life lived in humble service. It enraged him to die because of his unselfish devotion. His pacifism snapped; he died with an iron determination to make himself remembered and to study the mysteries of the Art without regard for charity. No one understands what causes some people to remain in the world as ghosts while others disappear, but John remained, a ghost in Twilight. He did not avenge his death; it was better, he thought, for the village to dwindle in obscurity than acquire infamy for a haunting. Unlike other ghosts bound to material anchors, John's knowledge of the Death Arcanum allowed him to move freely





without hindrance, and allowed him to create temporary anchors for himself.

John spent the following decades dogging areas plagued by religious strife. He possessed soldiers, because they traveled far and took the bold approach to life he'd always spurned. In time, he acquired a taste for violence, and the bodies he claimed became known for their ability to summon unnatural aid to the battlefield. He even began to use his own name, burning the faces of his puppets in tribute to the torture that had made him a ghost. Across several bodies, he became a witch-mercenary in the employ of certain knowledgeable officers — a career that would lead him to Boston against rebellion in the upstart colonies.

An unstoppable compulsion drove him from the field at the Battle of Bunker Hill to the Wood of Empty Houses. After experiencing the place, he decided that it might be a gateway to the forgotten mysteries. Like him, the spirits were discarded and wanted to regain mythic glory. He has devoted his existence to guarding the Wood's secrets. He and the Wood have a truce in which John keeps the Empty Houses from being discovered in exchange for a safe haven and conversation on occult matters. He has made an anchor for himself in the Wood, perhaps in the legendary Forgotten House itself.

**Description:** John's possessed bodies are covered in the pale creases of burn scars, and their eyes are missing, boiled to blackened sockets. This matches the way the

ghost manifests in Twilight. Unlucky trespassers are likely to find Black-Eyed John atop his spirit horse, riding them down in a tattered red coat like an avenging legend.

**Storytelling Hints:** Despite his memory of his life and his travels thereafter, Black-Eyed John is not exactly a mage clinging to unlife — he's a ghost that thinks he's a mage. While mages debate the fate of the soul for such a ghost mage — whether it truly has one still or is just a shell left behind — Black-Eyed John continues on as if he were still seeking ascension through knowledge of the world's mysteries.

**Attributes:** Power 5, Finesse 5, Resistance 5

**Willpower:** 5

**Max Essence:** 20

**Initiative:** 10

**Defense:** 5

**Speed:** 20

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 10

**Influences:** Death 4, Spirit 4, Space 2

As with other ghost mages, John's Influence resembles spells from the Arcana he knew in life. He can spend one Essence and roll Power + Finesse to "cast a spell." When using one of these abilities, John risks a Paradox as a human mage would.

**Numina:** Claim, Ghost Speech

**Ban:** Unlike other ghosts, John can directly affect his own anchors, although any Paradox that would normally affect him might affect his anchors instead.

# *The Red Word and the Prince of 100,000 Leaves*

This history exists, but it is not true yet: three thousand years ago, Egyptian cannibal-priests summoned what they called He Who Reveals Wisdom in the Fading Moonlight. They wove the demon's body out of blasphemous, prophetic hieroglyphs and spread this testament far and wide. Five hundred years later, blood-quilled scrolls were offered as a sacrifice within the demon's temples. Five hundred years after that, the demon's charnel towers smothered the Second Temple of Judea, and now, lectures of bone display copies in every nation, atop grand, horrible step pyramids erected to its glory. The demon looks at its slaves through the pages of its being and eats at its will. Humanity screams in its sleep.

The demon has many more titles. It's been called Khonsu-Tohut, the Drama of the Outcast Erinye and the Secret Branch of the Tree of Possibility. It has been called the Blasphemous Scribe. The Ebon Noose knows it by this last name.

Nearly 400 years ago, the Noose (then called Epona's Chariot) had its steading at Salem, ready to repel enemies from the indigenous mages and spirits that struggled with the Noose for the land's power. One small medicine society was the cabal's most potent foe. The society descended on the steading with spells and mortal weapons. Worse, they created bestial warriors by calling cannibal Manitou to possess their followers. Sharp-toothed, armed, hungry warriors besieged the steading for days. The Ebon Noose knew that they would fall unless they called upon unusual aid.

The Lernaean was the Ebon Noose's sole warlock and its greatest historian. She specialized in a thread of lore that went as far back as Egypt and beyond, to the legends of great, terrible Abyssal manifestations caused by Paradoxes and the orders of entities that intruded into the world through them. There was one entity — the Blasphemous Scribe — that could change history itself by replacing Time with its own Abyssal coils. The Lernaean knew a ritual that would bring the Scribe forth. It was not Supernal magic, but a procedure that would attract the Scribe's attention and give it a path into the world. She kept the rite hidden because it was too dangerous to unleash, but her allies read whispers of it in her surface thoughts.

The Ebon Noose tortured the secret out of her and called the Scribe to earth through the Lernaean's wailing soul. The Scribe needed a gap in history to appear, and an obliterated soul was the easiest method — and its favorite.

The mad coils of its being unraveled on Salem and on the enemy nation. The medicine society was erased from history. Its long house vanished, leaving an empty cove that would one day be called by the name Howard's Rock. One member of the Ebon Noose vanished in an instant. One turned into a boneless thing that wept blood and screamed blasphemies in the High Speech, until it was burned to ash by the cabal. One took his own life in shame, and four — those who are the acknowledged survivors of the Noose's Salem settlement — left, their

memories confused as to what had happened as Time shuddered around them.

But one mage remembered. The Medusan had destroyed the Lernaean's soul and wrote the terrible history that existed in the Lernaean's mind. The Medusan reeled from visions and crawled away to settle in Howard's Rock. She had two sets of memories: one of the siege and the rite and one of an anti-history, spawned in the Abyss (a cycle of events that birthed wars and atrocities). In this anti-history, there was no America; there was instead Cha'annys, the Land of the Broken Turtlesell, whose princes impaled the dead on bronze pikes so that their eyes could scan the living for signs of treason. She remembered the war with dread Vah and the blood-sewers of nearby Rukhavira, all scales and cells of a larger creature, a demon made out of Time. She remembered the Blasphemous Scribe itself: the Prince of 100,000 Leaves.

She carried a small piece of papyrus with her: fragments of the Prince's history that she wrote down to finish the ritual. She now knew that the Prince was contained in such fragments: she had only to bind them together to make his history true. The Prince *was* this history, this chronicle. To her scarred soul, the Prince was the truest version of reality now. The spell at Salem had broken Time before her, leaving the Prince. Most of the cannibal spirits that had once plagued her cabal were replaced by counterparts from the Shadow Realm that existed in the Prince's anti-history. Rather than mad scavenger-spirits, these beings were considered kings, for cannibalism was a sacrament in the Prince's world.

She used magic to bring the first followers to Howard's Rock, and taught them the cannibal rites of the Prince. When her followers came to devour her a generation later, she didn't resist. With her blood in their throats, the cult of the Red Word sang of cities that would one day exist for a thousand years and ancient lines of tyrants that would erect thrones.

This history exists, but it is not true yet.

## *Doom Yet Unwritten*

The Prince of 100,000 Leaves is a bizarre Abyssal entity that can only fully manifest by rewriting Fallen World existence to suit its own laws. Occultists have predicted the entity's existence by postulating heretical visions of Time that might exist in the Abyss. Some of these forgotten time lines exist in Astral Space as fancies and collective speculation, but the Prince is different: it is an alternate history so abhorrent that it has been rejected by reality itself. The Prince gained a certain self-knowledge and a desire to displace the flow of real events with its presence. The entity knows the Fallen World, because it has been called before by weak-souled mages who invoked Paradoxes using Time magic. The Prince is made of the essence of Time, but only as a castoff, a shell of genuine history that has twisted in the outer dark. The Prince realizes its nature as a timeline that has never been, and resents this. It wants to be the truth. It wants the Fallen World.

The Red Word cult believes that an Egyptian scribe tried to peer too far into the future. Touching the purity of the Void, this cleric encountered the Prince's anti-future instead, and, in his madness, decided to write the entity a "body": a comprehensive chronicle of history under its dominion. The completed book was to consist of 100,000 papyri, but something blocked the completion of the project. This is fortunate, because the cult postulated that, if the whole history were ever recorded and gathered in one medium, it would eject the current timeline into the Abyss. Reality would be the outcast, and the Prince would be the true history of the world. Naturally, members of the Red Word are the predestined rulers of the nations to come — the nations that will, one day, always have existed.

Since the time of that alleged event, the Prince has managed to extrude more of itself into the world through mages who fall to Time-related Paradoxes. Each victim writes a little more of the Prince. One errant sentence in an occult journal describes Azatadghil, the African port inhabited by skinless beasts that arose in the third millennium of the Prince's reign. A mad poet may ramble onto the sadistic legal code of Vah, the theocratic Britain of the anti-history.

### *Calling the Prince*

The individual fragments are mostly harmless, but a powerful enough Paradox (five successes on the Paradox roll — a Manifestation) on a spell involving a fragment might bring a part of the Prince in the form of a spirit that would have existed if the Prince's history were true. A fire-spirit might be replaced by the spirit of a green flame that sheds no warmth but rots whatever it touches. These spirits are as short-lived as any other Manifestations, because they are wholly alien to the Fallen World's ecology.

Unfortunately, these entities are actually extrusions of the Prince and, as such, are determined to lengthen their stays and create more opportunities for incursion. These entities use whatever means they can to inspire (see



below) and collect more fragments. Each additional fragment (a single sentence or a rough sketch) multiplies the entity's lifespan by the number of fragments it has added to its own. For example, a spirit that has a fragment inscribed alongside the one that accompanied its arrival can survive in the Fallen World for twice as long. Additional Paradoxes can bring more anti-spirits, which also benefit from fragment inspiration or collection. These spirits attempt to twist the material world to conform to anti-history. Not all of the spirits are wholly unnatural; if one does manage to twist the Fallen World enough, the spirit can exist indefinitely.

Anomaly Paradoxes can gather fragments without calling entities. The mage scribbles the fragment down, then forgets about it or believes that she intended to put it down all along. Some Paradoxes may change the mage or her surroundings to conform to the Prince's history. Compiled fragments also multiply the duration of these changes.

The anti-spirits use their special Numina to invade and influence the dreams of a rare few Sleepers (usually

writers or artists), who are then driven to record their nightmares — which are actually chronicles of the Prince's anti-history. In this way, more fragments are created. The anti-spirits then collect these fragments (or rely on Red Word cultists to find them) to extend their stay in the Fallen World.

Sleepers who encounter an anti-spirit or a place where it has manifested (soaked with its resonance, even many years later) can also dream of the anti-history. In this way, secret fragments unknown to the Red Word can be found throughout the world, waiting to be compiled into a greater whole.

To compile fragments, a writer or artist must collect them and put them down together so that they form a coherent whole. It must parse as a paragraph or a properly composed work of art. Two unrelated fragments (about Vah and about the giant centipedes of anti-China) would not extend a spirit's stay. Oral traditions can sometimes have this effect, but they must be recited to an ever-expanding audience at least weekly.

Once enough fragments have been compiled, an Abyssal Anomaly occurs — even without the help of a mage or a spellcasting Paradox. These are extremely rare, for the proper combination of fragments, scattered far and wide throughout the world, rarely come together. Once gathered, they have to be put together in the right order, a task requiring skill and a certain knowledge of the Prince's anti-history. If all these requirements are met, the Anomaly can take place. An example of one such incursion of the anti-history into the Fallen World is the Temple of Holy Devouring in Howard's Rock; see pp. 134-137.

### Story Hook — Book Collecting

Since accidents with the Time Arcanum call the Prince (in the form of an anti-spirit), they often get recorded in books, artwork and oral traditions. Mages may quest to find and destroy these tainted chronicles or fight against the infection itself. For a more epic game, a particularly disastrous spell or a compilation may threaten the entire region. Unless stopped, Boston might be transformed into the City of Broken Eyes.

A more subdued game might focus on tracking down and destroying the anti-history as it makes its way to the Red Word by courier, smuggler or acamoth's bargain.

Boston has the highest concentration of the Prince's fragments in the world. It's up to the Storyteller to determine how far the Red Word has progressed in their quest to assemble the 100,000 "leaves" of the Prince. If the cult has made little headway, then it can be treated as an ongoing threat. Otherwise, Storytellers can decide that the project is near completion, and

the Prince (and its terrible anti-history) is about to manifest in whole. Even though Red Word claims that this would bring about the anti-history, they have little evidence for this outside of their own doctrine. The true effect is for the Storyteller to decide, but it probably won't be pleasant.

### *The Red Word*

The Prince's largest and most active cult infests the Boston area. The extended clan of the Red Word is given to extreme wealth or poverty. For every degenerate populating a rude, isolated hillside village, a career-oriented professional makes his way through Boston's throngs. Despite these class differences, there is little rivalry. Red Word cultists put aside their differences to engage in the cult's twin rituals: cannibalism and the recopying of sacred texts.

The cult claims descent from the mythic Egyptian priest who supposedly called the first stories of the Prince from the Abyss. The Medusan's later influence is a minor tale, known to a few cult scholars. In any event, the Red Word place little emphasis on their own history. In fact, they rarely bother to record anything more about their past than they need to maintain social cohesion. To them, accepted history is false; the Prince's chronicle is the true story of events, and needs to be fully told to bring it into being. The cult has compiled enough of the sacred corpus to learn of Boston's counterpart in the anti-history, and Red Word uses this alien description as a secret code. They know the city as Rukhavira, City of Broken Eyes.

Red Word cultists ceaselessly track signs of the Prince of 100,000 Leaves. Naturally, they hope that by copying them all into a single volume, they will complete their master's codex-body. Most Red Word members have their own handwritten books, word processing files and even websites that compile as much of the Prince as they can find. Fortunately, very few of these compilations consist of new fragments; most are recopied from other members. Cultists scour Boston's port, museums and universities for more of the Prince; wealthy members pay antiquities dealers and smugglers handsomely for suspected fragments. The Dead Wrens have unwittingly sold these to cultists on more than one occasion.

The cultists complement fragment collecting with cannibalism, which they regard as the act of stealing a victim's false history. According to their beliefs, every meal weakens the integrity of the current cycle, thinning the barriers that keep the Prince away.

No member of the cult is Awakened, but, thanks to the unnatural energies around Howard's Rock (see pp. 134-137), most of the local cultists are Sleepwalkers. They don't care about occult lore outside of the sacred Prince, for it all comes from the usurping history. However, they do know that entities from the Abyss can influence mages, and so they sometimes hire themselves out to corrupt mages as thugs and intermediaries. The cultists are especially interested in mages who are bedeviled by Manifestation Paradoxes. The Red Word do not know why mages attract entities from the Abyss, but believe that such things are closer to the Prince and are thus worthy of veneration. If cultists actually meet



these entities, they normally ask them for help in the holy mission of bringing the Abyss to the world. Most Manifestations do not respond at all, as they reflect faults in the mage's own soul more than the Abyss itself. Some other Abyssal entities *have* responded to petitions, however. These beings might force a mage to cooperate with the cult.

## Story Hook — Decadent and Depraved

The Red Word are excellent secondary antagonists for stories that pit players' characters against the Abyss. Red Word cannibals are fine fanatical extras who have to be defeated or avoided before the cabal can overcome the primary antagonist: the Prince. The more refined members of the cult are fixers and informants who carefully hide freezers of human meat in their condos. Ambitious cultists can carefully (and literally) eat their way through Boston Brahmins who inconvenience them. City Red Word members are conscientious anthropophagists who never let a scrap go to waste, so their victims' bodies are almost never found.

Cannibalism serves as an excellent allegory for upper-class decadence, so Storytellers may want to conceal a Red Word cult among the city's elite. Street people might start vanishing. Mages can lose contact with friends and contacts. This puts them on the trail of the cult, which uses its own prestige and influence to foil the investigation.

When subtlety isn't what is needed, Storytellers can always rely on the country cousins: isolated mutants with bloodstained faces and a penchant for using power tools in personal combat. When these people aren't serving dark mages or ancient spirits, they provide an interesting hazard for mages traveling the countryside.

Feel free to put the cabal in Howard's Rock (see below) during a feast night, and see how they deal with it. Don't whip out the chainsaws and country music right away, though. Let the cabal get comfortable and even a bit contemptuous of the Red Word cult. Introduce signs that something is horribly wrong, and leave a fight for survival to the last act of the story.

## Cannibal Versus Cannibal

The Shadow Realm has a group of spirits that represent cannibal urges. These have been called *wendigo*, *atcen*, Bearwalkers and other names. They are found around the

world, but have been most famously described through a Native lens. Some of these spirits are actually benevolent and represent the desire to cling to life against adversity. Some of them preside over instinctual cannibalism in animal species. A rare few represent cannibalism as an expression of greed and domination.

Humans in the presence of these spirits can transform into animalistic predators who lose their minds to the taste of human meat. This occurs through direct possession or the spirit's Influence. The Ebon Noose riled up spirits like these, and the medicine society used the spirits to attack the Ebon Noose.

The cannibal-Manitou, also called *chenoo*, resent the alien spirits that appear with fragments of the Prince's chronicle. Cannibalistic resonance is hard to come by, and the Prince's extrusions into the Shadow World leave little left for the *chenoo* to feed on. Thus, mages who would fight the Red Word might be able to call upon some unpleasant allies. And, of course, there is only one easy way to keep cannibal spirits strong . . .

## *Chenoo*

**Description:** The *chenoo* looks like a starving old man or woman with eyes like a wild animal, such as a wolf or bear. The *chenoo* is naked, with teeth marks on its skin, and its lips are gnawed away. Its fingernails are sharp like claws.

**Rank:** 2

**Attributes:** Power 5, Finesse 2, Resistance 3

**Willpower:** 5

**Max Essence:** 15

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 5

**Speed:** 17

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 8

**Influence:** Hunger ...

The *chenoo* can make a hungry person so hungry that he's willing to eat just about anything. If this Influence is used over a course of days in which the victim has not eaten, he will eventually buckle and be willing to eat human flesh.

**Numina:** Cannibalism (the *chenoo* can Materialize and eat human flesh, gaining Essence from their meals: one point per Size point eaten), Gauntlet Breach, Harrow, Living Fetter, Materialize

**Ban:** The *chenoo* cannot use its Influence or Numina against a person who has never killed and eaten another living thing. In the modern world, in which most people eat food killed by another person, the *chenoo* have fewer victims than in the past.

## *Howard's Rock*

Two kinds of towns dot the Massachusetts coast. Picture-pretty villages amuse the tourists with historical plaques, antique architecture and friendly little shops. Visitors don't see the other kind too often. Commonwealth authorities forget to repair their connecting roads and their moldering, crooked buildings. Erratic streetlights practically urge motorists to keep driving. Most of these towns are poor, with a hard-drinking mix of teenagers



desperate to leave and aging farmers and fishermen loath to abandon their ancestral homes.

Howard's Rock is the latter kind of town, except for two important differences. First, the village has a luxurious hotel that's famous for its cuisine (French continental) and its friendly (if a bit rustic and ignorant) staff. Second, and certainly less well known, is the fact that every inhabitant above the age of 12 is a cannibal who worships an entity from the Abyss: the living anti-history called the Prince of 100,000 Leaves.

The town harbors the largest enclave of the Red Word cult (see pp. 133-134). Howard's Rock is a place where Red Word cannibals can let down their hair, so to speak. They can cook severed arms on the barbeque without looking over their shoulders and freely worship a living fragment of the Prince itself. For all the utterly evil acts that the cult takes as a matter of course, many members still ape human norms enough to enjoy their hobbies and pursue career ambitions. (This doesn't prevent devoted cultists from turning utterly mad. Rather, local culture has made it the norm, and the townspeople have learned to reflexively cover for the odd social gaffe.)

That's why the Howard's Rock Hotel exists. There was no particular sinister plan in mind when Ezekiel Johnston proposed the business at a town hall meeting. He'd always wanted to be an entrepreneur. He had worked hard, saved his money and earned his chef's papers in Paris. He would have opened a restaurant in the fiercely competitive New

York market, but the French police wanted him for the murder (and subsequent skinning, spicing and broiling) of a prominent saucier. Ezekiel knew very well that fellow citizens thought that the hotel would bring in meat on the hoof, so to speak, but he hoped that the cult's sense of discretion would prevail.

For the next decade, it did. On one occasion, impulsive local teenagers caused a "boating accident" with some of the guests, but, even though Ezekiel shared in the sacred feast, the kids saw the business end of his hickory cane right afterward. Everything seemed to be running smoothly, until the Red Word attained part of their dream.

Cult scholars assembled a new, complete paragraph of their Prince's chronicle. Combined with generations of worship, the act summoned a fragment of the Prince itself. It was called the Temple of Holy Devouring, and its arrival, sprouting out of a Verge in the Shadow Realm coastal rock of the harbor, tore the town out of synch with the Fallen World. The phenomenon erased hundreds of records, effectively erasing evidence that the town had ever existed. A chilling mist cloaked it from aerial observation. People in a few neighboring towns could still tell people where Howard's Rock was and even make pointed remarks about the villagers' notorious bad breath and odd habits, but, aside from that, only two pieces of information were still easy to find: its name and the existence of the Howard's Rock Hotel. Both appeared on too many

maps, brochures and fine dining magazines to disappear overnight. Ezekiel's adamant refusal to allow cult business to take place inside the hotel may have shielded it from the phenomenon that hid the town.

### *Eat or Be Eaten*

It's easy for urbane visitors to deride Howard's Rock. This is something that may ensure their survival, because even though Ezekiel is strictly loyal to the cult, he has a real passion for his little hotel and resents fellow citizens who slake their hunger on the tourists. This does not mean, however, that he will shelter opponents of the cult or similar troublemakers; he may actually go to great lengths to see that they are properly marinated for their just deserts.

Now that the Temple of Holy Devouring squats on the Shadow Realm shore, cultists prefer to eat human flesh there. They do not know exactly what the proper rites are (they have yet to find parts of the Prince's chronicle that can tell them), but they believe that it is the proper thing to do. Cultists only have to walk through the Verge to worship, and most adults have become so attuned to the place that they can even see it from a distance and have stopped noticing that it actually exists in the Shadow Realm. Constant exposure to the supernatural has long since dulled the Quiescence among the townsfolk; all of them are Sleepwalkers (see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 334).

The temple is an impressive edifice, consisting of three intertwined, twisting towers, with a fourth indescribable shape like a rippling polygon flickering in and out of an observer's peripheral vision. The towers are built of blue-veined rock, covered in green copper struts. Inside, each tower has a staircase leading to a rune-covered chamber with a free-floating, unquenchable flame in its center. Beneath the tower, a labyrinth extends farther than any Red Word member has been able to walk. The cult has walled off certain portions so as to imprison sacrifices; another tunnel leads into the interior of the shape: a perfect sphere with one grilled drain leading into utter darkness. It is here that the Red Word performs its most holy rites.

Red Word cannibalism is based on the belief that once the cultists ritually devour a victim, that little piece of history that the victim creates with her life and actions has been obliterated. Normally, the feast is only symbolic, but when it's performed in the temple itself it actually comes to pass. After Red Worders eat the victim, signs that she existed begin to disappear, bit by bit. Sleeper friends and family forget they ever knew the victim and invent explanations for any traces she left behind. Eventually, even material traces fade.

This is more than mere forgetfulness. The victim's place in the universe erodes, and the discontinuities she leaves behind represent a ragged hole in reality. Sleepers with extraordinary Willpower (9 or 10) experience a startling vision of the Void beyond reality the first time they contemplate the missing history. The experience is the stuff of nightmares; Sleepers must make a Morality roll (-5 difficulty). If they succeed, they can turn their

horrified attentions away. If they fail, they are seized by temporary derangements. From then on, sufferers make successive Morality rolls to return to sanity, rolling each week until they are successful, in which case they lose the derangements and need make no more rolls. Every week the condition persists, the victim gains another derangement and must make a separate daily roll to shake off each derangement.

Most of these victims eventually shake off the madness, but a very small number lose their minds (in game terms, they lose all their Morality). These unfortunates become a danger to others, because once they fully, madly appreciate the Void, *something* notices. It's only a matter of time until something possesses the victim.

Although the Awakened are immune to this effect, it does apply to Red Word cultists. The Abyss and the immoral nature of the feast take their toll on the townsfolk. The buildings fall into disrepair, enhancing Howard's Rock's already sinister ambiance. Visitors are likely to see rustic madmen tending the gardens outside of their teetering homes on the way downtown. If actual Abyssal beings have taken hold of any of the citizenry, the beings are keeping a low profile, but the presence of mages may inspire any hidden demons to take action.

### *Temple Hounds*

If the Storyteller has access to **World of Darkness: Antagonists**, every adult in Howard's Rock has at least the first stage of the Hunger (see **World of Darkness: Antagonists**, pp. 118–121). Over generations, town families have built up a resistance to the curse (or else the Temple of Holy Devouring has changed the curse to suit an alternate history where cannibalism is a way of life) so that it rarely progresses beyond the second stage.

Sometimes the resistance doesn't quite take, though, and a few town cannibals lose their minds to the lust for human meat. These unfortunates are not pitied, but revered. They are the Temple Hounds. The cult breaks them in with a steady supply of meat so that they won't attack fellow cannibals. It teaches Hounds to lope on all fours and how to respond to a leash and muzzle. Seen in heavy shadow, a visitor might mistake a Temple Hound for a huge dog, but in any significant light the differences — staring human eyes, razor teeth and hairless, callused skin — are horribly obvious. Cultists tattoo Temple Hounds with fragments of the Prince to edify the devout, and then set the Hounds to patrol the Temple of Holy Devouring. When enemies invade, cultists loose Hounds to scour the town.

Temple Hounds develop excellent smell and night vision. Their claws and distorted musculature increase their speed. Exposure to the elements, the beatings used to train them and their ability to mindlessly disregard pain toughen them against blows. In addition to the traits of a fifth-stage victim of the Hunger, Temple Hounds add two points to their base Speed, one point of armor against lethal and bashing attacks and +4 dice to perception rolls. Aside from the Hounds' regular handlers, they can only distinguish between cannibals and non-cannibals by smell. The Temple Hounds are, of course, trained to attack the latter.

## Story Hook — Cleansing the Taint

Howard's Rock is a blight on reality. The cannibals have called down fragment of the Outside so abhorrent to natural laws that the Fallen World appears to reject it. Red Word temple rites fray reality victim by victim. It's only a matter of time until the cultists find more of the Prince of 100,000 Leaves.

Sometimes, you have to call down the thunder.

Once the characters discover the secret of Howard's Rock, they might want to wipe the place from the face of the earth. This can be the center of a major, combat-heavy story, with squads of cannibals fending off a fragile but potent alliance of cabals. Even Seers of the Throne and Banishers may be willing to put aside their enmity to join an invasion force. Thanks to the nature of the Abyssal Anomaly, Storytellers don't need to worry about how it will all look to Sleepers until after the battle.

Hordes of Red Word cultists aren't quite enough to carry this kind of story, so there should be a greater threat at the story's finale. The Red Word may call upon acamoth-ridden allies and dark entities for aid. Cabals race against the cult's efforts to assemble a potent sentence from the Prince's history. This fragment could expand and empower the temple or summon potent Abyssal entities to ravage the ranks of mages.

Finally, add a bit of moral complexity by showing that Howard's Rock, for all its horror, has uninitiated children, frail elderly and citizens who never wanted to join the cult but had to eat human flesh or be served up themselves.

### *Rural Cultists*

**Quote:** *Not from 'round here, are ya?*

**Background:** Red Word members from Howard's Rock and the nearby countryside look poor, eccentric and a bit dull-witted — until they use guile to lure mages to their dinner tables.

**Description:** Red Word members from Howard's Rock don't like to leave town unless they have a special aptitude or feel called to join the search for their Prince. As a result, they wear dated, patched clothes. They tend to stare at inappropriate times and only expose their teeth when it's time to eat.

**Storytelling Hints:** Storytellers can play up the hick stereotype to lure characters into a false sense of security or simply treat them as laconic rural folk until their origins are

known. In fact, characters who get lost in the countryside or have their cars break down may get some help from cultists, only to be marked as potential prey and tracked to their destinations. Remember that all Howard's Rock cultists are Sleepwalkers (due to the strange Abyssal manifestation there) and have at least a passing knowledge of the occult.

### Abilities

**Handy (dice pool 5)** — Cultists have to learn to fix things for themselves, to avoid the risk of visiting technicians discovering the unsavory side of Red Word life. Many members can coax broken-down cars into new life, fix plumbing or do home repairs.

**Lore of the Prince (dice pool 6)** — Cultists know a lot about the Prince of 100,000 Leaves, including its anti-history and enough cosmology to realize that there is a separation between the Abyss and the Fallen World, but they aren't usually aware of the existence of the Supernal World. They know mages sometimes truck with the Abyss but don't know the difference between a Manifestation caused by a Paradox and an acamoth. The cultists rarely know how Awakened magic actually functions.

### *Annie and Zechariah Crowther*

A casual observer would never recognize that Annie and Zechariah are fraternal twins. Zechariah's an editor with a large publisher that specializes in lurid thrillers, erotica written by "Anonymous" and New Age books about healing crystals. He's one supervisor away from a corner office with a view of the harbor. Zee's considering eating the present supervisor to boost Zechariah's career, but it might attract too much attention. For now, the situation has resigned him to advancement though hard work.

Nobody knows that Annie, who comes in to clean Zechariah's office twice a week, is his sister. She doesn't mind, though; Zee sends half of his money back to the family home in Howard's Rock and keeps their meat in his walk-in freezer. Annie's a crack shot with a gun and has excellent survival skills. These traits have served her well when the twins have worked for amoral mages — Annie is good at thug work; Zechariah has helped with social connections and, in one case, gave a mage the publishing contract he always wanted — or tracked down pieces of the Prince.

If one were inclined to stereotype, it could be said that Zee has the brains and Annie the brawn, but they're both clever people who've adapted well to their respective surroundings. Zee handles his employers' slush pile: manuscripts that are either wrong for the company, poorly written or just plain crazy. Three years ago, he ran across a manuscript that included a tiny fragment of the Prince. Digging through the archives, he found one more, buried in an execrable science fiction novel that they'd rejected but had wound up seeing print for another company. Since then, he's developed the theory that some creative people can contact the Prince through their chosen medium. He uses his literary connections to hunt down likely prospects, and Annie leads a few of her kin to bag the prize. So far, a handful of novelists in New York, Chicago and Seattle look like they're close to finding the Prince through their work.

They have one shameful secret: Daddy. He succumbed to the Hunger (a curse that plagues cannibals — see



**World of Darkness: Antagonists**, pp. 118–121), but when the twins struck out for the big city they just didn't want to be apart from their darling father. They packed Daddy up when they left Howard's Rock. They love the Temple Hound (see p. 136) dearly, and, after they cut out his tongue, he doesn't make much of a ruckus. Keeping him fed is, however, proving to be a major challenge. Sometimes, Daddy comes in handy though. Two people have broken in to the Crowthers' condo in the last five years, but Daddy made sure the burglars didn't steal anything. Zee and Annie just had to clean the blood and throw away the tattered clothes.

### *Zechariah Crowther*

**Quote:** *You look positively — delectable tonight.*

**Description:** Zechariah (or “Zee,” as he’s called in Boston’s club scene) is a stylish, reedy, stereotypical metrosexual man who’s eminently confident, always well dressed and attracts men and women with little more than a glance and a nod. Of course, once you’ve eaten Club Kid Tartar, you’re less inclined to have any hang-ups about one-night stands. Still, the Hunger makes him prone to the odd cold stare.

**Age:** 29

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 4, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Academics (Editing) 3, Computer 2, Investigation (Book Collecting) 3, Medicine 3, Occult 4

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 1 Brawl 2, Drive 2, Firearms 1, Weaponry 1

**Social Skills:** Intimidation 1, Persuasion 4, Socialize (Clubbing) 4, Subterfuge 3.

**Merits:** Danger Sense, Iron Stomach, Allies (Red Word 3), Barfly, Contacts (Booksellers, Authors), Resources 4, Sleepwalker, Status (Corporate) 2, Striking Looks 2

**Willpower:** 6

**Morality:** 2



**Virtue:** Prudence

**Vice:** Pride

**Initiative:** 4

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9

**Health:** 7

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Clip	Special	Dice Pool
Chainsaw	3 (L)	—	—	9 again	6
Shotgun	4 (L)	20/40/80	5+1	9 again	7

**Special (Optional):** Zechariah is afflicted with the first stage of the Hunger. See **World of Darkness: Antagonists**, pp. 118–121. Zee suffers a –1 penalty to Social rolls, but, unlike most sufferers, his Mental rolls are unaffected, as he expects the Hunger-dreams that disturb others and treats the dreams as personal religious revelations.

### *Annie Crowther*

**Quote:** *Can't chop ya up when yer twitchin' like that.*

**Description:** Annie's stout build, stringy hair and thick rural accent prevent anyone from associating her with her suave brother. She normally looks down, shyly, but when she smiles for supper she bares her pointed, shark-like teeth.

**Age:** 29

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social Attributes:** Presence 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 4

**Mental Skills:** Animal Ken (Cats) 3, Crafts (Housecleaning) 3, Investigation 2, Medicine 3, Occult 4

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Drive 3, Firearms 4, Stealth 3, Survival 4, Weaponry 2



**Social Skills:** Intimidation (Wicked Laugh) 3, Socialize 1, Subterfuge 1

**Merits:** Allies (Red Word 3), Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Iron Stamina, Iron Stomach, Snap Shot, Sleepwalker

**Willpower:** 8

**Morality:** 2

**Virtue:** Fortitude

**Vice:** Wrath

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 3

**Speed:** 11

**Health:** 8

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Clip	Special	Dice Pool
Chainsaw	3 (L)	—	—	9 again	8
Shotgun	4 (L)	20/40/80	5+1	9 again	11

**Special (Optional):** Annie is well into the second stage of the Hunger. See **World of Darkness: Antagonists**, pp. 118–121. As a result, she suffers a –2 penalty for Social rolls and has obviously unnatural, shark-like teeth.

*“Daddy”*

**Quote:** (Grunting noises)

**Background:** Devout Red Word cultist John Crowther was always a little too earnest at cult functions and was known to shove worshipers aside to get at the choice parts of a sacrifice. He fell into the Hunger completely and was trained as a Temple Hound, but his children just couldn’t bear to be without him. Now Daddy guards the twins’ large penthouse condominium. He’s usually bored, waiting for his children to feed him. Fat on a diet of medical waste, he greets intruders with salivating enthusiasm. New people give Daddy *real* meat.

**Description:** Daddy’s hairless, callused body is covered with crude tattoos glorifying the Prince of 100,000 Leaves. He trots on all fours, shriveled lips pulled back in a shark’s grin. His teeth are yellow, sharp and very long.

**Age:** 50

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 1, Wits 2, Resolve 3

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 6, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5

**Social Attributes:** Presence 1, Manipulation 1, Composure 1

**Physical Skills:** Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Stealth 3

**Merits:** Iron Stamina, Iron Stomach, Sleepwalker

**Willpower:** 3

**Morality:** 1

**Virtue:** Fortitude



**Vice:** Gluttony

**Initiative:** 6

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 16

**Health:** 10

**Weapons/Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Special	Dice Pool
Claws/Teeth	(L)	—	9

**Armor:** 1

**Special (Optional):** As a Temple Hound (see p. 133), Daddy has a +4 bonus to perception rolls because of a combination of training and exposure to the Verge at Howard’s Rock. Thanks to the Hunger, he fails all Social rolls and makes Mental rolls at a –2 penalty unless these relate to finding food.





# BEAST OF BURDEN

I've seen all sorts of things come through Boston. The sea washes up a lot of what's lost and a lot of what should remain lost. But I put no mind to such old wives' tales — everything's got a value and a price, and somebody's got to be the broker. I've yet to see something come through here by ship that can't be turned to some good. Of course, the same's true the other way — there's nothing that can't be turned to bad use, either.

— Davy Jones, mage of the Dead Wrens cabal

Pirates, smugglers and stowaways have all touched Boston's port of call and left behind legacies. Awakened visitors also leave their mark. In the past, these travelers set the foundation for the region's occult communities, but now established mages are apt to look at newcomers as natural marks, meddlers or hapless random elements that blithely smash the established mages' plans.

No community is truly isolated, though, so the Wise must deal with these occult tourists. Boston seems to have an unlimited capacity for new ideas, even if it's just to ground them down into conceptual meal for the cultural melting pot. In the following story, the pros and cons of the situation show themselves as a singular monster stalks Boston's Awakened. Every death the monster leaves brings the possibility of a new life.

Storytellers should read the entire story first. Since it contains everything the Storyteller needs to run (and surprise players with) it, the players should not read what follows until they've played through the story themselves.



Thereupon, thou wilt be greatly frightened, awed, and terrified, and wilt tremble; and thou wilt attempt to tell lies, saying, 'I have not committed any evil deed.'

Then the Lord of Death will say, 'I will consult the Mirror of Karma.'

— The Tibetan Book of the Dead, Lama Kazi Dawa Samdup, trans.

### Default Assumptions

This story assumes that you are playing with a cabal of relatively inexperienced mages: characters who have completed their prelude and training and may have experienced a few sticky situations, but who aren't really established in their own right yet. If you are using more experienced characters, you'll have to make the antagonists tougher and play up the political situation more, since the cabal will be stronger and, presumably, more ensconced in occult politics.

### Synopsis

Wu Zhengfu hires the cabal to capture the beast that devoured his master, Khatvanga. He calls the monster the Shinje, a protective deity referred to in Tibetan mythology. In fact, the Shinje is actually a powerful spirit called the Threefold Resurrection. It kills victims and devours their souls but then reincarnates one in a young, healthy body. The deity escaped from its cage and now stalks Boston. Wu gives the characters the one reliable way to track the beast down: the ritual dagger (called a *phurba*) that his master, Khatvanga, used to work magic. Wu begs the characters to keep the whole thing a secret, lest other mages use the Shinje for evil ends.

In fact, this is a deception. Wu is soul-dead; Khatvanga implanted this information in his slave's mind, and he fully believes it. Khatvanga summoned the Shinje to restore his youth in a new body and increase his power. Toward that end, the Shinje devoured him, using its gruesome Rebirth Numen (see p. 150). Over the next seven nights the creature will stalk and devour two more mages. One of them will be reborn in a healthy body, but Khatvanga cannot guarantee that it will be him. Thus, Wu is acting as part of a plan to ensure that Khatvanga will win the prize of rebirth.

Theoretically, any mage devoured by the Shinje can reincarnate from the Shinje's form. If someone confronts the sated beast with an object that holds the resonance of the victim, the Shinje brings forth that life and uses the other two souls to fuel its creation. The characters are supposed to encounter the beast with Khatvanga's item — the *phurba* — in hand and bring about the mage's new incarnation.

Partway through the mission, the cabal learns the truth — but so do other cabals who've lost members to the beast. They learn how the reincarnation process works and are determined to rouse their comrade from the belly of the spirit. However, only one mage can live again so tensions rise to the point of open violence. The player characters' cabal must decide who will rise from the monster, and who will be utterly consumed.

### Involving the Cabal

Of course, there is a limit to how much you can hint, cajole and threaten the troupe into participating in this story. If none of your leads seem to work, save the story for another day. Here are several suggestions about how to bring the cabal to the story. Use or combine these preludes however you like.

### Grief

Rumor has it that an expatriate Tibetan Necromancer was aboard the *Hawk of Guangdong* (a ship recently docked in Boston Harbor), but disappeared when one of his experiments went awry. His only student was a man named Wu, who's offering cash and tass to investigate the disappearance. The Dead Wrens think that a local cabal killed the Necromancer, but aren't interested in the loot; they're currently flush with tass and busy with other affairs.

### Omens

A member of the cabal with the Dream Merit has a bizarre nightmare. In it, a wizened, blood-soaked man dons a demonic bull mask and flees the cabin of a ship, leaving a terrified young man (Wu) and a pile of gnawed human bones behind him. The next night, the dreaming mage sees the Shinje prowling Boston, with its horned head exposed to the moonlight (see p. 150 for its description). The Shinje gnaws three saplings to the ground and runs away with incredible speed and agility. The trunks of the trees ooze human blood. The blood pools into the Atlantean runes for the Death and Spirit Arcana.

### Research

The cabal encounters an occult text, a website or another source that describes the Shinje, a legendary harbinger of death. Whether they wish to destroy it or learn more, they discover that a recently arrived Tibetan mage keeps one caged for his own meditative rituals. The Dead Wrens have met the servant Wu

Zhengfu and have agreed to keep the mage's existence quiet, but are willing to trade a minor favor to share this fact. When the player cabal members arrive, they find Wu, clearly distraught over his master's death. Wu asks them to hunt the spirit down.

### *Duty*

In exchange for a service or uncontested territory of their own, an area cabal (most likely, the Company or the Ebon Noose) asks the cabal to serve as diplomats. They are to visit the *Hawk of Guangdong* and learn more about Khatvanga, a Necromancer who is rumored to be aboard along with all of his possessions and followers. If Khatvanga's a threat, the cabal's superiors would rather expose the player cabal to danger than risk their own mages. When the characters arrive, they are ushered into a cargo hold full of smashed statues and torn tapestries. A broken, twisted cage in the center and bloodstains add credence to the acolyte's story. There is, however, no body. Wu supposed that the Shinje swallowed Khatvanga whole, but the acolyte admits that he was not personally present when Khatvanga died. However, Wu was standing outside the only door to the cabin. He heard terrible screams and was knocked aside by something huge, but didn't get a good look at it. Wu says he has no use for what remains, and will give Khatvanga's possessions to the players' cabal if it finds and destroys the Shinje.

## *Scene One: From the Ship to the Streets*

The *Hawk of Guangdong* is a rusty cargo ship that flies under the Chinese flag. The crew are all experienced sailors and all Chinese; most of them know very little English outside of nautical phrases and speak Mandarin poorly since they mostly come from Hakka- and Cantonese-speaking regions. The crew have also all been bribed to keep quiet; Khatvanga has been the master of the ship for just under five years, and, thanks to his magic, they've made a lot of money. None of them saw how the old mage died, and some of them claim he's not dead — that they saw him leave the ship, looking very ill. (This was the Shinje masquerading in Khatvanga's form.)

When the characters meet Wu, they'll immediately recognize that he's distraught. His face is puffy with recently shed tears, and there are bags under his eyes. Wu Zhengfu (Zhengfu is his proper name) also looks ashen and walks with a listless gait, but this is not because he's unhappy. It's because Khatvanga stole his soul a month ago in a failed experiment designed to renew his youth.

Wu's entire act is part of a spell Khatvanga cast before the old mage let himself be devoured by the Shinje. Wu bears a false aura (the Prime 3 "Transform Other Aura" spell with a Potency of 5; see **Mage: The Awakening**, p. 227), so his missing soul will not be obvious to anyone

who does not see through the Prime spell (with a Prime 1 "Supernal Vision" spell of Potency 6 or higher or an extended scrutiny specifically for the purpose of detecting a concealing spell). The false, transformed aura's nature looks to be that of an Awakened person. Due to additional magic that Khatvanga cast (Mind 4 "Breach the Vault of Memory," Potency 4), Wu believes everything he says to the cabal, so Mind cannot be used to tell whether or not he is lying (and it requires a Potency 5, Mind 1 "Third Eye" spell to detect the presence of the memory-altering spell).

Wu tells the cabal that Khatvanga kept the Shinje in an ensorcelled iron cage to remind him of the ever-present threat of death. The spirit had never posed a threat before, and Wu had gotten used to it, confident that, as one of Khatvanga's defeated enemies, it could not bring the old mystic to harm. The cage still has the slight aura of a Matter spell designed to strengthen it and a Spirit spell to fetter the spirit on this side of the Gauntlet. The cargo hold is full of smashed Tibetan heirlooms.

Some items did survive. Wu says that Khatvanga bound the beast with a phurba (a Tibetan ritual knife) and that if the cabal takes it with them, they should be able to track the creature down through its sympathetic ties to the weapon (an Intimate connection). The phurba has a powerful aura of Death and Spirit magic about it. To help them track the monster down, the acolyte offers 20 points of tass (in the form of a necklace of black beads) and his master's remaining possessions. Wu further asks that the cabal keep the matter a secret. He doesn't want other mages capturing the Shinje and making the same mistake as Khatvanga. Wu is afraid that unscrupulous occultists will use the Shinje as some kind of "attack dog"; worse, he is frightened that mages and witch hunters will hunt him down for bringing such danger to Boston.

### *Complications*

One or more characters might discover that Wu is soul-dead: a victim of Khatvanga's previous failed attempt to hold back age and death. If they reveal this to Wu, he will commit suicide shortly thereafter, seemingly distressed over his master's death. Aside from the phurba, nothing else onboard carries Khatvanga's resonance so strongly as the knife.

The characters do acquire an accurate description of the beast but no clues about its capabilities. If concerns about Wu's nature cause the cabal to try and pass the matter to other mages, the characters' contacts still decide to leave them to it. The Ebon Noose considers the matter beneath them, and the Dead Wrens are more concerned that a local mage might be responsible for Khatvanga's death. The Gravediggers would be very interested in the Shinje and Khatvanga. If such an exotic spirit can reverse death itself, it might be a useful slave. Mages could hold the souls of their enemies hostage until paid.



moment any threat or encounter winds down, let the Shinje pounce.

The monster is hideously fast, tough and horrific. Make sure to describe its taloned limbs, its tusked, horned skull and its charnel-ground breath. The spirit fights savagely, but the cabal should be able to fend it off (but not destroy it) unless they do something obviously incompetent.

At some point, a member of the cabal may bring out the phurba to use against the Shinje, but this has no effect on anything but sympathetic magic, as noted. If that doesn't happen, play the Shinje's reactions toward the phurba's carrier (see below). If for some reason the cabal doesn't have the knife, then they've made a mistake; let the spirit inflict a more serious injury. Eventually, the monster retreats to seek out more Awakened souls.

In any event, the phurba (or its wielder) creates a significant reaction several turns into the fight. The spirit stares at the phurba (or the mage) and roars, before the Shinje's face distorts into that of a wizened man. Khatvanga's soul recognizes the phurba. In Tibetan, the creature screams "Not yet! Not yet!" and runs. The cabal will have time to see it take a half-human form as it rears up and bounds for the nearest escape route, hinting that it can change shape.

### *Complications*

Matters related to the location of the phurba have been covered, but a more serious problem may arise if the characters relentlessly pursue the Shinje. You can deal with this in a number of ways.

You may let it run through a crowded area, where magic becomes risky to use. Take the opportunity to let it shapeshift into an old Asian man (Khatvanga) to camouflage itself. The creature maximizes its Occultation throughout the chase. You can also let the spirit flee to a strange area, such as Copp's Hill Burial Ground, or even through another cabal of mages. The inhabitants are disturbed by the Shinje and don't care much for company, either.

Mages can slow the creature down or otherwise attempt to capture it, but if they do so too soon then the Shinje won't have consumed the three Awakened souls it needs to perform a reincarnation. If cornered, the Shinje will

## *Scene Two: The Hunt*

This scene gives the characters a taste of what they're fighting. Storytellers may run this as the result of the characters tracking the Shinje or justify the scene by having the Shinje stalk them for their souls. The spirit can sense Awakened souls within its line of sight, so, regardless of the reasons why they meet, the Shinje starts by stalking the mages from an appropriately stealthy vantage point.

Even though the phurba has an intimate sympathetic connection to the creature, characters must still pierce its powerful Occultation Numen (see p. 150). The Shinje may give up its Occultation at will. The monster will take this risk to lure scrying mages closer. It takes the risk of being attacked in the hope that an over-eager mage will hurry to its location, where the Shinje will hunt the mage down. The Shinje has Claimed Khatvanga's body (an extreme form of possession; see the Claim Numen, p. 150) and prowls in a constantly shifting material form.

If the cabal is stalking the Shinje, make sure to provide a moment of false tension before it strikes. This is a classic horror movie device. For example, a hulking figure in the shadows could end up being a local drunk or a strange noise may only be a rat, cat or dog.

One other way to generate tension is to introduce some non-sequitur strangeness from elsewhere in this book. Just make sure to keep the characters focused on the story at hand, preferably by withholding the time the players need to really process this odd new development. The

attack to consume the players' characters. Of course, if the Shinje has consumed more than one member of the players' cabal and then begins reincarnating into one of its victims, the cabal will have a hard decision to make: which one of their fallen will be born again and which ones will die?

## Scene Three: The Spirit Evolves

The Shinje has seven days to consume two additional Awakened souls. The spirit doesn't need to do this at the rate of one a day, but its deadline is otherwise absolute. By 1 A.M. on Day 8, the Shinje can no longer complete the metamorphosis, and will then disincorporate. This is a particular concern for characters whose comrades have been devoured, but they may not know this yet. If this is the case, you may want to switch this event with the next one.

In any case, at this point the Shinje has eaten the soul of one other mage (besides Khatvanga), and it's been at least two days since it "escaped." By default, the Shinje devours a traveling Guardian of the Veil named Agartha, who's come to Boston to lend Potestas a book on the occult significance of cannibal spirits. The book is not significant to this story, but might provide clues about the Red Word cult (see p. XX). As Agartha essentially enters this story to be eaten, his traits are not especially important; you can provide any (posthumous) additional traits or character background you wish.

To pack a punch, you may instead want the spirit to eat a more prominent figure like Anacaona de Xaragua instead. If you pick a mage that cabal members already have a rivalry with, it becomes an effective frame-up. The Shinje's aura radiates with the auras of all of its stolen souls, so, as long as examiners are familiar with the victims' auras, the examiners can determine who has been killed.

With each victim, the creature refines its ability to shapeshift and acts with more subtlety. Bostonian victims help it blend in because it can draw upon their souls to assume their forms, voices and memories. If the Shinje devours Agartha, it benefits from his order's skills at deception and impersonation.

### Killing a Mage

If you really want to be daring, let the creature kill a member of the players' cabal. Unlike most stories, this is not an irreversible event. The cabal will have a chance to get the victim back if it can beat other mages who also fight for the right to direct the spirit's transformation.

If the Ebon Noose gets involved and loses one of its mages, they will pressure any concerned

parties to help the spirit bring back *that* mage. They are willing to fight for it with a Duel Arcane. If a player's character wins, the Noose will relent but watches the cabal as possible rivals.

### Complications

Again, the danger is that the characters will try to catch the Shinje before the story develops itself any further. Storytellers have to tread a careful path here by rewarding the players' efforts without giving up the spirit.

Let each encounter with the spirit provide more hints about its nature and purpose. Following are some tactics you might use:

- After the Shinje eats its victim, the spirit rapidly transforms through the shapes of every mage it has devoured. The shapes don't come and go gently. Khatvanga's face and arms erupt from the spirit to claw at another victim's face. Khatvanga is strangled in turn by an arm that erupts from the victim that followed.
- The spirit carries the auras of all of its victims. Each success with a Mage Sight scrutiny reveals one aura.

## Scene Four: Research

This section adds two elements to the story. The first part enhances the mood by telling the cabal about the mythology behind what they're hunting. The second part consists of practical information that will reveal the nature of the Shinje and set up the next section, in which Boston's mages complicate the hunt. Some characters might want to perform research immediately. Accommodate this by revealing the Shinje's myth when the cabal performs its initial investigation, but save the second half until after the Shinje has devoured further victims (in Scene Three, above). If the characters do not perform any research, motivate them by revealing that another cabal has discovered the Shinje and is conducting an ongoing investigation. The characters can share what they know with this group or steal the information. The Brotherhood of Ineffable Truth is one possible candidate, especially if the spirit devours Agartha. Since the Shinje is a new phenomenon, this cabal will only ask for a token favor in return for what they know. However, the cabal risks involving the Ebon Noose since the Nemean is eager to demonstrate his cabal's authority in the face of Potestas' continued obstinacy. The Nemean send Tiamat and Scythe to forcibly "assist" the player cabal before claiming the glory and lore for the Noose.

Remember that every moment the characters spend studying is another opportunity for the Shinje to consume more mages.

### The Shinje's Myth

Characters can discover the mythology behind the Shinje by studying publicly available mythology, occult



lore or even by searching the web. (By typing Shinje and Tibet in a search engine, players can find dozens of relevant links; you could make this an in-character exercise that players pursue between game sessions).

Shinje is the Tibetan word for the Vedic deity Yama, Lord of the Dead. In Tibetan mythology, Shinje is a fierce guardian deity with demonic and animalistic features. He is identified with the bull. In Tibetan mythology, these deities can manifest as psychic constructs (or *tulpas*), so a given manifestation of Shinje could actually be created by an occultist. Occultists can channel Shinje to enhance their physical prowess (a discipline called *lung-gom*) or communicate with the dead.

However, the most relevant myth is that of the creation of Yamantaka, the god who defeated Shinje. According to legend, two thieves with a stolen bull retreated to a cave and slaughtered the animal in view of an accomplished yogi. This distracted the yogi at the moment he was to attain enlightenment. In his wrath, the holy man channeled Shinje in the form of Yamantaka ("conqueror of death") and devoured the two thieves. This manifestation of Shinje preyed on the people until one of the thieves returned from the dead in the form of the bodhisattva Manjusri and defeated it.

### *Beyond the Myth*

After consulting Sleeper mythology, the characters may want to try to correlate what they know with Atlantean lore. The Shinje corresponds to a spirit that the High Speech calls the Threefold Resurrection. This spirit was supposed to be able to revive the recently dead and restore youth. Mages called the spirit to heal citizens who were thought to be too important to suffer death or infirmity. Unfortunately, its signature Numen, called Rebirth, required two additional souls of the same quality (Awakened or Sleeping) as the candidate for revival. By then presenting the spirit with an item seeped in the resonance of one of the victims (i.e., an item with a strong sympathetic connection), mages could ensure that only their desired candidate was reborn. The other two victims would serve as sacrifices, and the mages would ensure that nothing with their resonance would be nearby to confuse the rebirth process. Only the victim whose resonance was presented to the spirit would be reborn. If more than one resonance was present, the strongest sample would win out.

### *Sources*

Aside from typical occult research, characters can piece together clues from other, less orthodox sources. The worst that can happen here is that the cabal utterly fails to uncover clues. In this case, you may have to indulge a certain *deus ex machina* to keep the story moving along.

- If the characters target the Shinje's cage with a Time 2 "Postcognition" spell, they can look back to see Khatvanga conversing with the Shinje. Khatvanga is a withered old man wearing a massive ritual crown, mask

and pectoral that looks to weigh at least 100 pounds. He wields the phurba (his dedicated magical tool). These items are inscribed with a mix of Tibetan and Atlantean symbols. Characters who searched the *Hawk of Guangdong* find this familiar, because they've seen fragments of the crown, mask and pectoral in Khatvanga's room.

Khatvanga holds a short conversation with a seemingly empty cage. (If the viewer uses the Spirit 1 "Spirit Tongue" spell, he can see the Shinje's Twilight form.)

Khatvanga: "Threefold Resurrection, who the Sleeping mystics call Shinje, you will bring me the youth due my enlightened state."

Shinje: "This cage is a weak thing, Moros. Children of Atlantis call me to ease their mortality. Despite your Path, you shirk away from Death? Your cowardice amuses me as much as your ineptitude."

Khatvanga: "You will take souls for me, Shinje, and make me strong again. I have proved my worth by bringing you here, across the ocean, in that cage you mock."

Shinje: "Your worth? Perhaps your arrogance. Many fear death; many souls have passed through me. Two souls and yours: which one of these is worthy? In the mountains of your birth and aging, monks laid out the tools and trinkets of the dead so that the reincarnated could prove they deserved their titles yet again."

The cage flies to pieces; the Shinje flows out of it and slips inside Khatvanga's body, completing the process of Claiming him that it had begun during the ship's long journey. Khatvanga's body *melts*, and the mass re-forms into a six-limbed, bull-headed monster. It savagely smashes the Necromancer's ritual tools, but, in its haste, misses the phurba.

- The characters may query local spirits about the Shinje. The spirits can't say exactly what it is, but recognize that the Shinje is much like the cannibals that humans in the region used to call the *chenoo* and that are called *atcen* and *wendigo* elsewhere (see "Cannibal Versus Cannibal," p. 134). These spirits have been complaining lately because "foreign" cannibal spirits have been stealing *chenoo* hunting grounds.

This leads characters to the Red Word cult (see pp. 133-134). As it so happens, the spirit is known to the cult. Fragments of their Prince of 100,000 Leaves call it the Rewarder of the Noble Hunt. In the anti-history, these materialized spirits are employed by the rulers of Vah (anti-Britain) to keep themselves eternally young. The cult accurately describes what the Shinje is capable of — but the cult wants the spirit for themselves. They will kidnap a member of the players' cabal to get the Shinje in the false belief that the cabal member can bind it.

- The Shadow Chorus knows all about Khatvanga's plans thanks to a combination of prophecy and espionage. They've kept quiet in order to conceal how far their information network goes. In exchange for an arduous array of services, the players' cabal receives occult texts

and surveillance reports that tell them exactly what the Shinje's purpose is.

## Scene Five: *The Resurrection Contest*

Unfortunately, the cabal isn't the only group to learn about the Shinje. Other cabals who've lost members to the beast uncover Khatvanga's goals by either using the methods outlined in the previous section or by srying on the cabal itself. This creates an immense complication. The cabals know that if they play their cards right, their lost comrade can return as long as the spirit is allowed to devour a full three souls.

As the story of the Shinje breaks open, the following is how Boston's cabals will likely react:

**The Brotherhood of the Ineffable Truth:** Potestas is morbidly fascinated by the Shinje but will not risk his mages in pursuit. Accordingly, his cabal will provide what indirect assistance it can without joining the fray. If the beast threatens Potestas himself, the cabal will drop this tactic and wade into the fray, willing to lie and kill to get him back.

**The Company:** They'll keep their heads down, visit every cabal that will stomach them and help the highest bidder.

**The Dead Wrens:** From the sea it came — and to the sea it must return. This situation seriously compromises

the Wrens' traditional role as the sentinels of Boston Harbor. They would be willing to make a generous offer to anyone who could solve this problem quickly and discreetly. Failing that, they'll try to bring together a coalition to remove the threat. They can work together to slay the beast — and take part of the blame off the Dead Wrens if it all goes south.

**The Ebon Noose:** The Nemean may try to set up mages from the Brotherhood of Ineffable Truth as perpetrators or victims. The Hierarch dislikes but respects Potestas. The Hierarch wouldn't risk attacking Potestas directly, but would be willing to use the spirit to break the back of his rival's cabal. However, soul theft is one of the worst crimes among the Awakened, so the Nemean needs to be especially subtle to pull this off without losing his position and his life.

**The Gravediggers:** The Gravediggers take care of their own by any means necessary, but prefer to go about it without the bother of rivals. The Gravediggers will waylay and misdirect other seekers before closing in on the Shinje.

**The Illuminated Pentad:** If even one member of this cabal dies, the Ebon Noose will crush the cabal. The Noose has always considered the Illuminated Pentad to be overly ambitious and unworthy of a distinct place in the Awakened scene. The Pentad is well aware of this and will move very cautiously. This is the cabal most likely to ask the players' mages to act as their proxies.



Others will provide the muscle; the Illuminated Pentad will take the credit.

**Knights of the Exalted Gryphon:** The Knights will not parley with the creature or with other mages. It is a clear threat to the Awakened, so they will wipe the spirit out without compromise or thought of a possible reincarnation. Only the Brotherhood of the Ineffable Truth can stay their hand, and it is that cabal (and not the Knights) whom the players' cabal must turn to if they want to influence the Knights' actions.

**The Sanguine Laurel:** This is a matter for servants. The Sanguine Laurel are pleased to let the Shinje extinguish the rabble, but if one of their own is taken, they will press for possession of the Shinje through the Consilium. Conversely, the Sanguine Laurel try to conceal the existence of other victims or accuse them of crimes so that the cabal's own lost soul ought to be the one who returns from the dead.

**The Shadow Chorus:** This cabal's reaction is entirely up to you, the Storyteller, in keeping with the role of the Chorus as a way to customize Boston for your own games.

**The Special Media Group:** The SMG will stay out of the conflict, except to trade favors for indirect services such as scrying and analysis. But if any of the SMG's own fall to the Shinje, everything changes. The event sparks resentment — rage even — at both the spirit and the antiquated mages who brought it to Boston. The SMG respond with scattershot revenge, hampered by their inexperience with Awakened politics.

**The White Putnams:** The creature is a blasphemy. The Putnams will want to destroy it and free the souls within. The spirit is nothing more than a mobile Hell for its incarcerated souls. The very idea of letting the Shinje reincarnate a mage is loathsome, and if such a mage does spring forth from the monster the cabal will watch him closely.

In addition, other mages may attempt to capture the Shinje and use it to execute "justice" on Seers of the Throne or Banishers. The mages may rationalize this as a more "ethical" use for the creature, but would face the same penalties for soul theft.

Finally, if the players' cabal has lost one of its own, it will also be an interested party. It's up to the characters whether or not they'll try to destroy the spirit or use it for their own purposes. When it comes to hunting the Shinje, however, the cabal has an advantage. Khatvanga's phurba has the closest sympathetic link to the beast.

This leads to a frenetic contest between all of the mages involved. Here are several mini-scenarios to use during this phase of the story.

- One or more members of the cabal are challenged to the Duel Arcane for possession of the phurba.

- Seers of the Throne or Banishers use the chaos caused by the Shinje's presence to arrange the capture and assassination of mages, posing (through magical means) as members of the players' cabal or as another interested party seeking a compromise.

- Vandals destroy personal Artifacts and even kill close companions of one of the Shinje's victims. The perpetrators are doing this to prevent anyone but their candidate from being reincarnated.

- A cabal specializing in Space magic tracks the Shinje and transports it to the sanctum of a rival. The cabal must rush to the scene before the spirit eats enough souls for its final metamorphosis.

Remember that the Shinje is still hunting mages throughout this period. The cabal will have to confront the spirit before it is too late.

### *Complications*

The situation can easily degenerate into a quagmire of backstabbing and politicking. To a certain extent that's fine, but you want to keep characters focused on the coming finale. Limit what happens to two or three signature incidents and move on. To prevent the final encounter with the Shinje from becoming too easy, ensure that only one or two parties survive or retain the will to move on to the story's finale. Otherwise, they will just mob the Shinje.

Accordingly, the other potential problem is that the cabal may try to form a large faction that could make it too easy to find the Shinje. Remember, however, that Boston's mages are highly competitive and untrustworthy. Reward characters' efforts by allowing enough of a temporary alliance to share information, but let the factions' leaders wreck any attempt to follow through.

## *Scene Six: Death and Reincarnation*

This is the final act; it's time for the Shinje to die or change. You can run several different finales based on the characters' accomplishments and objectives.

### *Before the Final Soul*

If the characters manage to track down the spirit before it eats its third soul, the confrontation becomes a chase. If chased, the Shinje runs to a place where it can more easily fend off the cabal: a ghost's haunt. As a spirit of reincarnation, the Shinje finds Essence easier to acquire here; aside from religious beliefs in reincarnation, the spirit finds resonance that stems from denying death quite palatable. Ironically, haunted places are often suffused with this resonance. Ghosts reject the afterlife, and mortals who venture within such haunted places often react by denying the reality of death.

The ideal place to set this finale would be Copp's Hill Burial Ground (see pp. 120-122). The cabal might have to fend off the angry dead and negotiate with ghosts to track the creature down, but the characters can also refuel their Mana from the Hallow there to assist them in the struggle.

If the spirit can't succeed, it continues to flee. If the cabal can keep it on the run for seven days, the Shinje will disincorporate without rebirthing one of its victims.

### *Hunting Tactics*

The Shinje can use a number of tactics to collect its final soul, including the following:

- **Infiltration:** The spirit can go back to its second victim's sanctum. The Shinje can only hide its aura with Occultation, so this will not serve as a long-term gambit. If the spirit can maintain its composure long enough, it can snatch and devour one of the mage's cabalmates (assuming it is a shared sanctum). Use this option if you want to snuff out an entire cabal to make room for the players' characters. The disguised beast can either return to its guise's home as if nothing has happened, or act as if it's fleeing some sort of threat. The supposed danger can include the player characters' cabal (which the spirit now recognizes as the bearers of the phurba) or even itself.

- **Right Under Their Nose:** If your players can take frustration in stride, let the Shinje snatch its prey in full view of the characters. This will be the first time the cabal has actually witnessed the spirit feeding.

### *On the Cusp of Reincarnation*

Once the Shinje has successfully devoured its third soul, the time has come for it to rebirth one of its victims.

Trackers from other cabals might arrive to confront the spirit. If they want to act contrary to the characters' objectives (resurrecting an unacceptable candidate or destroying it when the cabal needs it to resurrect an ally), have the other trackers intercept the cabal right before they reach the Shinje. From there, it's time for a fight or negotiations. Depending on how tough the cabal seems, other mages will either try to incapacitate them or race them to the Shinje.

The characters can confront the Shinje. If they present the phurba, the creature will slowly begin transforming into Khatvanga, unless someone presents an item belonging to one of the other victims with equal resonance (an intimate sympathetic connection). In this latter case, the Shinje will decide which one is worthy. The cabal can influence the spirit's decision by advocating for one of the victims.

Otherwise, when the seven days pass, the Shinje disincorporates into the Shadow Realm, elsewhere beyond Boston.

### *From the Belly of the Beast*

The Shinje violently shudders, and its flesh begins to peel off in smoldering strips. After five turns (during which the Shinje may still fight), the winning victim is reborn.

The reborn victim's biological age is turned back to the beginning of physiological adulthood (between 18 and 20 for most people).

Depending on how important you want the experience to be, you may add other effects as well. For example, the reincarnated mage might also be able to access the memories of the other victims. This allows her player to spend experience points to learn Skills the character didn't have the opportunity to learn, but were known by another victim.

### *Complications*

By ignorance or design, the cabal might successfully resurrect Khatvanga. His rebirth represents failure for the cabal, but he will not kill them unless attacked. He feels he owes them some gratitude. Characters may attempt to destroy him, but Khatvanga is powerful. He attempts to depart using the Space 4 "Teleportation" spell, but he does not know it as a rote and is not familiar with Boston. He will most probably teleport to the hold of his ship, so the cabal might have a fair chance of capturing or tracking him. His traits are left to the Storyteller to determine, should Khatvanga play a part in any successive stories within the chronicle.

Other outcomes are self-explanatory. If the characters don't achieve their goal (whether it was to destroy the Shinje or bring back an ally), they reap the appropriate loss. Based on the events of this story, the characters may have made enemies of the cabals who were foiled in their attempts to resurrect a lost member.

### *The Shinje*

**Quote:** (Between hideous screams) *Immortality is abhorrent.*

The Shinje is a Tibetan name for a spirit of reincarnation. Mages of old knew it as the Threefold Resurrection. It is a very rare spirit from an obscure choir of conceptual





spirits representing the knife-edge between living and dying and the mysterious processes that change death into life again. The rise of the Abyss fragmented this ancient cycle, all but making this spirit choir extinct.

After the fall of Atlantis, Sleeper occultists remembered the old way of death, but did not know the proper rites or names for the spirits that presided over reincarnation. Tibet was one of the few places that retained elements of this old knowledge. The legend of Yamantaka, "conqueror of death," reflects the spirit's infamous power: to devour three souls and grant new life to a fourth. The Shinje — the Threefold Resurrection spirit — resided in the Shadow Realm caves in the reaches of Tibet until Khatvanga bound the spirit to his service. Other spirits from its choir might exist in similarly remote regions.

**Description:** The creature's claimed body (see below) is vaguely human, mixed with the fur of a white tiger, the head of a bull, curving tusks and fingers that can unsheath wickedly sharp claws.

The Shinje may transform into the forms of its victims for a brief period of time (one scene), during which the spirit may also employ the victim's memories to maintain the ruse.

**Rank:** 4

**Attributes:** Power 12, Finesse 10, Resistance 10

**Willpower:** 10

**Max Essence:** 25

**Initiative:** 22

**Defense:** 12

**Speed:** 32

**Size:** 5

**Corpus:** 15

**Influences:** Reincarnation ••

The Shinje can influence a soul's fate after death. Since the appearance of the Abyss, however, this ability is limited — the Shinje can no longer aid a soul in reaching the Supernal World. Instead, the Shinje can only influence the choice of a dead or dying soul's next incarnation in the Fallen World (although not all souls are necessarily reincarnated).

**Numina:** Claim (see below), Occultation (as the 3-dot Merit; the spirit may spend a point of Essence to lower its degree of Occultation), Rebirth (see below), Sense Awakened Soul (see below)

**Ban:** When the Shinje uses its Rebirth Numen, the spirit *must* award reincarnation to the victim represented by an item with the strongest sympathetic connection (i.e., the one whose possessions, when presented to the Shinje following the death of its third victim, have the strongest sympathetic tie of all its victims). Spirit magic cannot be used to cause the Shinje to ignore this Ban.

## Numina

• **Claim:** This Numen is a more powerful version of the "Possession" Numen; if successful, the possession is permanent. Spend three Essence points and roll Power + Finesse in an extended and contested roll versus the victim's Resolve + Composure; each roll represents one

hour. If the spirit gains 50 successes between dusk and dawn, it gains permanent control of the victim's body. Use the victim's available traits (except Willpower points, which are equal to the spirit's current Willpower points) and dice pools for any action the spirit wishes to take. If the spirit fails to accumulate 50 successes within the required period of time, the attempt fails. If a possessed body is killed, the spirit is forced out and must possess another victim if it still wishes to act. Use of this Numen creates a being called a "Ridden," specifically a "Spirit-Claimed" (see **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, p. 282).

• **Rebirth:** This Numen is possessed only by conceptual spirits of choirs associated with reincarnation or Karma. It represents a process that, once begun, must be completed within one week (seven days), or else its benefits are lost. The spirit must first Claim a human body, either Sleeper or Awakened. The spirit must then kill and devour two more people within the next seven days. (If the Claimed victim was Awakened, the other victims must also be Awakened.)

During this time, the Shinje stores the souls of those it kills. Once it kills its third victim, it then restores *one* of those victims to life with renewed youth in a transformed version of the Claimed body: the body is biologically 18-years-old, although it ages normally from then on. The other souls are then released, to go to their proper fates. If the spirit cannot complete its task of killing two more mages within a week after the first death, none of its victims are reborn.

This Numen can only be used once upon a particular soul to rebirth its material body.

Once this Numen has played out, the spirit is involuntarily subject to the effects of the Discorporation Numen. Roll Power + Resistance; if successful, the spirit discorporates and reforms elsewhere in the Shadow Realm (probably at a locus it is familiar with).

• **Sense Awakened Soul:** The spirit can immediately tell when an Awakened soul is within its line of sight.

## Claimed Body

The Shinje used its Claim Numen to claim the body of Khatvanga as it goes about its Rebirth task.

**Mental Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

**Physical Attributes:** Strength 6, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

**Social Attributes:** Presence 3, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

**Mental Skills:** Academics 2, Crafts 3, Investigation 4, Medicine 4, Occult (Tibetan) 5

**Physical Skills:** Brawl 1, Survival (Mountaineering) 4, Weaponry (Knives) 3

**Social Skills:** Intimidation 4, Negotiation 3, Persuasion 3, Socialize 2, Subterfuge 4

**Merits:** Speak Languages (English, Hindi, Hakka, Mandarin, Tibetan)

**Initiative:** 7

**Defense:** 4

**Speed:** 16

**Health:** 9

**Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Special	Dice Pool
Claw/Bite	2 (L)	—	9
Gore	3 (L)	Knockdown	10

**Powers:** The Shinje may spend one Essence to heal two points of bashing damage or one point of lethal damage. It can also shapeshift into the forms of its victims.

Because it holds Awakened souls, it gains powers commensurate with each of its victim's highest Arcanum. This includes Khatvanga's Death 5 Arcanum. If Agartha (see Scene Three, above) was the spirit's second victim, the Shinje can use his Space 4 Arcanum. Note that the spirit's use of vulgar magic still risks a Paradox.

## Aftermath and Story Hooks

By the end of this story, the characters' cabal will have made a definite impression on Boston's mages. Every cabal will know something about the mages who encountered the Shinje. Based on the characters' goals and performance, they will make friends and earn enemies. The Storyteller can use this opportunity to have an established cabal invite the characters to join. The Brotherhood of Ineffable Truth respects knowledge, and the Company sees resourcefulness and a bit of ruthlessness as assets.

## Experience-Point Awards

The Storyteller should consider awarding an experience point to each character for the following actions:

- The characters uncover Wu's soul-dead nature and, because of this, question the legitimacy of his story.
- The cabal knows when to quit and does not pursue the Shinje to the point where the spirit kills one of their number.
- The cabal saves one or more mages from being devoured by the Shinje or directs the Shinje to devour an enemy or victim of convenience. Of course, if the cabal goes for the latter option, the cabal gains experience point at the risk of Wisdom.
- A character makes an ally while mages struggle over the destiny of the Shinje, or uses the situation to neutralize an enemy.

Award an Arcane Experience point for the following:

- The cabal learns the myth of the Shinje.
- The cabal successfully researches the Shinje to the point of learning about the upcoming reincarnation.

Finally, if the cabal prevents Khatvanga from being rebirthed, award one additional experience point to each

character, above and beyond what you would normally award for the end of the story.

## Further Stories

Don't look at this scenario in isolation. See how you can integrate it and extend it into a long-running chronicle. Make use of any of the following plot hooks or invent your own.

- What was Khatvanga doing on the *Hawk of Guangdong*? You can stock the ship's cargo holds with all kinds of exotic creatures and enchanted items. If the cabal disposes of Khatvanga, the ship as good as theirs — but they won't be the only opportunists around. The Dead Wrens, the Company and others are likely to take advantage of the opportunity. The cabal can try to beat all comers in a race for the ship's treasure. The vessel may be filled with all kinds of booby traps, wards and guardians. The story gets even better after the *Hawk* leaves port; on the high seas, mages can trade attack spells and whip up witch-winds in a race to the ship. Becalmed, it can act as a claustrophobic deathtrap. Mages might even make the *Hawk*'s crew an offer, and captain the ship to exotic ports of call. Of course, the ship sails under a Chinese flag and is technically owned by a small shipping concern, so characters will have to find a way to satisfy or evade the appropriate laws.

- Just as copycat killers plague investigations into real crimes, mad or opportunistic mages can fake Shinje murders to confuse the truth behind their acts. If the characters effectively dealt with the Shinje the first time around, it's likely they'll be contacted to deal with what looks like another attack. A former comrade of one of the spirit's victims may recreate the killings as an insane tribute. Perhaps the killer knows that the cabal in central to the story of the Shinje and wants to lure them for profit or revenge?

Successfully pulling this off would require an impressive command of illusions, the ability to kill mages with impunity and a way to hide any telltale aura that would expose the deception. Groups like the Company and the Gravediggers are known to have these capabilities.

- Khatvanga can open up a whole array of future stories. If the mage is rebirthed and escapes, he can be an ongoing antagonist who sees the cabal as one of his chief obstacles to amassing power. Even though his rebirth technically means the characters have "failed," it's the best kind of failure, because it opens the door to future scenarios.

Now that he has a young body, Khatvanga wants further security and the power to completely enjoy the eternity left to him. Boston's wealth represents opportunities beyond what he could have ever imagined as an aged, stateless monk in Tibet. The mage is not necessarily cruel by design, but his tastes are at once ruthless and epicurean. He has rejected the humble, ascetic life and wants eternal power in this world for no other reason than his own pleasure.

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# Boston

**1** - Psychomimetic Operations  
(Seers of the Throne)

**2** - Manray

**3** - The Fortress (SMG)

**4** - The Fens

**5** - Emerald Scroll (Dead Wrens)

**6** - Shangri-La (The Company)

**7** - Putnam Estate

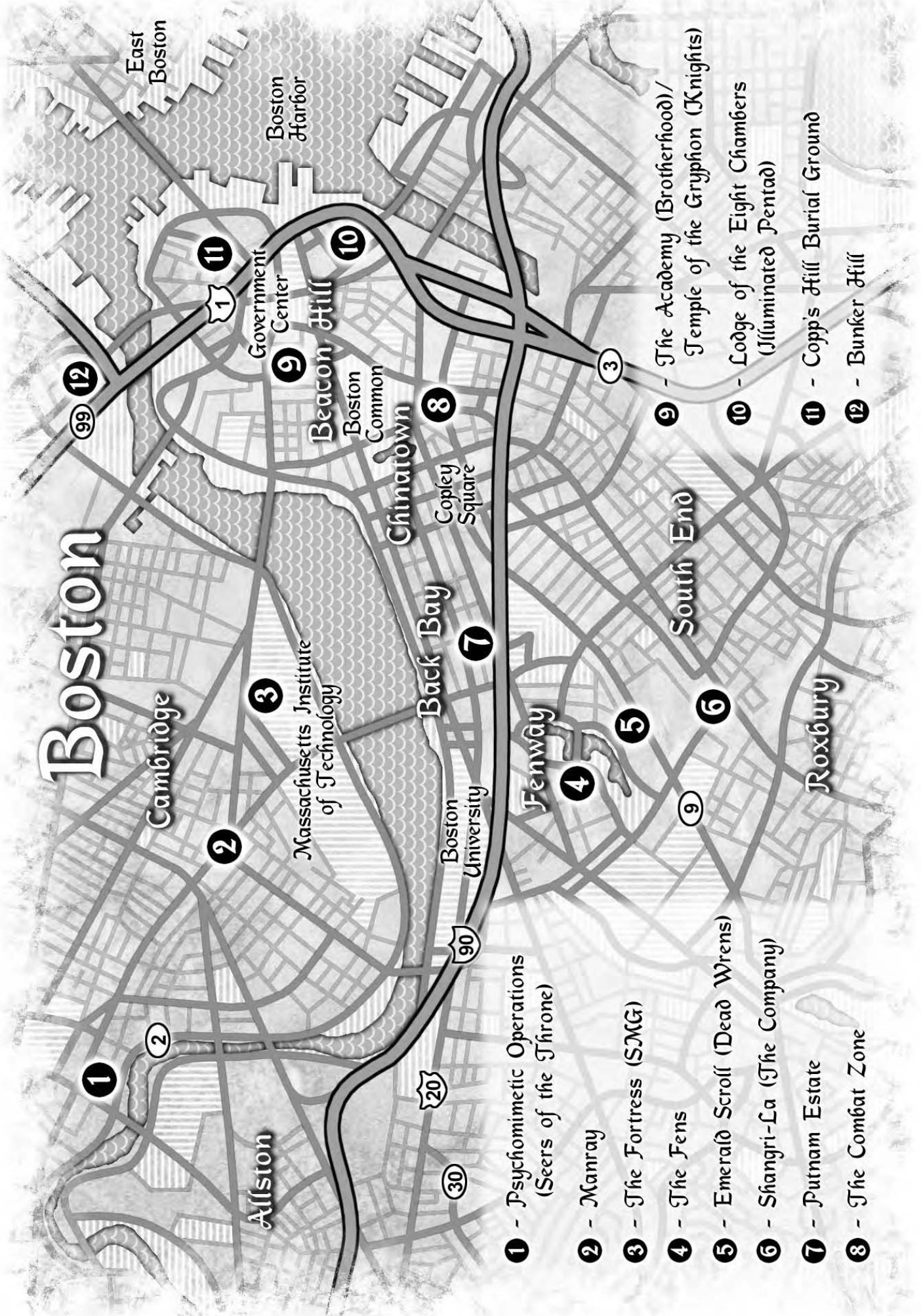
**8** - The Combat Zone

**9** - The Academy (Brotherhood)/  
Temple of the Gryphon (Knights)

**10** - Lodge of the Eight Chambers  
(Illuminated Pentad)

**11** - Copp's Hill Burial Ground

**12** - Bunker Hill



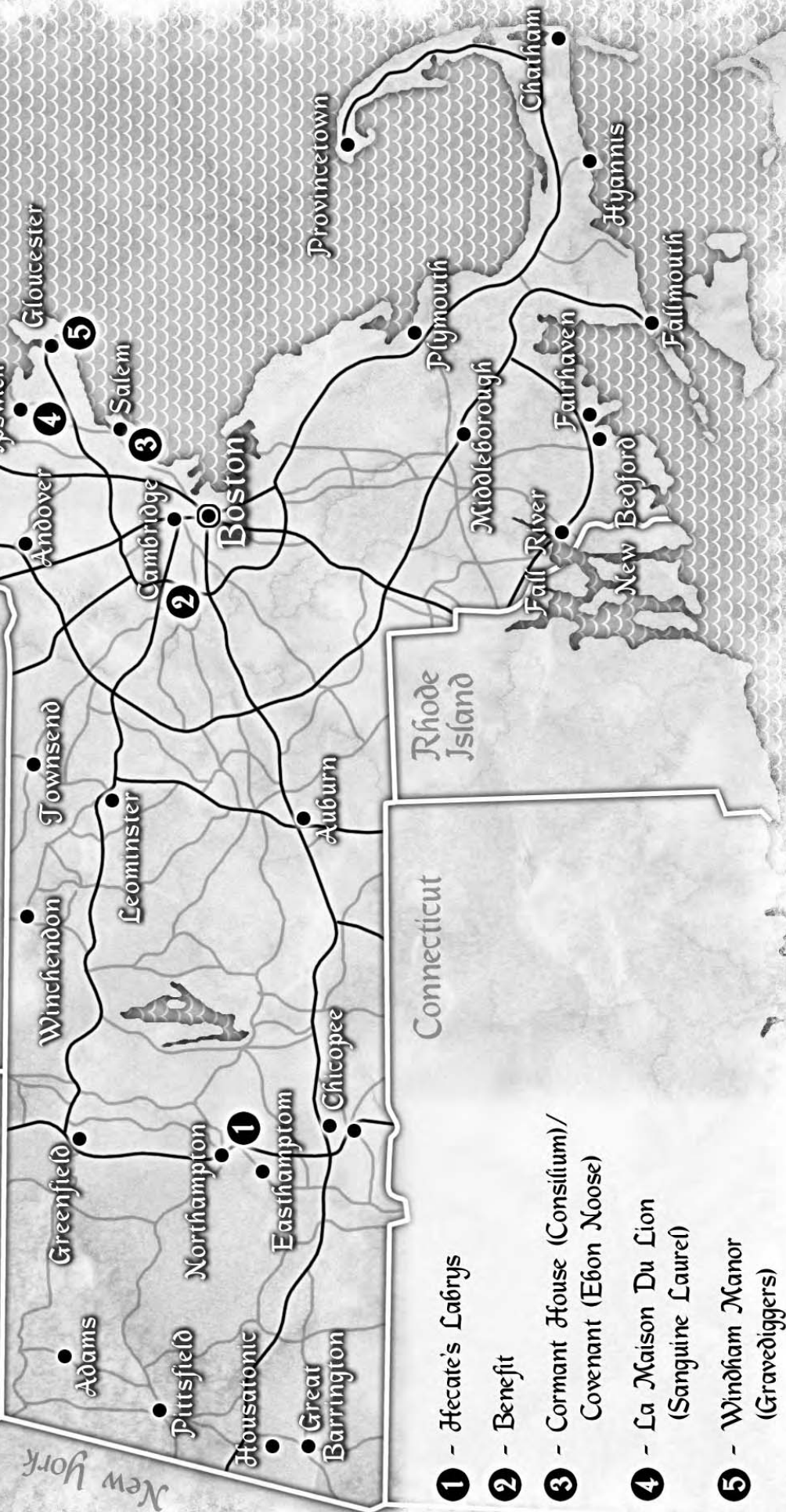


# Massachusetts

Vermont

New Hampshire

New York



- 1** - Hecate's Labrys
- 2** - Benefit
- 3** - Cormant House (Consilium)/  
Covenant (Ebon Moose)
- 4** - La Maison Du Lion  
(Sanguine Laurel)
- 5** - Windham Manor  
(Gravediggers)